

PARENT HANDBOOK



2011-2012



29028 Aloma Ave. Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

Phone: 949-495-5162 Fax: 949-495-6733

<http://www.mcdowellschool.org>

FOREWORD

This handbook is designed as a reference for parents and students so that they may understand the philosophies, policies and procedures at McDowell School. It does not replace the information in the tuition/childcare contract.

Please peruse this handbook carefully. It will provide you with a wealth of information about the school. If you have additional questions, please contact the school for clarification.

McDowell School
29028 Aloma Avenue, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
949-495-5162, Fax 949-495-6733
<http://www.mcdowellschool.org>

Administration

Executive Director	Ms. Donna Jeffrey	djeffrey@mcdowellschool.org
Preschool Director	Mrs. Cheryl Cragun	misscheryl@mcdowellschool.org
Office Manager	Mrs. Adrienne Steenblock	asteenblock@mcdowellschool.org
Office Assistant	Mrs. Tawny Crane	tcrane@mcdowellschool.org

Preschool

Three year olds	Ms. Katie Siek	misskatie@mcdowellschool.org
Four year olds	Ms. Kim Costello	misskim@mcdowellschool.org
Four year olds	Mrs. Valerie Novack	missvalerie@mcdowellschool.org
Four year olds	Ms. Gayle Sarti	missgayle@mcdowellschool.org
Four year olds	Ms. Jennifer Crow	missjennifer@mcdowellschool.org
Early Kindergarten	Mrs. Courtney Potter	misscourtney@mcdowellschool.org
Teacher's Aides	Mrs. Irma Martinez	
	Mrs. Lori Young	

Elementary

Kindergarten	Ms. Jesse Holmes	jholmes@mcdowellschool.org
Kindergarten	Mrs. Donna Cox	dcox@mcdowellschool.org
Grade 1	Ms. Jennifer Mims	jmims@mcdowellschool.org
Grade 1	Ms. Kristi Wilson	kwilson@mcdowellschool.org
Grade 2	Ms. Sheila Anderson	sanderson@mcdowellschool.org
Grade 3	Mrs. Allison Sudek	asudek@mcdowellschool.org
Grade 3	Mrs. Ingrid McKibben	imckibben@mcdowellschool.org
Grade 4	Ms. Kelly Sharum	ksharum@mcdowellschool.org
Grade 5	Mrs. Linda Peotter	lpeotter@mcdowellschool.org

Middle School

Math/Science	Mrs. Whitney Kleen	wkleen@mcdowellschool.org
Literature/Social Studies/ Language Arts	Mr. Mike Johnson	mjohnson@mcdowellschool.org

Specialties

Spanish	Sra. Kallie Flagstad	kflagstad@mcdowellschool.org
Computer Teacher / Technology Coordinator	Ms. Barbara Herrmann	bherrmann@mcdowellschool.org
Music Teacher	Ms. Ruthie Harden	rharden@mcdowellschool.org
Art Teacher	Mrs. Lisa Abbassi	labbassi@mcdowellschool.org
Athletic Director	Mr. Scott Myers	smyers@mcdowellschool.org
Teacher's Aide	Ms. Alex Moore	

Welcome to McDowell School

Thank you for choosing to become part of the McDowell Family! Here at McDowell we have created a warm and energetic learning environment which is designed to address your child's developing intellectual, social, and emotional needs, while challenging them to reach their full potential. We are fully aware of how precious and important these formative years are for building the character and skills of tomorrow's leaders. Your child/children are our top priority here at McDowell and we believe that open communication is key to a great partnership in ensuring their success.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Phoenix Children's Academy Mission Statement:

As the premier leader in advance education and early childhood education Phoenix Children's Academy champions children to grow intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically, by cultivating a lifetime love of learning.

Phoenix Children's Academy Core Purpose:

Phoenix Children's Academy is committed to being a responsible neighbor by embracing the community at large. We partner with our families to ensure peace of mind, inspiring children to flourish and grow in an exceptional, interactive environment that nurtures and promotes children's development and well-being through education, discovery and exploration.

Phoenix Children's Academy Promise:

- ◆ **Respect** the rights and dignity of each child as an individual, recognizing that every child has unique abilities and interests;
- ◆ **Prepare** the foundation for a lifetime journey of learning by implementing best practices that exceed standards;
- ◆ **Encourage** children to think for themselves as individuals in an environment of compassion and community culture;
- ◆ **Instill** core values that make a difference in the lives of children;
- ◆ **Provide** children and staff the opportunity to grow and feel their own successes each and every day;
- ◆ **Network** collaboratively and cooperatively with neighborhoods, businesses and agencies...
...and to **never** lose sight of the importance of the bond we are forging together!

Non-Discrimination Statement:

We comply with the American's with Disabilities Act and other applicable regulations pertaining to providing services to individuals with special needs. McDowell School admits qualified students of any race, color, disability, nationality and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, disability, nationality and ethnic origin, creed, religion, or similar factors in administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, or other school administered programs.

Insurance:

We have an extensive safety awareness program along with inspections and regular maintenance of the building's playground and equipment. In spite of the precautions the Company takes to ensure the safety of the children, and school, we respect that accidents may happen. Therefore, we are insured providers which include, but are not limited to, General and primary Child Accident Insurance.

Liability Release and Indemnification:

The School maintains an insurance policy in connection with its liability for any injury, loss or damage that may occur to your child, your child's property or your property as a result of fire, theft, storm or other causes. Acting on behalf of yourself and your child, you hereby waive and agree to release any claims that you, your child, or you and your child's legal representatives and heirs may have against the School or any employee, agent, owner or member of the School, or any successor or assign of the School, arising from or related to any injury, loss or damage to the extent, (a) that such injury, loss or damage is not covered by the insurance policy maintained by the School, or (b) that the monetary amount of such injury, loss or damage exceeds any amount payable under such insurance policy. You also agree to be responsible for and to indemnify and hold harmless the School, any employee, agent, owner or member of the School, and any successor and assign of the School from and against, any and all claims, liabilities, damages, judgments and costs (including attorney's fees and court costs) that may be brought against or incurred by the School, any employee, agent, owner or member of the School or any successor or assign of the School, arising from or related to any act or omission on the part of you or your child. The School is also not responsible for personal items lost, stolen or broken while in our care.

Admissions Requirements:

McDowell School does require entrance examinations for Kindergarten through 8th grade. It may also be required that each child visits the classroom for a Trial Day and a possible teacher assessment.

Entrance Age:

In order to enroll in the preschool program, students must be potty-trained and 2.9 years old.

Faculty:

Our faculty must meet academic and professional requirements. Academic qualifications for classroom teacher include a Bachelor's Degree in Education from a college or university with State certification. All preschool and pre-kindergarten must have 12 Early Childhood Education units (ECE) or a Bachelor's Degree in Child Development or Childhood Education. All faculty members are required to participate in professional development seminars and to be CPR certified.

Licensing:

All schools are fully licensed and inspected on a regular basis to ensure they are in compliance with regulations. The Schools current license is on display in the front lobby.

Department of Social Services:

The Department of Social Services performs such duties as are authorized by state regulations. The Department has the authority to interview children or staff and to inspect and audit child care school records without prior consent. The School shall comply with the Department and we shall make provisions for private interviews with any child (ren) or staff and the examination of all records relating to the operation of the School. Furthermore, the Department has the authority to observe the physical conditions of the child (ren), including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect or inappropriate placement.

Reporting Child Abuse:

In an instance when a McDowell employee has reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, child neglect or child exploitation the school is required under Penal Code Sections 11166 and 11168 to contact Child Protective Services.

Sexual Harassment:

It is McDowell's policy to maintain a learning environment that is free of sexual harassment, a form of sexual discrimination that constitutes differential treatment on the basis of sex. McDowell considers harassment to be a major offense that can result in disciplinary action to the offending employee or student. Each school employee and parents of any student who believes that he/she has been a victim of sexual harassment should bring the complaint to the attention of the administration so that appropriate action may be taken to resolve the complaint. Complaints will be promptly investigated in a way that respects the privacy of those concerned.

Pesticides:

We shall make written pesticide information available to a parent, upon parent's request, at least 48 hours before a pesticide application occurs on the schools grounds. The information will include: The brand, concentration, rate of application, and any use restrictions required by the label of the herbicide or specific pesticide; the date and time of the pesticide application; the pesticide label and the material safety data sheet; and the name and telephone number of the pesticide business licensee and the name of the licensed applicator.

Compliance -- School Policies and Provision of Authorizations and Information:

You agree (a) that you and your child will comply with all policies of the School, as those policies may be amended from time to time, and (b) that you will deliver promptly to the School all signed authorizations and any and all other documents and information, including without limitation, authorizations and information related to the emergency medical care of your child, as may be required by the School from time to time.

Cell Phones/Beepers:

We ask all parents to silence cell phones and/or beepers during attendance at all school functions. Students may not use cellular phones at school before or after class. Cell phones must be kept off and out of site or they will be taken by the teacher and need to be picked up by a parent.

Social Media:

In order to maintain appropriate and professional relationships, staff members at McDowell are not permitted to contact or accept contact from students and/or parents on social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. Please feel free to contact staff members through their school email address or by phone.

Bell Ringing:

Only students in 5th and 8th grade may participate in a very special McDowell tradition at the end of each school year. Fifth and eighth grade promoting students will ring the bell for as many years as they have been in attendance at McDowell. All parents are invited to attend.

Visitors:

McDowell School welcomes family members and visitors to our campus to observe a student's classroom or tour the facility. After an appointment has been made in advance, we require that you first check in to the front office.

Traffic:

Be aware that before and after school traffic in our parking lot is congested. Note the speed limit is 5 mph. Do not leave your car unattended except in designated parking slots. Do not leave your child/children in the car unattended.

Lost and Found:

All items susceptible to being lost should be permanently labeled. Our lost and found cupboard is in the lunch court hallway where unclaimed items are placed. Lost sweaters and other items of uniforms handed in the office will be put on display in the library during parent meetings. All clothing and items left unclaimed will be donated to charity at the end of each month.

SCHOOL HOURS

Scheduled Hours:

McDowell School is open from 7:00am – 6:00pm Monday through Friday offering before and after school childcare. Office hours are 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday through Friday including minimum days.

- Preschool 8:30 am – 11:30am
- Preschool Lunch Bunch 11:30am – 12:30pm
- K-5th 8:30 am – 3:00pm
- Middle School 8:00 am – 3:15pm

Students should not be brought into their classroom or playground earlier than ten (10) minutes prior the beginning of class. Should students arrive earlier than (10) minutes, they will go to childcare and a childcare fee will be charged. Students should be picked up no later than ten (10) minutes after dismissal times unless they are enrolled in the childcare or afterschool program. Should parents fail to pick up their students within the ten (10) minute time frame, students will go to childcare and a childcare fee will be charged.

Inclement Weather / Natural Disaster Policy:

In the case of inclement or natural disaster the school may be closed. Closure will be determined at the discretion of the corporate office, if it is determined that driving conditions for our families and staff are hazardous, or if opening the school is deemed unsafe. There will be no refund or tuition credit for any such closing. In the event of an early closing due to severe weather or other emergencies you agree to make arrangements to pick up your child promptly when notified by the school. A student will not be released until an authorized person has been identified.

Tardiness:

McDowell School encourages that students arrive on time for class. Students who are tardy must be accompanied into the school office and signed in by the parent. The student will be issued a pass to proceed to the classroom.

Arrival Time:

Preschool

Please make every effort to get your child to school on time. Classes for preschool begin at 8:30 a.m. Our learning program is structured so that every minute spent here offers some kind of learning experience. The teachers use the time before class to prepare materials for the maximum benefit of the learning program. If you need to bring your child earlier than 8:20am, our extended day service is available at 7:00am.

All preschoolers must be brought directly to their classroom and signed in and out, with a full legal signature – no initials on the sign-in sheets posted on the outside bulletin boards. State licensing requires a full and legible signature. Please do not ever drop your child off in the parking lot for obvious safety reasons. We request that parents refrain from parking on the north side of Aloma Avenue and from crossing the street with children at both drop-off and pick up times.

K-8th

Students are not permitted in the classroom earlier than 8:20 a.m. for Kindergarten – 5th grade and 7:50 a.m. for middle school. The teachers use the time before class to prepare materials for the maximum benefit of the learning program. Please pull into a parking space and accompany your child into school. You may drop your child off and permit them to walk in on their own if you use the drive through lane. For obvious safety reasons, students must not be permitted to cross the parking lot by themselves. We request that parents refrain from parking on the north side of Aloma Avenue and from crossing the street with children at both drop-off and pick-up times.

Students are to put their backpacks/lunch boxes in their teachers designated outside location. If students arrive before 8:20 a.m. (7:50 for Middle School), they are to be signed in and brought to extended day care in Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) before 8:00 a.m. and to the upper playground after 8:00 a.m.

Dismissal:

Dismissal time for preschoolers not enrolled in Lunch Bunch or Extended Day is 11:30 a.m. Please arrange to pick your child up from the classroom promptly at the end of the session. Parents who are **more than ten minutes** late will find their children with the Extended Day Supervisor and may pay for this service accordingly. Students will not be released to anyone other than parents unless we are authorized to do so in writing and with advance notice to the front desk.

Dismissal time for K-5th grade students is 3:00 p.m. Middle School students will be dismissed at 3:15pm. All students are not permitted to leave the school unaccompanied. Each child who is in extended day has a sign-in/out card in the front office. Once they are signed out at the end of the day, the parent will be issued a 'claim ticket' to pick up their child. Parents who are more than ten minutes late will find their children with the Extended Day Supervisor and may pay for this service accordingly.

If you arrive late and/or pick up early for any reason, you must sign your child in/out at the front office. Students are never released directly from the classroom to leave school before dismissal time. If a student is to be picked up early from school, please send a note so your child's teacher may have the student ready to leave.

We would greatly appreciate if the parents dropping off and picking up their children do not visit with one another in the front office area. Although we love having our parents socialize, it makes it difficult to conduct school business and answer phones with an added noise level. We encourage you to visit in the areas adjacent to the school, but ask that children are carefully supervised and not permitted in the parking lot unattended.

We also ask that the multi-purpose room/library and the playground area not be used for playtime after school, even if parents are there to supervise. These areas are scheduled into our extended day program and need to be used for that purpose only.

Parking:

Please enter the parking lot via the second entrance (entrance closest to the school) and exit through the first entrance (closest to Golden Lantern). The church parking lot is available for our use when our lot is full. Please refrain from parking directly in front of the church reading room building or in front of the trash bin area. Please park in marked parking stalls only and do not park in the handicap spot for the disabled. To help with traffic flow, please do not park in the drop off area at any time.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition Schedule and Policies:

Tuition is to be paid promptly by the 1st of each month. The tuition fees are based on an annual ten month school year (September through June) and are divided into eleven equal installments, for your convenience. Any payments received on or after the fifth of the month will include a **10% late fee**. McDowell School reserves the right to exclude your child/children from school if all fees are not paid by the 5th calendar day of each month.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be a \$30.00 service charge for checks not honored by your bank for any reason. Additionally, parents may be required to pay either by cash or cashier's check for the remainder of the school year.

Information regarding tuition payment, late charges, return check charge, discounts and dismissal is on the Enrollment Contract.

Adjustments in Tuition:

Adjustments will **not** be allowed for absences due to travel or vacations. If illness requires hospitalization or a period of home recuperation extending three weeks or more, two-thirds of the tuition will be charged to hold a spot in the class.

Early Withdrawal:

In the event that you need to withdrawal your child from school before the end of the year, **written notice is required 120 school days in advance of the withdrawal date**. You will be obligated to pay for those 120 school days. Unfortunately, we are unable to refund tuition for withdrawals made after February 1st of the current school year.

Holiday Closings:

Holidays include but are not limited to: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, The Day after Thanksgiving (Family Day) and Christmas Day.

If a holiday falls on a weekend, we will observe the holiday either on the preceding Friday or the following Monday. Tuition cost is based on these holidays and therefore, are not reduced for holiday weeks. Holidays differ between locations and states; the list above reflects consistent holidays only.

Other Closings:

School may be closed during the specified days other than the Holiday closings for such events as Teacher Training ('In Service Days'). Please see your School Director or reference the School Annual Calendar for specific dates your school will be closed.

Extended Day:

Extended care is available to all enrolled families beginning at 7:00am and after school until 6:00pm weekdays. Advance payment is required for this service and is payable at the beginning of each month with tuition for full time care. At McDowell, we offer an hourly rate of \$15.00 for those families that need that extra "hour or so" each month. This will be billed at the end of each month.

All students who remain on campus after 6:00pm will be charged \$1.00 per minute (per child) until picked up. *If policy is mistreated additional applicable charges will be applied.

When someone other than the parents/guardian will be picking up the student, the parents/guardian must complete the Authorized After School Pick-Up Form, which can be obtained at the front office. The authorized after school pick-up individual will be required to provide identification in order to pick up that student.

COMMUNICATION

Communication:

McDowell School recognizes that effective communication between parents, teachers and staff is essential. The main manner of communication with parents is email and our website located at www.mcdowellschool.org. It contains the school calendar and other vital information. Our Sea Lion Journal is emailed three times a year to parents. It contains a wide variety of information regarding classroom activities, important dates to remember, and events that will be forthcoming. It is the responsibility of each parent to read these newsletters to keep informed of the school's activities.

Weekly emails are sent every Friday from the office as well as K-8th teachers. Another important form of communication is you. We know that there are times when a parent needs more clarification on a situation, to draw attention to a special need of the student, or voice a concern that needs to be addressed. We are here to render the best service and provide an outstanding education for your child. Do not hesitate to contact us. Please follow the format below to best communicate your needs:

- See the classroom teacher or the specialist involved for concerns regarding your child and day-to-day issues in behavior or curriculum.
- If satisfactory results are not obtained, feel free to see the Preschool Director or Principal. The entire faculty involved will be required to provide input, and the parent/guardian will be contacted within 48 hours. Thereafter, the issue will be monitored between school and home every two weeks until a very satisfactory outcome has been achieved.
- If results are still not satisfactory, please see the Principal

Parents are welcome to observe in the classroom at any time throughout the year. Please make arrangements with the front office so that a convenient time can be chosen. On the day of your observation, please check in at the front desk. While in the classroom, please be aware that the teacher will be busy with his/her lesson and, in most cases will not be available to talk with you at that time.

Conferences:

Individual parent-teacher conferences are welcome throughout the year and parents should feel free to request these. Conferences concerning academic and/or discipline problems are scheduled through the school office. An administrator will be in attendance at each conference.

If you need to communicate with your child's teacher, you may phone the office to arrange for an appointment, send a note or email the teacher.

Formal parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled for both preschool and K-8 students. Preschool conferences are scheduled after the teacher has completed your child's developmental assessment so he/she can share the results with you. K-8th conferences are scheduled in October and March. Specific dates can be found on our school calendar, newsletters and on parent bulletin boards.

Observation Hall:

Preschool parents are encouraged to use our observation hall at any time during the school day. The one-way windows are ideal for observing your preschool child. Do keep in mind that this hall is for **parents and staff only**. Please leave toddlers at home. Please remember to check in at the front office.

CURRICULUM

McDowell School provides a balance of educational experiences, which actively involves each child in the learning process in traditionally structured and self-contained classrooms. Literacy-based weekly and monthly units form the framework for learning throughout subject areas, art activities and field trips.

Specialty Classes:

Music

Students attend once per week for forty-five minutes each session for K through 8th grade. Your child will learn music vocabulary, beat, interpretation, and rhythm. He/she will participate in movement, learn music appreciation and be introduced to instruments. Teachers emphasize your child's performance, extensive singing skills, and participating in-group performances.

Physical Education

Students attend one to four times per week for thirty to forty-five minutes each session for Preschool through 8th grade. Fine motor skills are developed as well as continued gross motor development. Your child's skills will progress through game development, using increased motor control and expansion of the sports programs.

Spanish

Students attend two to three time per week for thirty to forty-five minutes each session for K through 8th grade. Our teacher will develop your child's language pronunciation, vocabulary, understanding of the language and culture, greetings, alphabet, numbers, calendar use, and classroom object identification. Your child will examine daily resources and multimedia.

Computers

Students attend one, two, and three times per week for thirty to forty-five minutes each session for Pre-K through 8th grade. Your child learns the use of hardware, software, keyboard skills, games, and advance programs. Teachers concentrate on developing your child's independent use, enthusiasm, applications, individual and group projects. Your child will also learn to assemble information for content development and integration with other subjects.

Character Education / Flag Ceremony:

Manners, etiquette, and character development are an integral part of our school. All teachers stress manners throughout the day in their classrooms beginning with "please" and "thank you" and holding doors in preschool and continuing on with daily handshakes, and character education lessons in K-8. Cotillion classes begin in 4th grade. We participate in school-wide community service opportunities each year. We focus on one character trait per month throughout the year and honor those students that stand out each month at our Flag Ceremonies. Parents are encouraged to attend these monthly ceremonies where character standouts are presented as well as "caught being good" Super Sea Lion awards.

Preschool Developmental Assessment:

All preschool children will be given our developmental assessment approximately two weeks after school opens. This assessment will be administered by the child's teacher who will discuss the initial results with the parents at the assigned conference time in December. This assessment will not be offered to children who are enrolled after January 31st. Students in our 4 year and Early Kindergarten programs will additionally be assessed using the Educational Records Bureau's Children's Progress

Assessment (CPAA). This is an interactive and adaptive computer based assessment that aides our teachers in individualizing our instruction to best meet your child's needs (www.childrensprogress.com). Reassessments are given to all preschool students in the late spring with final report given to the parents prior to the end of the school year.

K-8 Achievement Tests:

All students are tested each spring to assess their level of academic achievement. All students are expected to be in school every day during testing. Parental cooperation is necessary to insure each student is on time and well rested for each test day.

Preschool Share Days:

Preschool students will be assigned a "Share Day" when they can bring acceptable toys, such as dolls, teddy bears, books, etc., to school. Please leave toy weapons and toys with sharp edges at home.

The only time pets are allowed on campus is for share day. It must first be approved by the teacher after all allergies have been taken into consideration, and ALWAYS on a leash or in a cage. Dogs and cats are not permitted to walk on campus during drop off or pick up, even if on a leash.

Books and Supplies:

The school will supply each student with basic items at the beginning of the school year. Your child may bring a water bottle, with the child's name written on it, to keep in their cubby.

Hard-covered textbooks are the property of the school. Students are expected to take proper care of the textbooks and return them at the end of the school year. If texts are lost or excessively damaged, a charge will be assessed.

Field Trips:

Field trips and sporting events are planned by our staff as an enriching part of our program. Therefore, it is often necessary to have parent participation to help drive small groups of students. All parent drivers must complete the required background check. Sign-up sheets for parent drivers are posted on the Parent Bulletin Board in each classroom. All students must have the required school field trip permission form signed by a parent, allowing them to participate in the trip or they will not be allowed to attend.

Please note that State law requires that all children and adults must be in seat belts when riding in a car. Children under six years of age or weighing less than sixty pounds must use car seats. No children are allowed to ride in the front seat.

Children whose Emergency Forms are not filed in our office will be excluded from leaving the school on field trips or sporting events. Due to insurance limitations and our desire to maintain a safe environment for those enrolled here, siblings, **without exception**, must be excluded from all field trips even if a parent is driving. Parents who chaperone trips are there to help the teacher monitor student behavior.

Students attending field trips are to leave with their class and return with their class to the school at the conclusion of the trip. Arrangements may not be made to meet their class at the field trip location nor may students be dismissed from the field trip prior to its return to the school.

If you choose to not have your child participate in a field trip, it is necessary to notify the teacher and to keep your child home on the day of the field trip.

Homework:

When homework is assigned by a teacher, parents are asked to share in the responsibility for the success of the homework by:

1. Providing your child with a quiet place and adequate time to do homework.
2. Encouraging the child to do his own work.
3. Aiding your child with homework and projects when needed.
4. Writing a note to the teacher when your child needed significant help or did not understand the concept/assignment.
5. Encouraging good study habits and completion of assignments.

Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday in grades K-8th. This does not include class work that a student did not complete and needs to take home that evening. Any unfinished homework or class work from the previous day is to be done at recess. APPROXIMATE time spent on homework per night is listed below.

Kindergarten: 20 minutes

Fourth: 45-60 minutes

First: 30 minutes

Fifth: 60-90 minutes

Second: 30-45 minutes

Middle School: 90 minutes

Third: 45 minutes

Required Reading: We additionally require all students to read for 20 minutes nightly.

Absences:

Homework and daily work for K-8th grade students can be requested for the day(s) absent if the request is called in **before 9:30 a.m.** It is the responsibility of the individual student and parent to request missed lessons and assignments. For an absence due to illness, every day the child has missed, he/she will receive one day to make up any missed work.

Pre-Planned or Extended Absence:

K-8 families are strongly discouraged from taking children out of school for family vacations or trips. The McDowell School calendar is published well in advance so that parents and students can make plans that do not interfere with school time. It is our experience that removing a child from class for an extended period of time has an adverse effect on academic progress.

However, in the event of a pre-planned extended absence, arrangements must be made **at least one week** in advance with the teacher and Principal to help assess the impact of the extended absence on the student's progress. It is the student's responsibility to complete all work assigned and to make sure all missed assignments are made up. In order to receive full credit for assignments, work must be presented on the first day upon returning to school. Tests or quizzes missed must be made-up **within the first week**. Any work not made-up in the allotted time will result in a "zero" grade.

FOOD POLICY

Lunches:

McDowell School offers a catered hot lunch program for all full day students on Monday through Friday. A monthly menu will be available on line or at the front desk with the payment due date. We will not be held responsible for any late payments or missed meals.

For parents of full time students who provide sack lunches and beverages for their child/children, California state code requires that lunches provided by parents include the following:

- A dairy product (please take appropriate measures to keep dairy products cool)
- A protein food, such as lean meat, fish, poultry, egg, cheese, etc.
- Bread
- Fruit or Vegetables

Students are expected to display good table manners and to clean up the area where they ate. Any student that does not display appropriate behavior at the lunch table will be removed.

Playground and lunch time is for students to build social skills. Parents are welcome to occasionally sign out their child and treat them to lunch or drop off a lunch. Please do not send soda, ice cream, or candy.

Nutrition:

Preschool through 8th grade students should bring their own nutritious snacks, which may be consumed at a time designated by the teacher, typically at the a.m. recess break/snack time. Keep in mind, recess is only 15 minutes in length. Snacks should be a size that can be finished within this time. Extended day for Preschool-8th grade students may bring an afternoon snack for 3:30pm snack time. Please refrain from sending snacks that are loaded with sugar.

Birthdays:

McDowell School recognizes that birthdays are important to children. Birthdays are celebrated before the end of the day or during morning recess, with the teacher's approval. Parents are welcome to attend and should notify the teacher if a snack will be brought to celebrate the birthday. Please do not bring any gifts, goodie bags, and no birthday cake with candles.

Invitations to parties may not be distributed at school. You may bring stamped envelopes to the front office and we will address and mail them for you.

UNIFORM POLICY

Preschool:

We agree with the philosophy that recognizes that “children’s work is their play”. Children learn through play and at times this entails getting a little messy. Therefore, we request that you send your child to school in play clothes. All outer clothing (sweaters, jackets, etc.) should be labeled with both first and last names.

We require that all children be daytime potty trained. They need to wear the appropriate attire to care for their own toilet needs (**no pull-ups**). Children in the 3 year old preschool classes should bring a change of clothing, labeled and in a plastic bag, at the beginning of the school year in case of “accidents”. These clothes can stay in your child’s cubby and be replenished if ever used. With the type of activities we offer, both indoors and out, the safest type of shoe is rubber soled (tennis shoes, etc.). Thongs and sandals are not permitted for safety reasons.

Elementary and Middle School:

Appropriate attire can be conducive to creating the best possible learning environment. All of the students at our campus are expected to abide by the McDowell Uniform Policy.

Dennis Uniforms email address is at <http://www.dennisuniform.com>. Our nearest store is at 22825 Savi Ranch Parkway, #G, Yorba Linda, CA 92887. The phone number is 714-637-8928.

Uniforms must be kept in good, clean condition. Shirts must always be tucked in. All outer wear (jackets and sweaters) must be McDowell logo wear purchased from Dennis and should be labeled. All boys and girls are to wear belts with uniform pants and shorts that have belt loops.

Turtlenecks and other long sleeve shirts may not be worn under the school uniform blouses or shirts. Plain white undershirts may be worn. Girls may not wear leggings or stretch pants under their uniform. The girls may wear Dennis bicycle shorts under their skirts and jumpers. They are permitted to wear white or blue tights with their jumpers or skirts. Long sleeve shirts and pants, for both boys and girls, are available for the cooler months.

Shoes must be appropriate for playground safety. Shoes are to have Velcro, tie, buckle or zipper. They must have a rubber sole and be closed toed. Tennis/Athletic shoes are highly recommended. All students are to wear socks as part of their uniform. Boots, slip-ons, and shoes with retractable wheels are not allowed.

Dangling earrings or other jewelry that would be a safety hazard may not be worn. Makeup is not allowed. Clear or pale pink nail polish may be worn, but must be kept neatly maintained.

Hair styles that are considered extreme are out of place in our environment. Hair must be clean and have a tidy, well groomed, conservative appearance at all times. **Boys’ hair must be shorter than the top of shirt collars, and may not hang over the top of the ears.** Pony tails on boys are not acceptable. Unnatural hair colors are not acceptable on boys or girls. **Only natural colors of hair are allowed.** All hair styling should be done at home. Mousse, gel or hairspray is not allowed at school. Parents are expected to immediately correct unacceptable hair styles. Girls head gear should be colors that are compatible with the uniform. Head scarves whose intent is to hold the hair back may not be worn if longer than collar length.

Students are to wear tennis/athletic shoes on physical education days. Girls who wear jumpers or skirts on physical education days must wear shorts underneath their clothes.

All students are asked to maintain these standards without prompting by the school. The first infraction of the dress or hair code will result in a note home that will require a signature by the parents and is then returned to school. If the infraction is repeated, the parent will be requested to bring proper attire for the student to change into and/or given a due date for the hair style to change.

Non-Uniforms Days:

Special days are designated throughout the school year to give the students a break from their school uniforms. In most cases, non-uniform days are in recognition of a special day or holiday. Students are expected to wear neat, attractive play clothes without holes. For girls: tops with spaghetti straps or bare midriffs are not acceptable. For boys: baggy pants, cut-offs or pants worn very low are not appropriate. Also not acceptable are shirts with inappropriate lettering/logos. It is our goal for our students to dress in a style that is appropriate for a school setting. Additional themed spirit days are voted in by the Student Government throughout the year.

School Spirit Day is the **last Friday of the month** (except September, December & June). Students are asked to wear their red school spirit shirts that can be purchased from PSG.

SICK POLICY

The school has a responsibility to all parents and students to maintain strict standards regarding attendance at school if a student is ill. Should a student become ill at school, the student's parents or guardian will be notified and asked to arrange to pick up the student within (1) hour. In the event you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts on your emergency card will be notified. We will make your child as comfortable as possible until someone arrives to pick him/her up.

In addition, your child must be free of all of these specified symptoms for at least **24** hours before they can be admitted back into McDowell School. These symptoms are as follows:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting within the previous 24-hour period
- Diarrhea within the previous 24-hour period
- A heavy nasal discharge indicative of infection
- A constant cough or sore throat
- Fussy, cranky and generally not himself/herself
- A skin rash
- Head lice (or nits)
- Symptoms of a communicative disease

Following an illness, a child may return to school once he/she has either been seen by a doctor or it has been determined that the illness is not contagious. A doctor's clearance may be requested, as necessary.

NOTIFY THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD HAS A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SUCH AS MUMPS, CHICKEN POX, LICE CONJUNCTIVITIS, STREP THROAT, ANY RASH, ETC.

Medication:

State laws require that before any medicine can be dispensed to a student a release form must be completed. These release forms are located in the front office. Each time the prescription is renewed or the dosage is change, a new form must complete.

- Give medications directly to the front Office Manager
- Prescription drugs must be sent in the original container with the prescription intact.
- Do not send any medicine (including vitamins and cough drops) in the student's lunch box or back-pack
- Whenever possible the student's medication dosage should be administered during non-school hours.
- Non-prescription drugs must be in their original container and will be administered according to the instructions on the completed release form.

Injury / Incident Report:

Students may occasionally receive bumps, bruises, scrapes, or have an encounter of which parents need to be informed. In these instances, an Ouch Report will be sent home with the student. Parents will receive a white copy and the yellow copy will be filed in the child's cumulative file.

Health and Immunization Requirements:

Preschool

In accordance with the requirements of the State Department of Health Services, all health forms must be in our school files. The Physician's Report must be filled out completely, including the child's immunization history, and returned before the first day of school attendance. Immunization requirements are as follows:

DPT	(Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis) - minimum 4 doses
POLIO	(OPV or IPV) - minimum 3 doses
MMR	1 dose given after first birthday
HEPb	(Hepatitis B) - 3 doses
HIB	1 dose must be on or after the first birthday regardless of any doses received earlier.
VARICELLA	(Chickenpox) 1 dose. If child has had the chickenpox disease, the doctor must note it on the immunization card.

It is the parent's responsibility to make certain that their child's immunizations are up to date **before** entering public and private schools. Information regarding free clinics is available through the Orange County Health Care Agency. There are additional forms required to be completed prior to your child's first day of school.

K-8:

California law requires that all children enrolled in public and private schools be immunized against the vaccine-preventable diseases shown below.

DPT	(Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis) – 5 doses at any age, but 4 meets requirements if at least one was given after 4 th birthday
POLIO	(OPV or IPV) – 4 doses, but 3 meets requirements if at least one was given after 4 th birthday
MMR	2 doses given after first birthday (both given after first birthday)
HEPb	(Hepatitis B) - 3 doses
VARICELLA	(Chicken Pox) 1 dose required for Kindergarten entry
TB	Test administered before entering Kindergarten

In the event that these requirements are not met, your child may be excluded from school in accordance with state law.

Another requirement is that your child has a health check-up sometime in the eighteen months prior to entering first grade. This is a Child Health and Disability Prevention requirement (CHDP).

In addition, for **all seventh grade students**, proof is required of a hepatitis B series and a second measles, mumps and rubella vaccination.

All students enrolled in school must have Identification and Emergency Form and a Medical Authorization on file on the first day of attendance. It is extremely important that all this information be kept updated. If, at any time during the school year, there should be a change of information on the forms, please notify the school **immediately**. Failure to keep the school informed could mean a loss of precious minutes at the time of emergency.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our Approach to Discipline:

One of our significant goals is to foster a warm and caring environment for our students. We find that our positive approach toward problem-solving based on trust and respect builds values essential to healthy human interaction.

Since our curriculum is full of enriching and new activities which are continually presented to stimulate the interest of eager young minds, we seldom see unacceptable behavior. We use praise, verbally recognizing and appreciating behavior that is acceptable. Other children will model their behavior after a child receiving a recognition so they, too, may gain recognition. Teachers sometimes use stickers or stamps as tokens or rewards for acceptable behavior. When the behavior of an entire class needs improvement, the teacher will set up a system whereby the class may earn points for a reward.

If a child's behavior infringes on the rights or health and safety of another child, this is explained and the child is shown an appropriate alternative. If a child continues to display unacceptable behavior, he/she is taken away from the activity in which the class is engaged and is required to sit in the classroom away from the group for a short period of time.

Consequences:

Preschool

Teachers, Aides and Extended Day Supervisors will give warnings and reminders to children having behavior problems. We will work with them to correct their behavior. At times it is necessary for a child to be removed from the situation. The teacher/supervisor will talk to the child about his/her behavior and how to make better choices next time. If there is any physically aggressive behavior, the child will be brought to the front office. Parents will be contacted to discuss the issue. In extreme instances, outside professional help may be required.

K-8

Teachers will handle discipline within their own individual classrooms. They will work with students to correct their behavior and make better choices. After the second incident, parents will be notified of the infraction. If there continues to be behavioral problems, parents will be asked to attend a conference with the teacher and Principal. Some behaviors, such as any physical aggression, foul language and disrespect toward a supervisor result in an immediate trip to the Principal's office, and/or a parent conference. Parents will be notified of unacceptable behavior through pink slips, citizen reports, and/or phone calls from the teacher or Principal.

Suspension:

If, in the judgment of the School Director or designee, your child's behavior interferes with the school staff providing a safe and nurturing program, the school will contact you to remove your child for the remainder of the school day. McDowell will require that the child be picked up within 1 hour of being notified. You will be responsible for daily tuition for that day. Re-admission of your child to the program will be discussed at the time of the suspension.

PARENT SUPPORT GROUP (PSG)

WHO is the PSG?

Parents are as important as support teams. We consider parent support a natural extension of our school's functions. The purpose of our Parent Support Group (PSG) is to provide fun social activities/events for the benefit of the students and teachers working at McDowell School. They achieve this through various fundraising opportunities.

WHY should you consider joining PSG?

You can help plan fun events for our children, their families, and teachers. All parents are invited to participate but it is not mandatory. Whether you can help a little or help a bunch, your time and talents will always be appreciated.

WHEN does the PSG meet?

The PSG will meet on first or second Friday of each month at 9:00am. Meetings last approximately one hour.

WHERE does the PSG meet?

PSG meetings are conducted at the school multi-purpose room.

HOW does PSG achieve its goals?

PSG contributes to the school by organizing fundraising event using a committee of volunteers.

Parent Volunteers:

For any adult who volunteers as a field trip driver, chaperone, classroom volunteer, room parent and any other individuals that have contact with students in a school related capacity must have a complete background check each year. Paperwork is sent home each July with your welcome packet.

McDowell School continually reviews its practices and procedures regarding providing a safe and nurturing environment for our children. We believe that contact and individualized relationships between students and staff are a healthy and beneficial part of the learning and development process for students. At the same time, protection of students' personal welfare is the highest priority at our school.

CAMP McDOWELL

Preschool:

Our Preschoolers will begin their day attending our three hour learning program from 8:30 to 11:30am with lunchtime following from 11:30am to 12:30pm. Preschool campers need to bring a morning snack and lunch. If staying for the afternoon camp, they will also need an afternoon snack and waterplay gear (towel, bathing suit, sunscreen and optional water shoes). Preschool campers must be 2.9 years old and potty-trained.

During the summer camp hours, the campers will be engaged in a wide variety of activities to capture their imagination and introduce them to exciting new skills, including academic skills, literature, science, music/movement, and art. This program runs from 8:30am to 3:30pm. Included in the afternoon is a nap option from 1:00-3:00pm.

If staying for optional nap program, please provide a labeled bag with a fitted crib sheet, blanket and a small pillow for your preschool camper.

K-8:

Camp McDowell unlocks the doors to adventure, discovery and imagination. Everyday overflows with a mix of exploration, academic enrichment, fun filled games, trips, learning activities, and athletic events all in a safe, secure and nurturing environment from 8:30am – 3:30pm. Camp McDowell runs for 10 weeks, from June through August. Students attending camp also have the option of participating in before and/or after school extended care programs, ensuring that they are in a loving and safe environment from 7:00am to 6:00pm.

Mini Camps:

Check out our Mini Camps! Choose from a variety of exciting activities and design a summer that is right for your child/children. Our programs promote a broad range of mental, physical, aesthetic, social and emotional skills and interests. Mini Camps are week-long sessions that you can either add on to the main camp program or enroll in independently from our other camps. Mini Camps are open to the community. Your child does not need to attend McDowell School nor be enrolled in the main camp.

Each camp will run Monday-Friday from 8:30-11:30am, unless noted. For more information, visit or call us now to secure you child a spot in Camp McDowell!