

Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School



25321 Dove Lane

Grand Rapids, MN 55744

218-326-2263

2026-2027

Student Handbook

Directory

School Personnel

Head Teacher:	Sara Hiner	218-833-2502
School Board Chair:	Ryan Christiansen	218-474-1199
School Treasurer:	Merry Moody	218-259-3744
Church Pastor:	TBA	
Home and School:	Kellie Wetterling	651-775-3363
Superintendent:	James Davis	763-424-8923

Ex-officio School Board Members: Superintendent of Schools, School Head Teacher, School Treasurer, Church Pastor, Home and School Leader

The members of the Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist Church elect the school board. The Superintendent of Education of the Minnesota Conference advises the Board in planning and operating the school program.

The school board usually meets on the third Tuesday every other month. These meetings are normally open meetings and parents, church members, or other friends of the school are welcome to attend. Occasionally, when sensitive or personnel items are discussed, attendance at the meeting is restricted to the school board members.

An individual who desires to address the school board on a certain topic should contact the school board chair 3 days in advance with that request.

Philosophy

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes God as the ultimate source of existence and truth. In the beginning God created in His image a perfect humanity, a perfection later marred by sin. Education in its broadest sense is a means of returning human beings to their original relationship with God. The distinctive characteristics of this Adventist worldview, built around creation, the fall, and redemption, are derived from the Bible. True education aims to restore human beings into the image of God as revealed by the life of Jesus Christ. Only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit can this be accomplished. An education of this kind imparts far more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person—spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social—a process that spans a lifetime. Working together, homes, schools, and churches cooperate with divine agencies to prepare students to be good citizens in this world and for eternity.

Mission Statement

The Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School provides Christ-centered education where students can develop a closer relationship with God. Biblical teaching, academic excellence, civic duty, and service are all emphasized in a safe environment.

Objectives

1. The teachers strive to create a loving learning climate—yet firm, accepting—yet challenging.
2. Every child is special and will be given individual attention.
3. Students are taught personal responsibility and respect for the rights and privileges of others. This includes respect for the home, school, and government.
4. The teachers strive to help each student develop a high degree of academic achievement as well as a personal relationship with God, preparing them for a life of service.

Accreditation

Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School is accredited by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities, Inc. (AAA) through the North American Division Commission on Accreditation. AAA is accredited by the National Council of Private School Accreditation. Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School is recognized as an approved school by the state.

Admission

Students who desire a Christian education and who are willing to live in harmony with the standards of Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School outlined in this handbook are welcome to apply for admission. There are a couple of things to note:

- The school board strongly recommends that kindergarten students be 6 (six) years old on or before September 1. A parent may petition the school board for early admittance.
- Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School does not have the necessary equipment or staff to provide extraordinary special education services. Therefore, the school is unable to accept pupils who require such services.

How to Apply

The procedure for admission of new students includes:

1. Fill out an inquiry form on the school's website or notify the head teacher or school board chair and request a link for registration.
2. Once accepted, fill out and submit application and all applicable forms online.
3. Submit any applicable academic records (latest test scores, latest report card, IEP, etc.).

4. Final approval by the school board.

All new students are automatically placed on probation for the first quarter. The school board has the authority to accept or deny any application, and parents will be notified of the decision of the school board. New students may be tested at the discretion of the head teacher to determine final grade placement.

Transfer Students

Parents who wish to transfer their children from another school to Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School after the school term has started must complete the regular registration process. A student may be allowed to attend classes on probationary status pending a decision by the Admissions Committee.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School admits students of any race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, financial policies, extra-curricular, or other school-administered programs.

Statement on Human Sexuality and Identity

Blackberry SDA School is a K-8 educational institution that is owned and operated by the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which is a part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. As such, we adhere to the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its interpretation and understanding of the scriptures. Therefore, we strive to conduct educational ministry within the world, maintaining our commitment to God as our Creator and Savior, and to fulfill the gospel commission of sharing Jesus Christ and His love with the world. With this foundation, we offer the following: First, as a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution, we neither condone nor promote any behavior outside of the Adventist biblical beliefs. Blackberry School's policy on human sexuality and identity is based on the North American Division Statement on Human Sexuality. This statement is based on Seventh-day Adventist understanding of scripture. Second, our teachings on human sexuality and identity throughout the curriculum are aligned with Seventh-day Adventist biblical beliefs. As a part of our commitment to Seventh-day Adventist education, we have adopted the following guidelines to assist our students, parents, staff, and all other stakeholders:

1. Physical contact between students that would normally be viewed as overly affectionate in nature is not allowed. This includes but is not limited to hand-holding, prolonged hugging, sitting on each other, hair stroking, etc.
2. Students will neither promote nor advocate a lifestyle while enrolled in Blackberry School that is not in accordance with the following: a. "Adventist educational institutions do not

condone gay, lesbian, or bisexual sexual practice or the promotion of sexual behavior outside of our biblical beliefs.” (NAD Statements on Human Sexuality, p 3)

3. Students must state their birth sex on an application for school:
 - a. The sex stated on the application should match the birth sex identified on the student's birth certificate at the time of birth.
 - b. The birth sex determines restroom use, sports team choices, uniform choices, pronouns used, and any other issue as stated in the student handbook concerning sex.
 - c. Transitioning transgender students, or those who have fully transitioned, will not be admitted.
4. Students and visitors to the campus must use the bathroom corresponding to their birth sex.
5. Students of LGBTQ parents may be admitted with full knowledge that SDA theology based on biblical teaching does not support this lifestyle. There may be restrictions placed on parent leadership involvement.

Blackberry SDA School is called to love all people. In this sin-filled world, our goal is to create an environment where all people love and respect each other. “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you have a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Colossians 3:12-14

Finances

Introduction

It is the commitment of the school to operate financially as Scripture admonishes, keeping all bills current. As such, we depend upon the timely payment of tuition and other appropriate fees. To keep the cost as low as possible and to furnish the funds necessary for the school to meet its operating expenses, the following financial policies have been adopted.

Registration Fee

A registration fee of \$310 is due on or before the first day of school. Registration fees include book rental, consumable workbooks, testing, and library materials. The registration fee is non-refundable.

Tuition Fees

Tuition is divided into 10 monthly payments. The first tuition payment is due on or before the first day of school. The remainder of the payments are due by the 10th of each month from September-May.

Tuition Rates

- Tuition is \$3,410 per year, or \$310 per month (August-May) + \$310 registration fee.
- Kindergarten tuition is the same.

Multiple-Student Discount

Families with multiple students enrolled will receive a discount as follows:

- 1st child: \$310 per month
- 2nd child: \$285 per month
- 3rd child: \$260 per month
- 4th child+: no tuition, but \$310 registration fee still applies

Method of Payment

1. Cash
2. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Blackberry SDA School. Payments can be mailed to the school or given to the teacher or school treasurer.
3. Adventist School Pay accounts can be created to utilize online payments.

Late Payments

If payment is not received by the 10th, please call to make arrangements with the teacher or the school treasurer. If arrangements are *not* made, the following actions may be taken:

- By the 15th: A late fee of \$5 may be assessed and a reminder sent home.
- Continued enrollment is contingent upon keeping the account current.
- Registration for a new school year is contingent on the previous year's account being paid in full.

Late Enrollment / Withdrawal from School

Students enrolling after school has begun or withdrawing before the school year is finished will be responsible for the registration fee and for a prorated portion of the total tuition, based on the date of starting at or officially withdrawing from the school.

Attendance

School Hours

Kindergarten Tuesday-Thursday: 8:00 AM – 12:30 PM
1st-8th Grade Monday-Thursday: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

No School on Fridays

Students should **arrive and leave within 10 minutes of the scheduled school hours** unless other arrangements are made with the teacher.

Attendance Policy

The school calendar is provided in the registration packet. Students in 1st-8th grades will attend the required 1,080 student contact hours in the year. Students in Kindergarten will attend for 675 hours. Parents are expected to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. All students are encouraged to schedule non-emergencies (dental appointments, doctor appointments, etc.) outside of school hours. In addition, as far as possible, families should schedule their vacation times during the school breaks. With fewer but longer days in a 4-day schedule, this is especially important. When a student is absent, parents are required to contact the school by 8:00 AM on the day of the absence. A parent should also send a written excuse with the child on the day he/she returns to school. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher and make arrangements to pick up assignments immediately after dismissal.

Field Trips

Off-campus educational activities are sometimes coordinated with the school program. Notices regarding each field trip are sent home informing parents and guardians of these planned activities. In some instances, a small fee may be necessary to defray trip expenses. Written permission will be required for each trip. If no written permission slip is returned to the school, the student will not be allowed to attend the field trip.

Unscheduled School Closings

Parents will be contacted by Parent Square and/or email in the event of a school closure due to weather. We will generally follow the lead of District 318 for weather-related closings and late starts. Information will also be posted in our Facebook group.

Medical

Physical Examinations

All new students entering or transferring to the school must have a physical examination before being admitted to the school. The completed physical examination form must be returned to the school office within 30 days after the student enters school. A physical examination given within the past six months is acceptable.

Immunizations

Immunizations are required of all students per state statute, except if their lives or health would be endangered or if their parents follow a religious belief whose teachings are opposed to such immunizations. Current immunization forms (or exemption forms) for each student must be on

file in the school office by October 15. All new or transferring students will have 30 days after beginning school to return the completed immunization form. Failure to have a current immunization card on file will require that the student be suspended until immunization records are complete and on file in the school office.

Medication

Whenever a student needs medication, these guidelines are to be followed:

- The medication must be in its original container.
- Prescription medication must be accompanied by written instructions from the doctor indicating the method, amount, and time the medicine is to be administered.

All medication should be given to the teacher upon arrival at school. The student's teacher will administer the medication according to the written direction provided with the medication. No over-the-counter medications will be administered unless they have been provided by the student's parent/guardian with proper written authorization as to the amount and time for administering the medication.

Emergencies

In case of serious emergency, such as injury, accident, or sickness, the school will attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian. If this individual cannot be reached, and in the judgment of the teacher or principal immediate medical attention is needed, the teacher or principal will summon or take the student to receive medical aid. All students must have a Consent to Treatment form, signed by the parent or guardian, on file in the school office.

School Accident Insurance

The school provides limited accident insurance for each student. The insurance covers accidents resulting while students are participating in regular school activities or while in transit to or from school-sponsored activities. Specific information regarding school accident insurance will be provided to each parent/guardian.

Curriculum

Curriculum taught in Seventh-day Adventist Schools is based on the Bible, is rooted in the belief that God created us with minds that can grasp spiritual and intellectual truths, and aims first to lead the student to accept Christ as his/her personal Lord and Savior. The curriculum stresses educating students for a life of worship, growth, and service, places a high estimate on the worth of the individual student, and dictates that Seventh-day Adventist values be developed in every subject area at all grade levels. Teachers will offer a cohesive curriculum enabling students to see connections between the many fields of learning by integrating faith throughout the curriculum, building connections within a subject area and to other related areas including co-curricular

activities, and cooperating with other teachers in integrating curriculum between subject areas and grade levels.

Typical course of study includes:

- The Basics: Language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, Bible
- Fine Arts: Music and art
- Physical Education: Individual and team activities
- Computers: Typing, basic programs, internet use and safety

Discipline

Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School promotes Christian values and character building. Students who wish to maintain these standards are accepted or retained in the school. Both printed and stated regulations hold equal value. The school board has designated that the head teacher is responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of school regulations:

- Respect the spiritual ideals of the Seventh-day Adventist church.
- Show respect to and cooperate with all school personnel and volunteers.
- Show respect for and protect school property and the rights of others.
- Abstain from those activities that destroy the development of the physical, mental, or spiritual life.
- Obey any regulations adopted and announced during the school year.

In any group, it is always necessary to have rules to provide for the rights, health, safety, and general welfare of all. The teacher is the sole authority in the classroom and develops/enforces classroom rules and regulations. The head teacher also has the right to temporarily suspend students who refuse to cooperate or do not follow the policies outlined in the handbook. The discipline committee will consider situations where students continually refuse to follow the standards and policies of the school and/or classroom. This committee makes a recommendation to the school board concerning whether the student should be expelled. The school board will expel students who continually refuse to follow the policies and rules. The student is invited to appear before the school discipline committee or school board when expulsion is being considered. The possibility of reinstatement at a later time is subject to review by the school board.

Student Appearance

Each student should have an appearance that is in good taste and appropriate for the occasion. The head teacher will handle any questions regarding specific articles of clothing.

The following guidelines should be considered:

- **Neat:** Apparel should be tidy and orderly.
- **Clean:** Students should dress in clean, non-tattered clothes.

- **Modest:** Students' dress should not be revealing, including spaghetti strap tops, tight or sheer clothing, or exposed midriffs.
- **Simple:** Attire should be appropriate for school and outdoor play. The wearing of jewelry is not allowed with the exception medical jewelry. (One simple stud in each ear to keep the piercings open is considered medical jewelry.) Unnatural nail polish or makeup and tattoos are not allowed.

Student Responsibility

These school policies are listed for reference when questions arise. They are intended to make the students' year as enjoyable as possible.

Students are expected to:

- **Be honest.** Abstain from cheating, stealing, gambling, or betting.
- **Promote safety.** Abstain from having at school: firearms, explosives, knives, dangerous animals, or other unsafe things.
- **Live wholesome lives.** Abstain from wearing, displaying, or possessing anything that indicates objectionable affiliations.
- **Keep their minds pure.** Abstain from the use of profane or lewd language and actions and the possession of suggestive materials.
- **Live healthfully.** Abstain from using, possessing, or supplying to others tobacco, drugs, or alcohol in any form.
- **Display Christian courtesy.** Abstain from bullying, ridiculing, harassing, or disgracing others.
- **Help maintain a desirable learning atmosphere** in school by not bringing electronic devices, skateboards, toys, pets, etc., unless permission is obtained in advance from the teacher.
- **Protect and care for the property** of the school, themselves, and others. The student shall immediately report any damage or misuse to the teacher, whether it is accidental or intentional.

Staff-Student Relationships and Professional Boundaries Policy

This policy is intended to help ensure that all staff-student interactions remain professional, accountable, safe, and consistent with the mission of Christian education. It addresses appropriate physical, emotional, social, and electronic communication boundaries between staff and students. All school-related electronic communication between staff and students shall occur only through Parent Square, which is trackable, retained, and reviewable by authorized school and conference administration. A copy of this policy is on file at the school office and is available for public inspection upon reasonable notice.

Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School to strive for a learning environment for students that is free from sexual, racial, and religious harassment. This policy will be enforced before, during, and after school hours on all school property, including school functions and events held at other locations. Any action toward or by a student of this school to harass through conduct or communication of a sexual, racial, and religious nature shall be a violation of this policy. The staff of the Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School will be guaranteed the same environment free of sexual, racial, or religious harassment as due the student body.

Definitions

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature affecting an individual's academic standing.
- Unwelcome sex-oriented comments or gestures (kidding, teasing, jokes, etc.)
- Subtle pressure or requests for sexual activity.
- Unnecessary and/or unwelcome touching of an individual (padding, pinching, hugging, etc.)
- Demand for sexual favors.
- Threatening notes or cartoons.
- Offensive or graphic printed material.

Religious or racial harassment consists of conduct that ridicules or otherwise intimidates an individual based on religious beliefs/practice or race. The conduct may be physical or verbal in nature.

Actions

Violence towards others, as well as harassment, whether it be religious, racial, disability, age, sexual, ethnic, or gender-related, is against the law. If anyone uses words or actions that make a student feel uncomfortable or fearful, the student or parents should tell the teacher, school board chairperson, or other trusted adult. The individual's right to privacy will be respected as much as possible. Complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly by the teacher and/or school board chairperson. On determining whether alleged conduct constitutes harassment, the teacher/school board chairperson shall look at the record as a whole and the totality of the circumstances. If harassment is found to exist, faculty shall take prompt corrective action. Depending on the severity of the act, the discipline may range from a written warning to immediate dismissal, or in the case of an employee, job termination.

Cell Phone and Personal Device Policy

Blackberry Seventh-day Adventist School affirms that we are called to nurture students in an environment that supports learning, healthy relationships, spiritual growth, personal responsibility, and respect for community. To advance these goals and to reduce distraction, social disruption, bullying, and negative effects on student well-being, we established the following standards on student cell phones and personal electronic devices. This approach is informed by the 2026 Minnesota law requiring public and charter schools to adopt such a policy.

- Students may not access or use personal electronic devices while on campus during the school day, including during class time, lunch, recess, and after-school care.
- If a student brings a cell phone or personal electronic device to school, he/she is to turn it in to the teacher before school begins.
- Personal devices will not be used for routine instructional purposes.
- Parent or guardian communication with students will be provided using Parent Square. A private location will be provided for students to speak with their parent/guardian if needed.
- For overnight school-sponsored trips, student phones or personal electronic devices will be collected during school hours and activities and designated sleeping hours.
- Short-term exceptions may be granted at the teacher's discretion, and long-term exceptions will be presented to the school board for approval.
- If the teacher sees that a student has not turned in an electronic device, the item will be confiscated and held until the student's parent comes to retrieve it.

Visitors

Parents are always welcome at the school and are encouraged to visit the classroom. It is requested that all visits be made by appointment with the teacher. For the security of the students, all visitors to the school are asked to wait at the door to be let in. Students wishing to bring a friend to school should inquire with his/her teacher and must make these arrangements at least a day in advance.

Note to Parents

The success of the school depends largely upon the full cooperation between parents and teacher. It sometimes happens that students make complaints to their parents concerning school matters, especially when measures for discipline are involved. In such cases, parents are urged to withhold judgment until the teacher is contacted and an investigation of the matter is made. Following this plan can prevent unhappy consequences. Parents should discuss policies, problems, or complaints with the teacher rather than with other parents or members of the community. A parent who has a question regarding something at school should contact the teacher. If the issue is still not resolved, it should be taken to the school board chairperson.

Asbestos Notification

The inspection and management plan for Asbestos-Containing-Building-Materials (ACBM) required by the Federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) has been performed for this school. The management plan has been submitted to the state for review and approval. A copy is on file at the school office and is available for public inspection upon reasonable notice. If desired, a copy of the plan may be obtained upon payment of a reasonable reproduction cost.