

MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

# PARENT HANDBOOK

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PRE-K4 TO 5TH GRADE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM LAUNCH INTO LEARNING

### OUR MISSION

The mission of MCM (Mississippi Children's Museum) is to create unparalleled experiences to inspire excellence and a lifelong joy of learning.

### INFORMATION

Mississippi Children's Museum  
2145 Museum Blvd, Jackson, MS 39202  
Museum's mainline - 601-981-5469

### LAUNCH GOOGLE VOICE CALL/TEXT LINE

**662-775-0050** - use this number first for real time communication.

### LEARNING EXPERIENCES TEAM

**Patti Reiss** - patti@mcm.ms | **Office line** - 601-709-8967  
**Elizabeth Ogle** - elizabeth@mcm.ms | **Office line** - 601-709-8350  
**Natascha Kirkland** - natascha@mcm.ms  
**Ellen Litton** - ellen@mcm.ms

*To contact all Learning Experiences team members, use the Google Voice number to call or text at any time.*

*While MCM is handicap accessible for persons with disabilities, MCM staff is not certified to manage the special needs of children with physical impairments, limitations, or disabilities. Any questions related to children with special needs, please contact the MCM Director of Learning Experiences, **Patti Reiss at patti@mcm.ms.***

# IMPORTANT DATE ITEMS

MCM follows all JPS calendar dates from **Monday, July 28, 2025 to Friday, May 22, 2026** at time of registration. Any later calendar changes reflected by JPS will be reflected later by MCM.

If there is an event that causes virtual learning, MCM will evaluate the safety of staff and offer drop off service if possible.

MCM has three full staff meetings each year - MCM asks that for long term safety and training you pick up your children close to 5pm these three days. These dates could change if the loaning museum changes exhibit dates. Parents will be notified if an early pick-up day changes.

**Thursday, November 20th**  
**Thursday, February 26th**  
**Thursday, May 21st**

MCM will host two afterschool family nights with dinner, please plan to attend:  
**Tuesday, October 21st - Lights on Afterschool Open House**  
**Thursday, April 23rd - Launch into Learning Awards' Night**

## EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILDREN

We want all people at MCM to learn and grow while on the campus. This includes yourself, fellow children, MCM staff, volunteers, and visitors. MCM cannot allow behavior that compromises the safety or integrity of the children and adults that make up the museum family.

1. We show respect.
  - a. Treat other people politely.
  - b. Use our words to express our feelings.
  - c. Respect others' personal space and boundaries.
  - d. Listen to the adults who are trying to keep us safe and happy.
  - e. Use good manners.
2. We are responsible.
  - a. Be honest.
  - b. Be reliable.
  - c. Be accountable for our words and actions.
  - d. Treat books and supplies as instructed to do so.
  - e. Have the courage to do the right thing.
3. We act safely.
  - a. Think before I act.

- b. Cooperate.
  - c. Play by the rules.
  - d. Take turns.
  - e. Walking is always the speed limit.
  - f. Keep hands, feet, and other belongings to ourselves.
4. We are caring.
- a. Be kind.
  - b. Share.
  - c. Listen to others.
  - d. Forgive others.
  - e. Encourage others.

## **FEES AND CANCELATIONS**

### **LAUNCH INTO LEARNING COSTS**

#### ***Spring 2025***

- There is a registration fee for the 2025-2026 school year at \$100.00 per child. This secures your "seat on the bus" for 2025-2026.
- This fee is non-refundable if you later choose not to continue after school service when tuition is due on Friday, July 25, 2025.

#### ***July 2025-May 2026***

- Monthly Tuition rate is \$390.00 without discount, and \$351.00 with Membership discount. There are 5 months in each semester.
- Semester Tuition rate is \$1,755.00/person without discount, and \$1,579.50/person with Membership discount. The semester rate is a 10% savings vs. paying monthly. The semester rate will only be available for July's tuition and January's tuition.
- Late Pick Up fees are \$1.00 per minute per child with a max of \$30.00 on any given day.
- Fees are totaled monthly and billed individually to families.
- Any August payments not made by Friday, July 25, 2025, could result in forfeiture of service.
- All payments July - May not completed by the due date (first Friday of the month) will have an added \$25.00 late fee that will increase weekly in \$25.00 increments.

### **PAYMENT PARTICULARS**

- All Launch into Learning payments can be paid by:
  - Cash in person at MCM.
  - Check in person at MCM.
  - Credit card through the website, in person, or over the phone, all credit card payments will have a 4% credit card fee.
- Families will be alerted of any awarded funds in the future, and this could lower future tuition payments.
- Parents are welcome to contact MCM with alternatives before a payment is missed to work out options between the family and MCM.

### **CANCELATION FOR LAUNCH INTO LEARNING SERVICE**

- Prior to 2 weeks before scheduled start date - full refund of paid tuition.

- Any cancellations outside of these parameters could result in denial of service in future years
- After the program's start, tuition refund prorated with an addition of 2 weeks from the last service.
  - For families on the monthly payment or for all families at semester breaks this amount equates to \$195.00
  - For families on the semester payment plan the amount will be calculated by number of dates of service plus 10 days and the remaining refund issued by original method of payment.

## **ATTIRE AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

- We understand most children will be in school uniform.
- Some activities and crafts may involve washable paints or materials that may soil clothes.
- Children should wear tennis shoes or closed toe closed back shoes with rubber soles; for the safety of our children, flip flops and shoes with open toes or backs are discouraged.
- Children who have activities and lessons away from MCM that require a change of clothes should be able to change into their own uniform independently.
- Adults may bring a uniform at time of pick-up and change the child themselves.
- Children should bring a reusable water bottle from home. Please make sure NAMES are on water bottles and other personal belongings.
- If your child brought nonelectrical items to aid with their learning experiences to school- they will be stored when not in use at MCM. No personal, school issued items, or projects will be used at MCM.
- If your child brings any toys, sports equipment, or other personal items from home, they will be stored in the child's bookbag at MCM. No personal items will be used at MCM.
- MCM recommends a change of clothes in a child's backpack in case of spills or accidents. Please label in a Ziploc specific to "MCM" spare clothes.
- Food, drink, and gum chewing are not allowed in the museum exhibit areas. All eating takes place in the Red Rocket Cafe area and snack areas at specific times.
- MCM provides a nutritious snack for all afterschool children.
- Cell phones, tablets, smart watches, and laptops - personal or school issued, should always be stored in a backpack/zippered case. Children are not allowed to utilize these devices for any reason while at MCM. If an adult notices a device, the child will be instructed to take it to the front desk for safety.
- Lost and Found items will be cycled through regularly. Items left after display period will be rehomed. Please check clothing racks/cubbies daily for lost items.
- Any extra personal items other than their bookbags including but not limited to sports bags, projects, and musical instruments, should be kept with the child while at MCM or stored in an approved MCM location and taken home daily.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- Children must have a medical information form on file with the MCM that names individuals to be contacted in the case of an emergency and lists any physical limitations, religious exemptions, impairments, and medications your child may be taking.
- Please notify the MCM Director of Learning Experiences, Patti Reiss, if your child is taking any medication that might affect his/her behavior at the museum.
- The MCM staff does not dispense any medication. If your child has a condition (allergies, asthma) that could need lifesaving medication, please ask MCM before registration.

- In the case that your child has any food allergies, please document that on the Emergency Information forms and be specific as possible. It is helpful to indicate if your child will be bringing all their own food to MCM.
- Child kept health devices such as epi-pens or inhalers will need to be kept in the child's bookbag while at the MCM.
- Parents of children with health devices will be reminded quarterly to ensure they are up to date and available if the need arises.
- In case of an accident or injury that requires first aid, an accident report will be completed, and parents will be notified.
- In case of an accident or injury that requires emergency service attention, 911 will be called and emergency contacts will be notified. MCM will follow the suggestions of first responders until the parents can arrive or be notified if the child has left MCM grounds in an ambulance for any reason.
- Children should not attend aftercare if they have an unexplained rash, vomiting, diarrhea, discharge from the eyes or ears, or any symptoms that are cause for concern to MCM staff. A parent will be called to pick up their child at once if MCM staff notices any of above-mentioned symptoms or others.
- Please notify the team at the museum or specifically the MCM Director of Learning Experiences, Patti Reiss, if your child has been exposed to any germs or communicable conditions that could be shared with other children or staff members.

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

- MCM uses phone, email, and SMS messaging (Google Voice) to communicate with parents as needed.
- MCM uses internal safety procedures that staff are trained on for the following scenarios:
  - Fire
  - Inclement weather
  - Suspicious/Unknown persons
  - Persons carrying weapons in and out of uniform (including but not limited to: Police, FBI, Fire Marshall, Park Rangers)
  - Injuries and unexpected incidents
  - Children separated from their group.
- Our staff team and the children will practice emergency drills at least twice a year.
- In case of an emergency that requires evacuation - caregivers will be first notified through the SMS messaging service and emergency services will be utilized to transport children.
- Our 1-mile evacuation spot is 2185 Riverside Drive, Jackson, MS - MS Museum of Natural Science
- Our 5-mile evacuation spot is 200 E County Line Rd, Ridgeland, MS - Northpark Mall

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

- MCM's Launch into Learning program aims to serve families that need care for their children.
- If your child will NOT be riding the bus with MCM please utilize the Google Voice number to alert MCM staff of student absences.
- At arrival and departure, the KidCheck app is used with a MCM iPad to admit and dismiss children.

- If your child will be going home with someone other than previously noted on registration paperwork, please send a signed note or email identifying the individual that will be picking up along with the time they will be taking your child. Please advise anyone picking up your child that the MCM may request photo identification at the time of pick-up.
- MCM cannot be responsible for extra belongings. Please make sure that the person picking up your child knows how to collect all the child's belongings.
- If you have an extraordinary circumstance around pick-up, please call MCM at 601-981-5469 and leave a message or directly contact using Google Voice or the Learning Experiences team via email.
- Please do not message each day to alert MCM staff of your arrival for pick-up. We will call for student dismissal when we see the person responsible for pick-up.
- If you have not picked up your child and not communicated an extenuating circumstance after the program ends, the contacts provided on the child's registration form will be called by an MCM staff member.
- Please adhere to MCM clothing and conduct policy when dropping off or picking up your child/children from after school.
- MCM has museum and visitor guidelines and rules, we ask all to follow - regarding behaviors on the campus - <https://mschildrensmuseum.org/visitor-info/>
- MCM believes fed children are happy children. Snack is the first activity students will have once arriving at MCM. Students can choose two MCM provided snacks or eat a snack brought from home. Examples of MCM provided snack choices are yogurt, apple sauce, diced peaches, apples, bananas, graham crackers, saltine crackers, Goldfish crackers, mozzarella cheese sticks, etc. These options are due to availability; however, most options are available each day. Water is available for children to drink during snack time.

## TRANSPORTATION

Mississippi Children's Museum provides transportation to the museum from school for your child following the known JPS schedule. MCM will try to accommodate same-day changes in transportation. We ask for understanding in sudden changes of inclement weather.

The following are rules and guidelines that all children must follow when transportation is provided:

- Children are to always remain seated.
- Children are encouraged to talk quietly with their seat partners. We understand this is a social part of their day; however, we do discourage loud/screaming voices and noises.
- Children are reminded that there is no food or drinks allowed during travel to ensure safety.
- Children are not allowed to get out of their seat while the bus is in operation. In case of an emergency, they may comply with the MCM Staff or driver's directions to do so.
- There is a mobile phone on the buses for emergency calls only.
- If there is a behavior concern or safety concern, the MCM Staff will remind children of behavior requirements, and the driver will relay the information back to the Directors and may then be relayed to the parent/legal guardian if necessary.
- If behavior concerns continue with a child, transportation will be refused for that child to ensure the safety of all passengers on the buses.
- Mississippi Children's Museum has the right to refuse transportation for your child with limited notice.

- Safety is our priority, and we will make every effort to ensure your child will arrive at the museum safely.
- Families should notify Mississippi Children’s Museum of any changes for transportation and give ample time to meet these changes.
- At times children may forget or leave belongings at school, the bus will not have time to return to the school to collect them.
- Children receiving two or more bus infractions within a biweekly behavior period will be suspended from MCM provided transportation for one school day following the third infraction.
- If the behavior continues, the child may be asked to stay home with no refund of fees.

## DISCIPLINE

- The MCM staff believes in positive, affirming discipline that allows for a personally enriching experience. We understand children are learning and developing. Our goal is to focus on developing the whole child through positive and consistent interactions.
- Museum staff and counselors will use positive language and reinforcement to help guide a child to make safe, positive choices as he/she explores the environment and interacts with peers. Our museum leaders and counselors are ready to work with parents to make sure their child feels nurtured and encouraged in the MCM environment.
- MCM will send home biweekly behavior reports for all children. Group counselors will complete daily reports for all children to determine behavior areas that need work.
- Daily behavior reports and above and beyond behaviors determine Group of the Week status and awards including Rocky flag bearer, dance party, and treasure box.
- Consistent “needs work” behaviors may result in parent/staff conferences to improve behavior.
  - Disciplinary actions taken will include:
    - A warning
    - A constructive time-out
    - Meeting with Launch Leadership
    - Parent consultation at the end of the day
- If a child is a constant disruption in the museum and is not responding to the museum leaders’ guidance, the MCM Director of Learning Experiences, Patti Reiss, will call a parent to discuss alternate options. If the behavior continues, the child may be asked to stay home (with no refund of fees).
  - Consequences that have been issued in past instances include:
    - Suspension of 1 Day
    - Suspension of 3 Days
    - Suspension of 5 Days
    - A communicated date of release from Launch into Learning program
- If a child does something egregious while at the museum, there will be an immediate call to a parent to pick up their child and the child could be asked to stay home (with no refund of fees).
  - Consequences that have been issues in past instances include:
    - Destruction of museum property could result in the family being asked to pay a portion of the repair and replacement fees.
    - Suspension of 1 Day

- Suspension of 3 Days
- Any bullying, both physical and verbal, such as name-calling, teasing, ridiculing, or anything that “hurts” another person will not be tolerated, and children will be counseled immediately.
  - Consequences that have been issued in past instances include:
    - Meeting with Launch Leadership
    - Parent consultation at the end of the day
    - Suspension of 1 Day
    - Suspension of 3 Days
    - Suspension of 5 Days
- We encourage parents to discuss ideas of “respect and responsibility” at home with your children before they come to aftercare.
- Self-deprecating behaviors whether mental or physical will be immediately reported to parents and may result in a parent/staff conference
- Children are expected to follow Launch into Learning’s daily schedules and participate in MCM activities. If children choose not to participate in MCM activities, they are expected to communicate this respectfully to MCM staff who will offer an alternate related activity.

## **POLICIES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS INCLUDED IN THE ADMISSIONS PAPERWORK**

### **PHOTO**

I hereby grant the Mississippi Children’s Museum, hereby referred to as MCM, permission to use my child/children listed on this form in a photograph in any and all of its publications, including website entries, without payment or any other consideration. I understand and agree that these materials will become the property of the MCM and will not be returned. I hereby irrevocably authorize MCM to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish or distribute this photo for purposes of publicizing MCM’s programs, events or for any other lawful purpose. In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears.

Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photograph. I hereby hold harmless and release and forever discharge MCM from all claims, demands, and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have by reason of this authorization.

### **JPS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

I understand and acknowledge MCM has a Memorandum of Understanding with JPS and the test scores of every child enrolled in the grant-funded program will be made available to MCM so that the staff can gauge program effectiveness. Names will not be associated with the scores.

### **COMPLETE AND FACTUAL**

I hereby certify that I am the parent or guardian of this child/children named above; I do hereby give my consent without reservation to the foregoing on behalf of this person. I have completed the above to the best of my ability. I have read and agree with the policies and procedures of the Mississippi Children’s Museum Launch into Learning Program. I have discussed all the rules and expectations of the museum with my child/children.

**ELECTRONIC FORM:**

By submitting this form, I am acknowledging this as my electronic signature.

**PRIVACY**

MCM respects the privacy of our families, students, and staff. We are committed to protecting privacy by keeping matters confidential. We want to foster positive relationships with our community. The names of all students and staff members, information regarding discipline and behavior issues, health concerns or other program and student related issues should not be discussed directly or indirectly with others.

**TRANSPORTATION**

I have read and understood the Transportation Policy and The Transportation and School Transportation Consent and give Mississippi Children's Museum the consent for my child(ren) to be transported from school. I have reviewed expected rider behavior and the idea of respect and responsibility with my child(ren).