



Strickland Christian School

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July 29, 2026

Dear Parents,

When Moses' leadership came to an end, Israel faced uncertainty. A new leader, a new chapter, and a calling that felt bigger than any one person. Into that moment, God spoke directly to Joshua — and to the people — with words that still steady us today.

God says:

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.... I will not leave you or forsake you.... Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:5, 9)

This wasn't just reassurance for Joshua as a leader — it was comfort for the entire community. God was reminding them that His presence, not human leadership, was their true security. Leadership may change, seasons may shift, but God's care for His people remains constant.

And notice what God emphasizes repeatedly: Joshua is commanded to lead with courage for the sake of the people — to guide them into the land God promised, to shepherd them faithfully, and to ensure their flourishing. The heart of the passage is deeply student-centered, family-centered, community-centered.

It's a reminder that:

- God goes before His people in every transition.
- God equips leaders not for their own sake, but for the sake of those entrusted to them.
- God's presence is the steady anchor when everything else feels new or unfamiliar.
- New beginnings are not moments of fear — they are moments where God reveals His faithfulness in fresh ways.

As this new chapter begins for Strickland School, I receive great comfort that in seasons of change, God does not step back — He steps closer. Just as He guided Israel into a new chapter, He guides us now. Leadership may shift, responsibilities may grow, and the path ahead may feel unfamiliar, but God's promise remains unchanged: He is with us, He goes before us, and He pours His heart into the students we shepherd. Their education, their growth, their safety, their spiritual formation, their joy — these remain the priority. And God equips every leader He calls with exactly what is needed to shepherd His children well.

The Chen's, the Rigdon's, the teachers', staff, and I are deeply committed to serve our Lord as He directs us. Please read the enclosed information carefully as it will answer many of your questions.

May this school year be filled with His providential care for you and your children!

In His service,

Ms. MJ Strickland, School Director

CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS {A complete calendar is updated regularly on our website.}

Saturday,	August 8th	8:00 - Noon	Parent Volunteer Workday (see details below)
Saturday,	August 8th	9:00 - 11:00	Pre-owned Uniform Sale
Saturday,	August 8th	11:00 - Noon	Ice Cream Social [sponsored by the PTF]
Monday,	August 10th	7:00pm	*New Parent Orientation in the school cafeteria
Wednesday,	August 12th	Teachers Return	
Monday,	August 17th	10:00am	Open House for K4 through 2nd grade
Monday,	August 17th	7:00pm	Open House for 3rd through 8th grade
Wednesday,	August 19th	First Day of School	
Monday,	September 7th	Labor Day School Holiday	
Tuesday,	September 8th	6:00pm	PTF Meeting

{*New Parent Orientation is for parents of newly enrolled students only, no children please.}

NEW PARENT ORIENTATION – Monday, August 10, 7:00pm

This meeting is mandatory for all parents new to Strickland School this year, unless they attended the New Parent Orientation in May. We will discuss important school policies and procedures, uniforms, tips for parents, and there will be a question-and-answer session. The meeting will take place in the school cafeteria and last about an hour and a half.

OPEN HOUSE - Monday, August 17, 10:00am for K4 – 2nd grades; 7:00pm for 3rd – 8th grades

This is an important event for you and your child to meet the teacher and visit the classroom. See the times for your child above. Teachers will have some pertinent information for you at this time. It will begin with a short meeting in the sanctuary. First through eighth grade students please bring the notebook paper assigned below with you to help teachers prepare before the first day. K4 and K5 students who stay until 3 PM should bring their mats for nap time.

VOLUNTEER WORKDAY

Saturday, August 8, from 8:00 to noon, is our annual summer spruce up the school workday. Parents will receive credit toward their volunteer hours by working this day. Please bring work gloves, yard equipment, and tools, if you have them. We may be cleaning, doing yard work, moving gravel, trimming bushes and trees, and painting, among other things.

PRE-OWNED UNIFORM SALE

Also, Saturday, August 8th, from 9:00 til 11:00 - You may bring your unneeded uniforms to sell to other parents. The cafeteria will be open for you to set up and sell your own uniforms and buy from other parents. Please bring cash as some parents may not want to accept checks. No credit cards will be accepted. Be sure that the uniforms you offer for sale are on the approved uniform list since this is only for clothing that may be worn at school. Strickland PTF will also be selling pre-owned uniforms.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Strickland School is seeking teachers for several positions: a Full-Time 5th grade teacher, a Full-Time 7/8th grade teacher, and the following Part-Time teaching positions: Technology; 7/8th grade Language Arts; 8th grade Algebra; 6th grade Bible; Music; and an Extended-Care Director.

Candidates must be born again Christians of high moral character and must love children. They must also be college graduates. If you know a qualified person, ask him/her to send a resume with references to mj.strickland@stricklandschool.com; one may also call the office (512 378-3879 or 512-4471447) for more information. Strickland is also in need of substitute teachers. While we are actively recruiting and interviewing candidates, please pray with us that the Lord will send the right teachers for these positions.

TEACHERS AND STAFF FOR 2026-2027

We are so sorry to report that Marla Van Wyk, Rebecca Ramirez, Coach Winfrey, Ed Allsteadt, and Morgan Fox will not be returning for the coming year. We are thankful for their loving care for our students and parents and will miss them. We pray the Lord will be with them and prosper them in their next assignment from Him. We are happy to welcome back so many wonderful teachers this year. Please pray for all our teachers as they prepare to minister to your precious ones. We think God has graciously supplied a wonderful group of teachers and staff for the coming year!

Here is the current list of employees:

<u>2026-2027 Teachers and Staff</u>	
<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Grade / Subject</u>
Heather Durant	Pre-K
Jessica Montelongo	Kindergarten
Shelly Aleman	Assistant Principal & 1st Grade Teacher
Alese Foulds	2nd Grade
Mary Salaz	3rd Grade
D'Aubrey Gray	4th Grade
Rebecca Windsor	Principal & 6th Grade
Fabiola Vergara	1st through 8th Grade / Spanish
Natasha Doherty	1st & 2nd Grade Assistant / Extended-Care
Tobi Hall	6th & 7th Math Teacher
Marisa Doherty	Extended Care Teacher
Keri Steen	Admissions Director / Office & Accounts Mgr
Doug Rigdon	Special Advisor
MJ Strickland	School Director

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Except as noted below, students will receive the supplies they need to get started in school. The teachers will distribute these supplies as needed for their classrooms.

Full day (until 3:00) K4 and K5 students must supply their own foldable mats for naptime. These may be brought to the open house or on the first day of school. Please mark each mat with the child's name and grade.

Students in first through eighth grade may bring their own personal size hand sanitizer (in a non-spray bottle) to keep in their desks.

Students in First through eighth grade must bring the following types and amounts of loose-leaf notebook paper. Please bring the notebook paper to the open house so teachers have time to prepare for the first day of class.

1 st through 5 th Grades	Wide-Ruled	1,200 sheets
6 th through 8 th Grades	College-Ruled	1,000 sheets

DRESS CODE

Please note the following additions to this year's uniform list:

- Rapid.Dry.Polo.Shirt.(short.or.long.sleeved).Red?Classic.Navy?Burgundy?Evergreen. This.has.been.added.for.daily.wear.for.all.students.in.all.classrooms.They.may.continue.to.wear.the.other.approved.Polo.shirts.
- Kids.Zip_front.Sweatshirt.....Classic.Navy.with.Logo
- Active.Track.Pants.....Classic.Navy.

This.sweatshirt.and.these.pants.have.been.added.for.first.grade.and.older.for.PE.use.only.They.may.continue.to.wear.the.other.approved.uniforms.for.PE.

It is important that you buy uniforms for your child now if you have not done so, as all students must be in uniform starting on the first day of school. Be sure to buy a Lands' End cardigan sweater also since some classrooms are cold even in hot weather. PE uniforms must also be purchased before beginning of school. This is especially important for parents of first graders since this is the first year they will wear PE uniforms First through eighth graders will wear their PE uniforms to school on PE days. Gray.T_shirts.without.the.Strickland.logo.are.not.allowed. Expect your child to have PE twice a week. You will learn the PE schedule during Open House. Spirit T-shirts should also be purchased, if you want them. They are available from Lands' End only. These may be worn on Fridays. Students on sports teams may also wear the blue Strickland team jersey on T-shirt Fridays. Class T-shirts will be printed for each class sometime in October and will be worn on class T-shirt days and field trips.

All uniforms must be modest, clean and in good repair. Shorts and skirts must be no more than two inches above the top of the knee. Please review the policy for haircuts also before school starts so your child will have a proper hairstyle or haircut. For further dress code or uniform details, please see the school handbook.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Students are not permitted to use AI to do their research or to write sentences, paragraphs, essays, or papers. Therefore, teachers will be using more time in class for writing and will be scrutinizing written assignments for plagiarism and work that is not created by the student. We ask you as parents of older children to be involved with their children's work so that you may help monitor their internet research.

CELL PHONES

Strickland does not allow students to bring cell phones to campus. Children are still learning how to handle friendships wisely, and online communication can easily lead to hurtful or inappropriate posts. Some students have even been mistreated online without their parents knowing. To protect all children and maintain a safe, Christ-honoring environment, we require that phones stay at home.

We strongly encourage parents to actively oversee their child's phone and social media use, monitoring all activity or limiting access altogether. Your partnership helps safeguard their hearts, minds, and relationships.

OFFICE HOURS

While someone is usually at the school this summer, please check the office answering machine for office hours or call for an appointment. The office phone number is temporarily: 512-378-3679 – although our regular main line, 512-447-1447, will be working again within a few days. The general office email address is info@stricklandschool.com. Feel free to email MJ Strickland (school director) at mj.strickland@stricklandschool.com, or Keri Steen (admissions director, office & accounting manager) at k.steen@stricklandschool.com.

CATERED LUNCH OPTION

Lunches will be provided by Crave-It Nutrition, a catering company for schools. Each parent will need to open his own account online with Crave-It and order lunches for his child by Friday of the previous week. Teachers, nor the office can submit late orders. Catered lunches will be offered every school day, five days a week. There will be several choices for your child each day so that you will probably be able to find something he likes every day. Their website is <https://craveit.boonli.com/login>: School Password is: SC48. You will also find the link to Crave-It Nutrition on the Strickland School website on the top banner labeled "Hot Lunch Program".

DISEASE PREVENTION

Teachers and staff take disease prevention seriously by promoting the following:

- Frequent handwashing by students and staff.
- Use of hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes.
- Antimicrobial treatment is approximately every three months.
- Informing parents if there is a serious illness like COVID or the flu reported in a classroom.
- Ultraviolet lights to kill airborne germs in HVAC units.

STRICKLAND'S PARENT/TEACHER FELLOWSHIP [PTF]

Parents are planning to host a Fall Fest this year on Saturday, October 24th. This is a fun event for the families of Strickland. Volunteers will be needed to assist in making this a successful event. Please see the PTF letter explaining more parent plans, activities, and meetings at the end of this letter.

PSIA

The Private School Interscholastic Association is revving up for a new year of academic competitions. These events are for students in first through eighth grade. Categories include math, spelling, ready writing, poetry or prose interpretation, spelling, and others. The competition will be in February or March. The plan is for our students who enter to meet each Wednesday beginning in October after school for practice. These practices will be taught by parents who volunteer. Please see the PSIA enrollment form on the home page of our website for you to complete, if your child is interested. Please return to the child's teacher with the registration fee. Last year, 28 students presented Strickland at the district level with 15 students advancing to the state competition. At the district level a 1st place trophy for elementary and a 2nd place trophy for middle school were awarded. Way to go!!

APSA SPORTS LEAGUE

The Austin Private School Association is planning our sports league starting in September for girls' volleyball and coed flag football. These are open to fourth grade and older students. Some third graders may be considered for teams if there is a need. Please complete the registration form for Strickland sports that is on the home page of our website and return it to your child's teacher with the registration fee if you are interested. If your child is interested in girls' volleyball or flag football, please email info@stricklandschool.com and bring your form by the first day of school as games start early, and rosters must be turned in about the time school begins. Parent volunteers will be needed to make the league a success. Other sports will be offered later in the school year.

SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEWS

A great way for parents to help the school is to post a review on social media. To encourage you to do so, Strickland is initiating a drawing for a \$100 gift card. Any parent who verifies to the school that he has posted a review on social media sites like Rumble, Yelp, or Greatschools.com will have his name entered into the drawing. A parent may post to all three and have three chances to win! If you have previously posted, you may post a new review now and have your name entered again! Reviews must be posted between now and November 30 and reported to the school by December 1. Please email the office at the official school email address: info@stricklandschool.com.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS

Strickland still has openings in some of our classrooms. The best way to let people know about our school is by word of mouth. If you like what your child is learning, tell all your friends! If someone comes to a school tour and mentions your name, you will receive a \$25 gift card. If that person subsequently enrolls, you will receive another \$50 gift card.

Message from the PTF Officers:

Dear Strickland Parents,

It's time to head back to school soon! We're so excited to see all your faces again, and we're eager to meet all the new families who will be joining us this year!

We are having our annual Uniform Sale and Ice Cream Social on Saturday, August 8th. We'll start selling uniforms at 9am and hang out until 11am when we'll dig into some ice cream.

If you have any uniforms to donate, please send us an email so we can coordinate drop off. You may reach us at ptfstrickland@gmail.com.

Please remember to sign up for the PTF website. Each classroom will have the ability to manage volunteer signups, share class photos, and send out classroom announcements.

You'll be able to keep up with events, meetings, teacher birthdays, and more on the calendar, access the bylaws and past meeting minutes in the documents section, and sign up for your membership or buy Fall Fest tickets and more.

If you already signed up for the website last year, you'll be able to log back in again this year with no additional setup.

New members can submit their contact information here and we'll send you an invitation email. You can also go directly to the website at <https://stricklandptf.ptboard.com>. Once we verify your student with the school roster, we will get your account confirmed and you'll be on your way.

We encourage membership. The money raised helps to fund the PTF in several ways, including helping to cover events, teacher appreciation, supplies for day-to-day operations, etc. We're hoping to add a few exciting new events this year, so please go sign up and become a member.

Each family only needs one membership at \$15 that covers the parents and all kids.

Additional membership benefits include access to the student directory, committee membership, potential voting opportunities, etc.

God bless, and we can't wait to see you all!

PTF Strickland Board of Directors

Shelley Hodges, President [ptfstrickland@gmail.com]

Markie Ruiz, Secretary [ptfstrickland.secretary@gmail.com]

Tira Brom, Treasurer [ptfstrickland.treasurer@gmail.com]