



# **Magnolia Community Academy Handbook**

## **IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THIS HANDBOOK CAREFULLY**

It is imperative that all students and their parents/guardians familiarize themselves with the regulations and policies outlined in the school handbook. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in the student's dismissal from the school. Any decisions related to the handbook will be at the administration's discretion, and the handbook may be amended at any time. Parents and members of the school community will be notified of any updates.

Once you have read the handbook and discussed it with your child, please sign and return the "Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgment Form."

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Magnolia Community Academy welcomes students of all races, colors, nationalities, and ethnicities. We provide equal rights, privileges, programs, and activities to all students and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnicity in any of our educational programs or policies.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

At Magnolia Community Academy, we believe that education should be adaptable to the individual student's needs. We aim to create a flexible learning environment that is responsive to the student, not the other way around. Our approach to learning fosters small communities of students who learn together under the guidance of knowledgeable adults. We believe that incorporating the best aspects of various educational philosophies is the best way to meet our students' needs.

Our school's philosophy centers around the belief that each child is unique and has their own learning style. We strive to teach a curriculum of core subjects while also promoting the social, emotional, and creative well-being of the child to foster their overall development.

## **Religious Affiliation at Magnolia Community Academy**

Magnolia Community Academy is a community of mixed denomination Christians who believe in biblical teachings, prayer, devotional learning and the principles of Christian faith. Our curriculum includes these principles and emphasizes salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ as the only way to reach Heaven. Our goal is to lead by Christ's example and spread his love to the world around us. Regardless of personal faith, parents should be comfortable with exposure to these topics if they plan to send their children to Magnolia Community Academy.

## **Accreditation at Magnolia Community Academy**

Magnolia Community Academy is subject to BESE private and homeschool laws, as Louisiana does not have accreditation or licensing requirements for non-public schools. Additionally, we will seek state approval to ensure that our program meets state standards. Our students will receive a portfolio each year, including attendance records, immunization records, a list of texts and workbooks used for the curriculum, samples of student work, applicable tests or evaluations, and a statement from a third-party certified teacher detailing the child's competency for their specific grade.

## **Student Classification**

In Magnolia Community Academy, students are classified based on their grade level. The breakdown is as follows:

Early Elementary: PreK4, Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten (age 5 after September 30th), and 1st Grade.

*The placement of a four-year-old child into PK4 or Transitional Kindergarten is determined in part by a placement test administered by our teachers. The rationale behind grouping students separately is to provide individualized attention to those who demonstrate academic strengths as well as those who may require additional academic support.*

Elementary: 2nd – 5th grades

Middle School: 6th – 8th grades (to be added in future years)

High School: 8th -12th grades (to be added in future years)

## **Academics**

### **Grading System**

Early Elementary students at Magnolia Community Academy utilize a mastery-based approach to grading instead of the traditional A-F grading system. In order to receive an "M" for mastery on a given benchmark task, students must demonstrate a competency level of 90% or higher. Students must achieve mastery to receive credit and progress in their studies. It is normal and acceptable for students in the same class to be at different levels of study at any given time.

To ensure benchmark standards are met for secondary and post-secondary educational institutes and to ensure state approval, we will implement a more standardized alphabetical grading system for elementary, middle, and high-school students. However, we remain committed to prioritizing individual mastery of subjects over grades. Our goal is to address the needs of each student and not penalize them for subpar grades.

- A = 93-100%
- B = 85-92%
- C = 75-84%
- D = 67-74%
- F = 66% and below

Students are given grades during each quarter to assess their mastery progress. This helps instructors determine where students may need additional support or where they can work independently. It also serves as a transcript for Louisiana's educational requirements. Parents receive updates on student progress after each 6 week academic block. If a student is in danger of not meeting mastery level in any subject, interventions will be put into place to ensure success.

### **Academic Progress**

Academic progress is maintained through student progress reports provided to the parents after each 6 week block and on an as-requested basis.

## **Major Subjects**

The following subjects are considered major subjects:

- Early Elementary: Reading and Language Arts, Handwriting, Math, and Science
- Elementary: Reading and Language Arts, Handwriting, Math, Science, and Social Studies

## **Minor Subjects**

The following subjects are integrated into the curriculum throughout the year:

- All Grades: Horticulture, Bible, Art, Animal Science, Anatomy, Music, Culinary Arts, Foreign Language, Practical Life, Poetry

## **Report Cards**

At the end of each six-week block, students and parents receive report cards. It's suggested that parents keep a copy of the report card for their records, as it's kept with school records for state verification.

## **Academic Calendar**

The 2024-2025 school year will begin on August 19, 2024.

Please refer to the attachment for the complete school calendar.

## **Exams**

To meet individual academic needs, teachers at Magnolia Community Academy have the flexibility to determine the most effective way to test their students. Students may take written test, oral tests, and also may be tested in groups. Projects can also be used as test grades. Please note that the testing method is not standardized.

## **The Role of Homework in Academic Development**

Homework is intended to offer practice and develop skills and study habits, but it should not replace teaching opportunities that can be covered in the classroom. While meaningful homework provides a bridge between home and school, it is important to maintain a proper balance between schoolwork, home life, and other activities the family feels is important.

Today's average homework load for most students has veered far from its original intention. Children are spending less time outdoors and more time on monotonous copy work and extensive at-home assignments that are both arduous for the child and parent. This lack of balance results in more restless sleep, decreased school performance, inattentive and hyperactive behaviors, and a lack of quality time with family.

Research shows there is little benefit to a regular schedule of homework in younger grades. To maintain a proper balance, parents should view open ended discussions with their child about their school day as the child's "routine" homework. Ask them questions about what they are learning and have them teach you about their adventures from the week. We firmly believe that parental involvement in their child's education is crucial. Ensuring parents communicate openly with their student is one effective method to achieve this goal.

At our school, no assignment, homework or otherwise, is more important than the well-being of our students and families. Our goal is to have all needed core studies completed during the school day. We provide a logical progression of expectations from one grade level to another and partner with families who share our values and understand that we set high expectations for our students during their academic day. However, we also want our families to know that not all learning is on pen and paper.

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **Admission Requirements**

Magnolia Community Academy admits new and returning students through an evaluation process that assesses whether their needs are compatible with the school's offerings. The academy welcomes all qualified applicants, without discrimination based on race, color, sex, or national origin. However, parents should note that the academy's small size and emphasis on individualized education may make it challenging to accommodate all medical, social, or behavior needs at present. If you have any concerns, please contact the administration to arrange a meeting.

Parents must demonstrate an interest in their children's education by collaborating with the administration and faculty in all school-related matters. Students are expected to adhere to all school regulations and conduct themselves in a manner that promotes effective learning and appropriate behavior. The Admissions Committee thoroughly reviews academic, attendance, and conduct records to determine admission eligibility. If the academy cannot accommodate all qualified students due to class size, they will be placed on a waitlist. As vacancies become available, they will be allocated accordingly.

#### **Offering a Trial Period and Parental Meetings**

After a student has applied and undergone an interview, in the event that there are doubts about whether Magnolia Community Academy can adequately address their medical, social, or behavioral requirements, we are willing to organize a trial period for your student during the current academic year. Once the trial period is over, we can hold an open discussion with the family to reassess the situation so all parties are well informed and can make appropriate decisions regarding the student's needs.

Trial periods are not intended to be offered to every student who applies to our program. Please speak with administration directly if you feel this is a good option for your student.

### **Age Requirements**

All children entering PreK 4 must be four years of age by September 30th and be able to use the restroom independently.

Children entering Transitional Kindergarten programs are usually five years of age by December 31st and be able to use the restroom independently. *An exception to this policy would apply to a four-year-old student exhibiting suitable academic and social capabilities, making them eligible to join the "young fives" group. We designed our Transitional Kindergarten program to serve as a bridge for younger five-year-old students not meeting the age criteria to enroll in Kindergarten or those who display academic excellence and require a more challenging curriculum. Our Transitional Kindergarten curriculum incorporates a blend of PreK4 and Kindergarten coursework. If you believe your child meets the academic criteria for this program, our teachers will be delighted to assess their eligibility.*

All children entering Kindergarten must be five years of age by September 30th and be able to use the restroom independently.

### **Registration Guidelines for Currently Enrolled Students:**

If you are presently enrolled, registration for the next academic year will be allowed throughout the year and will conclude in February. Please note that registration can only be done through our website or via a paper application provided by administration. It is imperative that you have paid all outstanding tuition loans and have no dues pending for the February payment to be eligible for registration. A registration fee must be paid to complete the registration process. Please ensure that the fee is paid within a week of registration, otherwise, your registration status will be revoked. If you have paid the registration fee but have not cleared the tuition fee in full before the due date, or have not secured a loan with Gulf Bank, and/or have not paid the July installment before the first day of school, your child's name will be removed from the school roster, and the school will assume that they will not be returning.

### **Registration for New Students:**

#### **Registration Fee: \$100 per family**

Registration for new students is held on a rolling basis but is contingent upon space in the desired class. Current students and their families will be prioritized over new applicants. The student's birth certificate and social security card are required. A copy of these documents and an up-to-date immunization card/or waiver form is required. The record may be obtained from your pediatrician or the Health Unit. Children who have attended school elsewhere must present their latest report card demonstrating promotion from within that system.

*The registration fee is refunded to any child not accepted into the school.*

*The registration fee and deposit are not refundable if the student is accepted into the school. The registration fee and deposit are not refundable even if the student chooses not to attend the program at a later date.*

### **Withdrawal**

In the event that a student should voluntarily withdraw, transcripts and other records will be withheld until all financial obligations have been cleared. Parents are requested to come to the school office and complete a Student Withdrawal Form at least three school days prior to the child's last day of school. If all financial obligations are met, the records will be sent to the new school once a request is sent from the new school. All withdrawals from the academy will need to be submitted in writing.

### **Student Records Policy**

To obtain student records or other information, please submit a written request to the administration. It is important to note that anecdotal notes may not be released to parents or legal guardians at the administration's discretion. Additionally, expulsion or withdrawal letters may be included in a student's cumulative folder when transferring to another school. Please be advised that student records are confidential and can only be released to parents, legal guardians, or the custodial parent.

## **New Admissions Requirements**

To complete registration, please provide the following forms:

- A fully filled-out MCA registration form, including a medication form if applicable
- A copy of your child's birth certificate and Social Security card
- An immunization record or an immunization waiver if in place
- Pertinent custody documents, if applicable
- Academic records from the previous school, including any applicable IEP or 504 plan. Any therapy documents/summaries, Speech, OT, or PT records or recommendations are appreciated

## **Attendance Guidelines**

Arrival/Dismissal:

1. School Hours:
  - a. PK4-Kindergarten:
    - i. Instruction begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. and finishes at 2:30 p.m.
    - ii. Students may arrive on campus between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and are expected to engage in productive activities to set themselves up for success. Student pick up is between 2:30pm and 3:00pm
    - iii. Parents should only drop off their students through the designated carpool line. A teacher will be on hand to assist students during drop-off and pick-up.
  - b. First through Fifth Grade:
    - i. Instruction begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. and finishes at 3:00 p.m.
    - ii. Students may arrive on campus between 7:45 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. and are expected to engage in productive activities to set themselves up for success. Student pick up is between 3:00pm and 3:30pm
    - iii. Parents should only drop off their students through the designated carpool line. A teacher will be on hand to assist students during drop-off and pick-up.
2. Carpool Procedures: All vehicles are required to follow the designated carpool route. Please be respectful and courteous to other drivers. All vehicles must have an MCA car tag to pick up a student.

## **Attendance Guidelines at Magnolia Community Academy**

1. It is the responsibility of both the school and parents to stress the importance of regular attendance to students. Each school day is significant, and Magnolia Community Academy will keep a record of every student's attendance on days when school is in session. This record will be used to verify that your child is attending a reputable program that is in good standing with the state.
2. Louisiana state law requires that elementary and middle school students attend school for at least 167 days to receive credit for the academic year. It is preferable that students attend 180 days of the program. Magnolia Community Academy must adhere to state mandates in this regard, and school officials will notify both authorities and parents or guardians of students with excessive unexcused absences.
3. Tardiness and early checkouts have a significant impact on the classroom environment and deprive students of valuable instructional time. A student is considered tardy if they arrive at school after their designated start time.
4. At Magnolia Community Academy, we value our students' time with family, and we recognize that learning can happen in various settings. If a student plans to be away from school for an extended period, we ask that you notify our teachers with ample time (preferably four weeks) to prepare a packet of work for your student to



complete under the guidance of a parent or guardian. Upon their return, the student will submit their work, and assessments will resume as usual. If the student can demonstrate mastery of the missed material while working at home, they will not be counted absent. Mastery will be determined by the teacher's assessment.

5. It is crucial to understand the non-public school/private/homeschool laws in Louisiana to participate in any effective hybrid homeschool group or private microschool. These laws are subject to change, so it is recommended that you stay up to date personally on these matters.

### **School Policies: Illness and Emergency Procedures**

#### **ILLNESS:**

If a student falls ill during the school day and has a temperature exceeding 100.4 F, the parents or guardians will be contacted to collect the child. The student should not return to school until they are fever-free without the aid of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.

If a student feels unwell and is unable to finish the school day despite not having a fever, their parents will be informed, and the best decision for the student's pick-up will be made.

To receive medication during the day, students must complete a medication administration form, which must be on file with the school. Teachers and administrators expect a thorough explanation of the student's medical needs to ensure that they can be accommodated in a supportive environment.

#### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

In the event of an emergency, Magnolia Community Academy adheres to Tangipahoa Parish School Board directives regarding school closures. The school conducts regular emergency drills, and emergency plans are in place for fire, dangerous weather, shelter-in-place, evacuations, and campus intruders.

1. **DANGEROUS WEATHER:** If school is dismissed early or canceled due to dangerous weather, MCA follows the same directive in regard to inclement weather as the Tangipahoa Parish School System. Therefore, adhere to announcements made via radio and television for the public school system. Parents will be notified by phone and/or text message. If the staff and students are required to move to our safe places during dangerous weather, parents will not be allowed to check out a student until the threat has lifted unless approved by administration.

2. **EVACUATION:** In the event of an evacuation off campus, the school would notify the parents of our students immediately with location.

3. **SHELTER-IN-PLACE:** In some situations, authorities may direct us to remain on the school grounds and shelter-in-place. The following steps will be taken: All students will be brought inside. Doors, windows, and blinds will be closed, and, if necessary, cracks or openings will be taped. Students will remain in their classrooms or move inside to secure rooms if outside. Heating or cooling systems will be turned off. Administration will be directed by authorities from the local Springfield Fire Department. Parents will not be allowed to pick up their students until the event is declared over and safe for everyone to move around the campus.

4. **INTRUDER/LOCK DOWN:** If the students and staff are directed to move into Lock Down, students and staff will remain in locked classrooms until directed that it is safe to return to normal activity.



## **Effective Communication between Teachers and Parents**

Parents can schedule a conference any time during the academic year using one of the following methods:

1. The preferred way is to email the teacher directly.
2. Contacting the school administration.
3. Writing a note to the teacher- handing the note directly to the teacher is the best approach, rather than passing information through students.

It is recommended that parents arrange conferences during school hours according to the teacher's schedule, with Friday conferences being preferred. Before or after school conferences are at the teacher's discretion. Teachers may be contacted either by email or written note. Please allow teachers at least 24 hours to respond. It is important to note that teachers are encouraged to avoid responding to emails before 7am and after 5pm. If no response is received within 48 hours, parents can contact administration.

### **Cell Phone/Gaming Device Policy**

Gaming devices and iPads are not permitted. If a student carries a cell phone, it must remain in their backpack and switched off during school hours. If the student does not follow these guidelines, then the parents will be asked to keep the device at home. Failure to comply with disciplinary action will require a conference between the student, parents, and administration.

iPads and gaming devices are allowed during aftercare, but the teacher in charge of aftercare will have sole discretion over their use. Games, movies, and shows viewed on the MCA campus are also subject to the teacher's discretion. Even if parents find something acceptable in their home environment, it may not be acceptable at MCA. If in doubt, parents should speak with the aftercare teacher before allowing a child to bring the device on campus.

## **GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION**

### **Field Trips:**

We encourage classes to take part in educational field trips. Teachers will share trip details throughout the year. Students must have a completed and signed field trip form, along with the necessary funds, in order to attend the trip. Field trip funds are non-refundable, except in the case of school cancellation. We cannot accept verbal permission for these events.

### **Transportation:**

When a private vehicle is used for school functions, please follow these guidelines:

- All occupants must wear seat belts.
- The driver must abide by the speed limit.
- Students must return to the school in the same vehicle they left in, unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher.
- In the event of an accident or injury, the driver's car insurance is the primary coverage. The school accepts no responsibility for the use of individual vehicles.

- Drivers must be approved for each trip.

## **Meeting Financial Obligations at Magnolia Community Academy**

At Magnolia Community Academy, we strive to provide excellent facilities and qualified educators to meet our educational goals. Student tuition is based on a twelve-month program and is non-refundable.

We offer three payment options to our students:

- Paying the full tuition amount by May 6th, 2024 at the school office, upon receiving acceptance, entitles the payer to a 10% discount.
- A loan for the full amount is available through Gulf Coast Bank and Trust.
- A partial loan can be made for a portion of the tuition amount. The remaining amount should be paid in the school office by the last Friday in May.

Another payment option is available as well and is at the sole discretion of the administration. Tuition can be paid every six months, with the first payment due by May 6th, 2024, and the second payment due by September 27th, 2024.

### **Bank Financing, Loan Signing, and Loan Cancellation:**

An 11-month tuition loan plan is available from Gulf Coast Bank and Trust if application is made by May 1st. After May 1st, there is a 10-month loan plan available. Loans are to be paid by the 1st of each month. A loan will be cancelled if a payment is not received by noon on the last day of the month that the payment is due. The loan will not be carried for 60 days. The parent has five days to pay the school the full amount of the cancelled loan or have the student dropped from the class roll. When a loan has been cancelled due to non-payment, the school will not approve another tuition loan.

MCA only accepts cash or check payments. It does not accept any type of electronic payments such as Venmo, PayPal, etc.

### **12 Month Tuition:**

#### **If Tuition Registered before April 5th:**

1<sup>st</sup> Child: \$6,710 per year

2<sup>nd</sup> Child: \$6,360 per year

3<sup>rd</sup> Child: \$6,010 per year

Non-refundable \$1000 deposit per child will be due to hold the student's spot, deposit will be applied to total cost of tuition.

#### **If Tuition Registered After April 5th:**

Flat rate for late registration tuition: \$7,210 per year

Non-refundable \$1000 deposit per child will be due to hold spot, deposit will be applied to total cost of tuition.

## **Homeschool Hybrid Pricing:**

3 Day a week program (M/W/F): \$5,000 per year

We will no longer offer our 2 day per week hybrid program. Only those currently in the program will be allowed to continue this schedule.

Same Registration and Deposit required

## **Magnolia Community Academy Aftercare Program**

The aftercare program at Magnolia Community Academy caters to the needs of working parents, and is designed to ensure that students receive proper supervision following afternoon dismissal. As per the school's policy, students must be involved in an extracurricular activity or in Aftercare if they remain on campus after school hours have concluded.

To ensure timely arrangements, parents are requested to inform the school of their aftercare needs on a monthly basis. In case this isn't possible, a note to the school at the beginning of the week will suffice.

In case of emergencies, parents may utilize the aftercare program, and payments will be charged at the end of each month for the days used during that period. Payments for aftercare are due by the 5th of each month, and access to the program will be denied to students if payment hasn't been received.

To resume the program, the past due amount along with next month's charge must be paid in full. Aftercare program charges are as follows:

- From 3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. – \$8.00 per student per day for one student, and \$7.00 for student for additional siblings
- After 5:30 p.m., there is a \$1.00 per minute per child charge until the child is picked up.

Any person picking up a child from aftercare must present identification. Only authorized adults listed on the child's information sheet, other than the parents, are allowed to pick them up.

It's important to note that aftercare is an extension of the school day, and as such, the same rules and regulations apply.

## **Delinquent Accounts for the Current Year**

If a student's financial account is more than five days past due, the student will not be allowed to participate in the school day or any extracurricular activity. Accounts that are past due include tuition, fees, and aftercare. In case of financial difficulties, families are encouraged to contact the school administration to make financial arrangements.

## **STUDENT HEALTH**

### Medication Policy

Magnolia Community Academy has a strict medication policy that prohibits students from possessing medication on school grounds. If a student is found with medication, such as antibiotics or non-prescription

drugs (aspirin, Tylenol, eye drops, contact solution, cough drops, etc.), the teacher or administrative staff will confiscate it and contact the parent.

If a student requires medication during school hours, such as long-term medications for behavior modification, insect sting allergy, anticonvulsive medication, or for asthmatic conditions, the parent or guardian must bring the medication to the school office along with a signed note that includes the child's name, prescription number, name of medication, specific time and dosage to be administered, and permission for the school to administer the medication. The medication must be in its original packaging with a label containing the student's name, name of medication, dosage, and specific time it is to be given at school. All necessary paperwork must be obtained, completed, and returned to the school office before this service is provided.

To ensure safety and avoid potential abuse, all long-term medications will be kept under lock and key in a secure, central location. Unlabeled medicine cannot be dispensed.

### **Illness/Communicable Diseases**

Magnolia Community Academy has a "no nit" policy for head lice. Students who have head lice will be sent home and must return with a doctor's note and be nit-free. If a student is excluded from classes due to head lice, a note from a doctor or the health unit must be presented to the school office before the child may enter class.

Parents are responsible for notifying the school if their child has contracted a communicable disease, including lice. Students who are ill should be kept home. If a student has a fever and/or has vomited, the parent must pick up the child from school. The child must be fever-free and vomit-free for a 24-hour period before returning to school.

All medical excuses for student absences, as well as all statements from doctors about restrictions on activities or diets, must be referred to the administration. A doctor's note is required after illnesses caused by a communicable disease. All doctors' notes must be submitted within three days of the absence for the absence to be excused.

### **Guidelines for Visitors and Volunteers**

Visitors to the School:

We welcome all parents and school patrons to visit the school during appropriate times. In fact, special programs and visiting days are organized throughout the school year to allow for such visits. To ensure the safety of our students, all visitors must be approved by the school administration before visiting the school. Please sign in to receive a visitor's pass and sign out upon leaving.

Observations:

Observations must be scheduled through the administration. Classroom visits are limited to 30 minutes and visitors are not allowed to interrupt instructional time.

Celebrations/Snacks:

Teachers may organize seasonal or curriculum-based celebrations. Invitations to private parties may be distributed during homeroom period to all students in the class or grade level. Gifts are not to be exchanged at school.

## Lunch/Snack:

Students have the option of bringing their own lunch or participating in our hot lunch catering. All home-packed lunches must be nutritious. We are currently not a nut free campus, please discuss your student's health needs with us for accommodation requests. We prohibit the following items in bag lunches: candy, soft drinks, power drinks, Kool-Aid, etc. Students should bring a morning and afternoon snack and spill-proof water bottle every day. Water bottle should only be filled with water.