

PARENTS AND STUDENTS HANDBOOK

Parents/Guardians and Teachers' Relationship

UMCA Rich Tree Academy views the parents of our children as worthy of our utmost courtesy and respect. The entire teaching staff at UMCA Rich Tree Academy has been specifically selected based on competence, knowledge of their subject, dedication to the teaching profession, and interpersonal skills.

Learning Environment

UMCA Rich Tree Academy enjoys exceptional harmony on all levels of involvement, from the teaching team (made up of teachers and administration), to the learning team (made up of teachers and their students) and to the support team (made up of teachers and parents). Students, teachers, and parents must work together. Each has responsibilities and a role to play. Students will be more successful with their learning by being responsible, participating, and having a positive attitude.

Students

All students and parents have a responsibility to promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within UMCA Rich Tree Academy and the wider community. Students have rights, roles, and responsibilities.

UMCA Rich Tree Academy Students are responsible for:

- Arriving at school prepared, on time, and ready to learn
- Attending classes on time and regularly
- Completing homework, assignments, major tests, projects, and all other assigned work
- This responsibility also extends to times of absence. If the student is sick or goes on vacation, he/she have to cover the material taught in class
- Being prepared for classes with all the necessary supplies
- Taking good care of school property, including the books
- Showing respect for themselves, for others, and for those in authority
- Refraining from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others
- Following the established rules and taking responsibility for his or her own actions
- Have a clear, shared understanding of what is acceptable behaviour
- Respect school property: books, notebooks, walls and outdoor equipment
- Use washrooms appropriately: Make sure to flush, wipe the toilet seat, and put used paper towels in the garbage
- Absolutely do not throw any garbage in the school parking lot or neighbours' lot

Participation:

- Participating in classroom activities

- Contributing to discussions and group activities
- Asking questions when they don't understand
- Participating in school activities and having fun
- Participating in community and recreation programs

Attitude:

- Understanding parents' values, expectations, and culture
- Maintaining good physical health, exercising, eating right, and getting enough sleep
- Listening carefully to teachers and parents
- Developing positive attitudes; being cooperative and considerate
- Welcoming challenges and helping others
- In case of a conflict situation, inform the school principal immediately

Students have the right to:

- Know that their concerns will be responded to by the school staff
- Be provided with appropriate support if involved in bullying, either as a person bullying, a person being bullied, or a person who witnesses bullying
- Take part in learning experiences that address key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, and bullying
- Earn in a safe and cooperative environment

Teachers

Teachers play vital roles in the lives of the students in their classrooms. Teachers are best known for the role of educating the students who are placed in their care. Beyond that, teachers serve many other roles in the classroom. Teachers set the tone of their classrooms, build a warm environment, mentor and nurture students, become role models, and listen and look for signs of trouble.

Teachers also have rights, roles, and responsibilities.

UMCA Rich Tree Academy Teachers are responsible for:

- preparing lesson plans and teaching classes
- encouraging students in their studies and evaluating their work and progress
- supervising student behaviour and maintaining classroom discipline
- demonstrating good citizenship and respect for all groups of people
- Design educational activities that promote the physical, social, and intellectual growth of students
- Enhance learning abilities and good habits in children
- Communicate with parents about students' progress and development
- Maintain classroom records, cleanliness and orderliness
- Ensure a safe learning environment in the classroom
- Inculcate healthy habits and discipline in children
- Plan, develop and implement an appropriate curriculum
- Maintain regular communication with parents and staff regarding students' progress
- Help children and students discover their creativity
- Teach children and students to solve problems independently

- Encouraging parents to be open in their discussions about bullying and behaviour management at UMCA. Rich Tree Academy
- Being observant of signs of bullying and treating reports of bullying seriously
- Responding in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying and classroom management
- Reporting, recording and following up on incidents of bullying and behaviour management.

UMCA Rich Tree Academy staff have the right to:

- Feel safe in their working environment
- Be treated with respect by students, parents and other staff
- Teach in a cooperative environment which is conducive to learning
- Address their concerns with the appropriate personnel

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians also have rights, roles, and responsibilities.

We at UMCA Rich Tree Academy consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children. We believe that parents are the primary role models for the development of their children. Your choice of UMCA involves a commitment and responsibilities.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at UMCA, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During the formative years, your child needs constant support from both parents and school in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical attitude.

It is vital that both parents and teachers remember that allowing oneself to be caught between the child and the other partner will never have positive results.

To divide authority between school and home or within the home will only teach disrespect of all authority. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model mature behaviour and relationships.

Students are naturally eager to grow and learn. However, sometimes in the process of maturation new interests may cause them to lose focus. As this natural process occurs, the student needs both understanding and discipline. At times, your child may perceive discipline as restrictive. However, boundaries and limits provide a young person with both guidance and security.

Together, let us begin this journey with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she is capable of becoming.

As partners, we ask parents/guardians:

To set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Completes assignments, homework, major tests, projects, and all other assigned work on time
- Covers the material taught in class, if the student is sick or goes on vacation
- To notify the school with a note when the student has been absent or tardy
- To notify the school office of any changes in address or phone numbers
- To meet all financial obligations to the school
- To inform the school of any special situations regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health

- To read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy in discussing student concerns
- To participate in meetings with teachers including parent-teacher interviews
- To encourage and assist the child in following the rules of behaviour

Also, we ask:

- To check our website weekly for homework messages and upcoming events
- Check your child's school bag weekly
- Respect parking rules: Do not park in front of the school front door
- Do not park in the Kiss N' Ride lane

Please remember: the school is not responsible for any lost belongings. Do not send any money or food unless you are asked to do so.

Together, let us begin this journey with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he/she can become.

UMCA Rich Tree Academy Parents have the right to:

- Expect their child to be safe, supported and treated with respect
- Be heard and have their opinions valued
- Be provided with information regarding the prevention and management of bullying situations
- Be provided with information outlining the expectations in promoting and managing positive behaviour in all learning environments
- Have their concerns dealt with in a confidential and professional manner

UMCA Rich Tree Academy has a responsibility to inform staff, students, parents, and guardians about:

- Providing students with strategies to respond positively to incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Providing parents, caregivers and students with clear information
- Communicating to parents and caregivers that they have an important role in resolving bullying behaviour and behaviour management issues involving their children.

The best tip for our school's success is to make sure that Students, Parents and Teachers are working together.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is one strategy in a more complex problem-solving restorative process designed to support the student in changing unacceptable conduct and should be viewed as only one part of a process in a range of options. Suspension may be considered when the school's progressive interventions have failed to correct unacceptable conduct, or at the end of a series of incremental disciplinary consequences. It is recognized that sometimes immediate student suspension can be the appropriate action to take in order to make a school safe when there is a serious breach of conduct or an illegal act.

The purpose of suspension, or any other discipline strategy, should be to develop self-reliant adults. Used judiciously, suspension can have positive effects, including:

- ensuring safety for everyone in the school community

- assigning clear consequences for a range of serious breaches of code of conduct
- providing the time for planning support for behaviour change
- promoting collaboration among family, school, and other community services to solve problems and provide support

Types of Student Suspensions

UMCA sanctions the following types of student suspensions:

- a partial day
- full day(s)
- partial day followed by full day(s)
- in-school suspension
- a series of partial-day suspensions
- A note of the incident in the student's OSR (Ontario Student Record - this is the student's file that follows the student throughout his elementary and high school).

Students who are suspended from school as per the School Act will have an educational program available to them while under suspension and will have the opportunity to complete work/assignments off-site.

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Dress Code

Our belief is that school is a place of learning and, to be successful, students must focus their attention and energy on school-related matters. For this reason, it is important to minimize any distractions that clothing could cause. Clothing which demonstrates respect for oneself and for others is expected at all times.

The following section gives an overview of what is considered acceptable wear at UMCA.

- Appropriate gym clothing must be worn during gym. All students must wear the white UMCA T-shirt
- Indoor shoes must be worn at all times, or sandals in the hot weather. No shoes with wheels are permitted in school
- Language or graphics on clothing will not display provocative, suggestive sexist or racist slogans, or reference to smoking, drugs, alcohol, or anything unsuitable for a minor
- Clothing must cover midriffs and undergarments, shorts and skirts should be mid-thigh or longer, and clothing should not be sheer/flimsy or extremely tight. Tube tops, halter-tops, and other tops with narrow shoulder straps or "spaghetti straps" are unacceptable
- Students are expected to come to school with neatly groomed hair. Girls must have their hair tied back in braids or a ponytail to maintain a tidy and professional appearance. Hair dye is not permitted; natural hair colours must be maintained at all times. Proper grooming helps promote a respectful and focused learning environment for everyone.

Bus Information

Students use the bus when travelling to extra-curricular activities. Students riding the school bus must observe the following procedures:

- Go directly to your seat
- Remain seated while the bus is in motion
- Do not eat or drink on the bus. It is not allowed
- Keep the aisle clear of books, knapsacks, lunch bags and other items
- Keep windows closed unless the driver permits you to open them. Never put hands, arms, legs or head out of the window
- Never throw anything out the window
- Talk quietly. Do not disturb the attention of driver
- All shouting, horseplay, and fighting is forbidden at any time. Students will be suspended for doing any of the above

SNOW DAYS: On extreme weather, the school may or may not still be open. Parents must check their email for any notification. The school will not be calling any parents regarding this information.

Website

Our Newsletter is the primary way the School communicates important notifications with parents/guardians and students. We encourage parents to read the newsletter to their children. Schoology is our students' Learning Management System. Students must check it regularly, as homework, quizzes and other assignments are posted there.

Report Card

There will be two Report Cards per school year. The first card will be in February and the second will be in June (high school also have a mid-term report card). Report cards serve as a document that outlines your child's strengths and areas for improvement based on the grade level. There will be two parent/teacher interviews (in November & April, the exact date will be communicated in advance), in which you to talk with all teachers in person (or on the phone). Dates, quiz & test marks, and comments will always be posted on your child's Schoology account on a continuous and timely basis.

Exams

The pre-exam preparation will take place during the month of May. Each student will receive a pre-exam package that is designed for review of the course material. This is for preparation leading into the exam months in June. The teachers will explain what is expected. We need parents to help with the students' organizational skills to ensure that none of the packages are lost or kept at home. If it is sent home, it must come back to school every day. The pages will be available on the website for you to print.

Exam Month

The exams will take place in June. The purpose of exam month is for students to have a final assessment of material in all subjects in order to consolidate their skills. We want to ensure that each student is ready for the next grade level. We request that you do not plan major events such as moving to a new residence or taking holidays at this time, and prioritize Exams and studying.

Healthy Food

Our school provides tasty, nutritious food for students throughout the day. A snack is provided twice a day for preschool students (in the morning and in the afternoon), once a day for elementary students (in the afternoon); high school students are not included. We also provide a hot, healthy lunch every day. Our food is delivered from Angela's Deli restaurant, and we ensure that the food meets healthy eating standards. Students are provided with soup, salad, and a main course. Eating together is also regarded by our school as a social activity. Cleanliness, manners, and pleasant conversation are expected. Students are invited to the table with washed hands, ready to eat their food while it is warm. They are encouraged to finish the portion they are served and are free to ask for a second serving if they wish.

Playing, throwing, or wasting food is not acceptable at our school. Shouting, horseplay, or aggressive behaviour at the meal is not acceptable. Parents will be notified if a student does not adhere to the above guidelines.

March Break

The school is closed during March Break

Things to leave at home

The only materials students should bring to school are those related to school studies, sports, and nutrition (if you bring your own lunch/snack, it must be nut-free). Exceptions require prior permission from a teacher or the school office. **Student cell phones and camera phones are banned on school property.** If any students are found using their cell phones or taking photographs without permission, they will have their cell phone and camera taken away, and their parents will be asked to come into the school office to retrieve them.

The following items are not allowed at UMCA:

- Cellphones
- Gum
- Tobacco
- Narcotics of any kind, including products of marihuana
- Fireworks, Laser Pointers
- Lighters/Lighter Fluid Knives (also pen knives)
- Matches
- No collectible items (like sports cards, etc.)

- Electronic games, videos, computer software, and other electronic media may not be brought to school or during extracurricular activities unless they have been approved by the faculty and administration for that event.

Trips

Students go on many trips throughout the year to enrich their experiences at school. Examples of field trips include the Royal Ontario Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, Farm, Markham Theatre, Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, Vaughan City Play House, Sky Zone, different Universities, and more! Participation in these trips is mandatory.

It is the goal (of all staff) to inspire success, confidence, and hope in each of you. We aim to provide a safe/positive school environment for all students. Equity, inclusion, and a school free from bullying/intimidation/harassment are critical for setting a tone that is welcoming and engaging.

All members of UMCA. Rich Tree Academy looks forward to a school year that celebrates innovation, creativity, determination, critical thinking, and collaboration.