

MorningStar University

Student Handbook

Academic Year 2026-2027

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Welcome

Welcome to MorningStar University (MSU).

My name is Daniel Emanuel, and I'm honored to serve as the MSU Director. I want you to hear this clearly from the beginning:

MSU is about Jesus.

Not a platform. Not a title. Not a “ministry resume.”

This is a place to walk with Christ daily, to learn how to abide in Him in every season, to be grounded in the Word of God, and to grow into the kind of leader who can carry His presence with maturity.

We care about you—not just what you can do, but who you are becoming in Christ.

My desire is that you grow into the person God has called you to be—someone who honors the Lord, loves His Word, walks in integrity, and follows the calling God has placed on your life. I genuinely believe the Lord has a lot for you, and we want to help you learn how to walk with Him in a way that lasts.

Our heartbeat is simple:

Abide. Grow. Lead.

- Abide in Jesus—because without Him, we can do nothing.
- Grow in the Word and in character—because gifting without formation is dangerous.

- Lead in the Holy Spirit—because true ministry is not performance; it's obedience.

My prayer is that you don't just leave MSU with information—you leave with transformation. That you don't just learn how to do ministry—you become a person who knows God, loves people, and carries the life of Jesus in a way that is real.

Welcome home. Let's walk this out together.

1. Identity, Mission, and Vision

Our identity

MorningStar University is a training environment centered on spiritual formation, biblical grounding, and Spirit-led leadership. We are here to build healthy disciples and leaders—people who live close to Jesus and are equipped to serve His Church and His purposes.

Our mission

To train and equip students to abide in Christ daily, grow in the Word of God and spiritual maturity, and lead by the Holy Spirit with humility, integrity, and love.

Our vision

We believe God is raising up a generation who will be deeply rooted in Scripture, alive in prayer and worship, faithful in community, and courageous in their calling.

Our goal is not just knowledge—it's formation. We want students to grow in intimacy with Jesus, the renewing of the mind through the Word, healthy character and emotional maturity, ministry skill with humility, and leadership that looks like Christ.

2. Culture Pillars

Jesus is the Center

We don't build around personalities, gifting, or spotlight. We build around the presence of Jesus.

Our worship, our classes, our community, and our leadership are measured by one question: Is Jesus being honored here?

Abiding is Our Foundation

We prioritize the secret place: prayer, Scripture, worship, and listening to God.

Abiding is not a mood. It's a life.

Scripture is Our Standard

We are committed to loving the Word, revering it, and obeying it.

At MSU, the Bible isn't just studied—it's embraced, applied, and lived.

Honor Builds Family

We choose honor in how we speak, how we confront, and how we handle conflict.

Honor means we don't gossip; we don't slander; we don't gather a team against someone; we protect unity; and we handle issues directly and biblically.

We are not building a crowd—we are building a family.

Humility and Teachability are Required

You don't have to be perfect to be here, but you do have to be teachable.

Pride breaks people. Humility builds people.

Excellence is Worship

Excellence is not perfectionism. Excellence is honor.

We practice excellence because God is worthy, people matter, and preparation protects integrity.

Purity and Boundaries Protect Calling

We believe boundaries are not restriction—they are protection.

Our goal is not control—it is safeguarding your heart, your witness, and your calling.

We Pursue Spiritual Hunger and Growth

We want students who are hungry for God—not just curious, not just informed, but hungry.

We are not here to maintain—we are here to grow.

3. Weekly Rhythm and Schedule

At MSU, we don't want your life with God to be something you do only in a classroom. We want you to learn how to walk with Jesus in a weekly rhythm that forms you—spiritually, relationally, and practically.

Our schedule is designed to help you grow in presence (abiding with God), formation (character and discipleship), and faithfulness (responsibility, service, excellence).

Weekly overview

Tuesday–Thursday: Instructional Days. These are our main classroom days. This is when we prioritize classes and training, chapel and worship environments, assignments and learning, and ministry activations as scheduled.

Monday and Friday: Development Days. These days are intentionally built to help you develop the lifestyle that sustains your calling—personal formation, discipleship structures, serving in approved environments, and practical responsibilities.

Student responsibility

Because this is a discipleship environment, we expect students to live with maturity and ownership. We will help you and walk with you—but we also expect you to come ready to grow.

4. Discipleship Structure: Connect Groups

Connect Groups are one of the primary ways we pursue real formation at MSU. MSU is not designed to be a place where you hide—it is designed to be a place where you grow.

Connect Groups honor the legacy of the Moravians and John Wesley's historic band meetings by creating a consistent space for confession, accountability, prayer, and spiritual maturity.

What a Connect Group is

A Connect Group is a small discipleship group where students meet consistently to walk in honesty, accountability, and spiritual maturity.

Connect Groups are typically 3–5 students and are organized with wisdom: same-gender groups, similar age and civil status or life season when possible, and clear expectations for honor, maturity, and biblical accountability.

Why Connect Groups exist

Connect Groups exist because confession brings freedom, accountability protects your calling, and healing often happens in community. This is not about shame. This is about growth.

The Four C's

Confession

We bring sin, struggles, and patterns into the light. We don't perform. We tell the truth.

Commitment

We make real commitments to obey what the Bible teaches and what the Holy Spirit is convicting us to walk out. Repentance becomes practical.

Consecration

We pray for each other and bring those commitments before the Lord. We consecrate our obedience to Him—not to impress people, but to honor Jesus.

Community

We walk together. We carry one another's burdens. We follow up. We pray weekly. We stay connected so growth is sustained, not momentary.

Confidentiality and trust

Connect Groups must be safe. That means what is shared is treated with honor and confidentiality. We do not repeat personal information as gossip or as "prayer requests." We protect one another's stories.

However, confidentiality does not mean secrecy when someone is in danger. If a student shares anything that involves self-harm, abuse, threats of violence, illegal activity, or anything that requires immediate help, leadership may involve appropriate oversight to protect the student and others.

5. Honor, Conflict Resolution, and Support It

Honor is not just a value at MSU—it's how we protect community.

We build a culture where issues are handled directly, biblically, and with a goal of restoration.

Biblical conflict resolution

We follow a biblical pattern (Matthew 18): go to the person first; ask for help if needed; and follow the right chain of care. The goal is never punishment. The goal is restoration.

Support It (how to handle concerns)

There are times when what you see or experience needs to be addressed for protection. Reporting is not about accusation—it's about care.

If something could harm a student, harm community, or compromise integrity, bring it to appropriate leadership. MSU will handle concerns with discretion, wisdom, and care.

MSU also maintains an open-door culture of support. Students are encouraged to bring concerns, personal struggles, interpersonal problems, or questions to appropriate leadership, including the MSU Director, the Dean of Students, the Assistant to the Director, or the person responsible for the area involved. We are here to support, mentor, and walk with students in maturity.

6. Boundaries, Relationships, and Student Life Standards

Substance-free campus

MSU is a substance-free campus. For the health, safety, witness, and spiritual integrity of our community, the use, possession, or distribution of alcohol, tobacco products, vaping / e-cigarettes / nicotine products, illegal drugs, and misuse of prescription drugs is not permitted on MSU property or at MSU-sponsored activities. Off campus, students are expected to walk with maturity and honor. Substance abuse is not acceptable, and students may not use substances in a way that compromises integrity, damages witness, causes others to stumble, or undermines MSU culture and discipleship. If an off-campus situation creates harm, disorder, stumbling, or compromise, MSU reserves the right to address it through conversation, accountability, and, when needed, restrictions and consequences.

Dating and first-semester focus

Because the first semester is designed to establish spiritual foundations, healing, and clarity of calling, first-year students are not permitted to date during the first semester.

Dating is defined as an exclusive romantic pursuit or an ongoing intention of a one-on-one romantic relationship, including behavior that functions as dating even if it is not labeled as dating.

Friendship and healthy community are encouraged, including group fellowship and community meals.

After the first semester, students may begin a relationship with honor and safe boundaries, keeping the relationship in the light. Students are encouraged to approach the beginning of a relationship more as courtship and friendship than casual dating - growing in maturity, seeking wise counsel, staying surrounded by healthy community, and not centering the relationship around being alone together.

If a student disregards MSU's dating policy, leadership will intervene through conversation and, if needed, privileges-based restrictions and consequences. The goal is support, protection, and maturity—not shame.

Ministry and counseling boundaries

Students may pray for one another in appropriate settings, including public spaces and supervised ministry environments. However, male students should not minister alone to female students, and female students should not minister alone to male students.

Private, one-on-one ministry or counseling settings that involve deep ongoing heart-to-heart counseling are not permitted without appropriate oversight. If someone needs deeper care, students should involve MSU leadership and follow the care structure.

Privileges and responsibility

Some aspects of MSU life are privileges, not rights. When privileges are mishandled—through dishonor, repeated boundary violations, or patterns that damage community—MSU may restrict certain privileges for a season. Restrictions exist for protection, repentance, and rebuilding trust.

Dress Code and Modesty

At MSU, the main idea behind modesty and dress standards is to honor our bodies and honor one another. We want our clothing to reflect maturity and to fit an academic and discipleship environment, so students can focus and we can protect a culture of honor. Our goal is not to shame anyone. Our goal is to create a campus environment that reflects reverence for the Lord and respect for others.

General Standards (All Students)

- Clothing must be modest, clean, and appropriate for a classroom environment.
- Undergarments must be worn but not visible.
- Clothing with inappropriate logos, slogans, profanity, sexually suggestive messages, or anti-biblical content is not permitted.
- Tight clothing that is form-fitting in a way that clearly shows the body or draws sexual attention is not permitted for men or women.

Women's Guidelines

- Tops must cover the shoulder, back, midriff, and cleavage.
- Sleeveless tops must cover to the edge of the shoulder where a normal sleeve begins.
- Dresses and skirts must extend to the top of the kneecap at all times. Shorts should be at least fingertip length.
- Tights or leggings may be worn under a dress or long top.

- Short shorts and revealing tops are not permitted outside student housing.

Men's Guidelines

- No muscle tees or other overly tight tops that are form-fitting in a way that clearly draws attention to the body.
- Belts must be worn if pants tend to ride too low.
- Shirts must be worn at all times, except when swimming or engaging in approved water activities.
- No ripped or holey t-shirts or other inappropriate holey tops. This does not refer to standard jeans unless they become immodest or inappropriate.
- Clothing must not display inappropriate logos, slogans, profanity, or anti-biblical messages.

MSU leadership has final discretion in determining whether clothing is inappropriate or out of dress code. Leadership may address clothing concerns with students at any time. If a student is out of dress code, they may be asked to change before attending class, chapel, or required gatherings.

Physical Boundaries and Public Affection

MSU expects students to honor purity and modesty in relationships. Sexual behavior of any kind and physically intimate behavior that is romantic or sexual in nature—such as making out, cuddling, or other behaviors that blur physical boundaries—are not permitted on or off campus. Even within dating relationships after the first semester, students are expected to keep physical affection modest and honorable. Married students are still expected to carry themselves with modesty and respect in public settings. These boundaries exist for protection, holiness, and to help students stay focused on what God is forming in them.

Responsible Conduct

To maintain a safe, respectful campus community, the following actions are strictly prohibited.

Harassment and Bullying

- Name-calling, slurs, or derogatory jokes.
- Threatening behavior or intimidation.

- Sexual comments, sexual jokes, or unwanted advances.
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact.
- Offensive or demeaning remarks related to race, sex, ethnicity, or other characteristics.
- Repeated unwanted attention or communication.
- Interference with a person's ability to participate in campus life.

Disorderly, Reckless, or Unsafe Behavior

Reckless conduct that endangers people or property is not permitted. This includes rough play, aggressive joking, reckless pranks, or any behavior that creates risk, fear, or damage. MSU is a discipleship environment, and we expect students to carry themselves with maturity and self-control.

Entertainment Standards (Music, Dancing, Media)

We want an atmosphere where students can grow in holiness, focus, and spiritual sensitivity. Entertainment shapes thoughts and desires, so students are expected to live with discernment and to avoid entertainment that is clearly contrary to biblical values. The question is not just "Is it allowed?" The deeper question is: Is this edifying my soul, sharpening my conscience, and helping me follow Jesus? If something is feeding darkness, compromise, lust, pride, bitterness, or rebellion, it should not have a place in a disciple's life.

Music

Students are expected to avoid music that promotes anti-biblical values in lyrics, message, or spirit—especially music that celebrates sexual immorality, darkness, rebellion, or anything contrary to the fear of the Lord. Music should not be used in a way that distracts, stirs conflict, or disturbs others.

Dancing

Sexually provocative or seductive dancing is not permitted. Students must avoid any form of dance that is interpreted as sexually suggestive or contrary to biblical principles and MSU standards.

Movies, TV, and Video Games

Students are expected to avoid entertainment that exalts or normalizes things that are clearly anti-biblical, such as sexual immorality and lust, pornography or explicit sexual content, glorifying darkness or demonic themes, celebrating violence in a way that hardens the heart, or mocking holiness, faith, or the fear of the Lord. MSU is not trying to police every decision. We are building a culture of maturity—where students choose what strengthens the spirit, not what feeds compromise.

7. Academic Expectations, Credits, and Integrity

Academic and formation requirements

At MSU, formation is not optional. Students must maintain passing grades and complete required formation credits. Formation components carry the same weight as a class and may affect student standing and enrollment status.

Academic requirements may vary by major in workload, location, and frequency. However, the credits and formation expectations carry the same weight across programs.

Connect Groups (discipleship credit)

Credit is earned through attendance and participation, including honest engagement with confession, commitment, consecration, and community.

Service (service credit)

Students are expected to serve weekly in approved environments (local church, MorningStar departments, or approved outreaches). Students must communicate that they served and provide a leader contact who can confirm service when needed. If service cannot be verified, it will be treated as not completed and must be redone.

MSU Reading Program (reading credit)

MSU assigns required books each year. Students must complete the assigned reading and the required assignment/activity.

MSU may evaluate comprehension through a book review, workshop, interview, or a defense of written work. Reading credit is earned when the requirement is completed.

Chapel and required gatherings

Each student will also be scheduled to help lead chapel. This may include praying in or out, sharing a short word, facilitating an activity, leading prayer or intercession, or fully leading a small chapel service of approximately 30 minutes. Students are expected to prepare and lead these assignments with honor, maturity, and punctuality.

Students are expected to attend required chapels and other required MSU gatherings as announced, and to arrive on time.

Tardiness: Arrival after chapel has begun is counted as tardy for the first 5 minutes. Arrival after the first 5 minutes is counted as an absence.

Phone Use During Class

Students are expected to be fully present during class, chapel, and required gatherings. Phones should be put away and not used during class. Exceptions may be allowed only if the instructor gives permission for a class-related activity or an urgent need. Repeated phone use may affect participation, credit, and/or result in the student being asked to step out.

Attendance, intervention, and completion standards

Attendance and punctuality are part of honor, responsibility, and formation. Students are expected to communicate promptly when an absence occurs. An absence is excused only when it is caused by circumstances outside the student's control and is approved by the instructor and/or MSU leadership.

Examples of possible excused absences may include illness or medical issue, family emergency, transportation breakdown or unexpected travel delay, or another serious situation approved by MSU leadership.

Examples of unexcused absences include oversleeping, choosing not to attend, poor planning, staying up too late and missing class, spiritualizing irresponsibility (such as staying up all night and then missing class), or a non-emergency conflict not approved by leadership.

Two unexcused absences in a class or required training component will trigger intervention, including a conversation and support plan with the instructor and/or MSU leadership.

Three unexcused absences in a semester in any class or required training component is unacceptable and will result in failure of that class/component and loss of associated credit.

Repeated tardiness in any required setting may also trigger intervention and participation consequences.

Late work policy

Late work may receive a percentage penalty at instructor discretion. If a student has a legitimate excuse and communicates appropriately, penalties may be waived at instructor discretion.

Assignment Submission Standards

Assignment instructions and submission standards will be set by each instructor. Students are responsible to follow each course syllabus and assignment guidelines, including format, length, method of submission, and deadlines. If a student is unsure, the student is expected to ask the instructor in advance.

Grading scale

MSU uses the standard letter grading scale: A = 90–100, B = 80–89, C = 70–79, D = 60–69, and F = below 60. A final grade below 70 in any class is not passing. A student who receives below a C in any class is not eligible to advance to the next level/year and will not graduate that year until the requirement is satisfactorily resolved according to MSU leadership and academic policy.

Plagiarism and academic honesty

Plagiarism is using another person's words, ideas, or work without proper credit. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be penalized by the instructor and may trigger additional accountability measures.

Use of AI

MSU is not against the use of AI tools. AI may be used for research support, reference gathering, outlining, structure help, proofreading, and editing. Students may not submit AI-generated work as if it were their own. MSU reserves the right to question any student on any assignment and require a verbal review or defense to confirm understanding and integrity.

8. Discipline, Privileges, and Restoration

At MSU, discipline is not about punishment—it's about discipleship. Our goal is protection, growth, and restoration.

MSU reserves the right to address conduct not specifically listed in this handbook if such conduct is determined by leadership to be inconsistent with biblical standards, the mission of MSU, the health of the community, or the spirit of this handbook.

How discipline works

When concerns arise, MSU leadership will address them with discretion and care through conversation, appropriate documentation, a support plan when needed, and follow-up.

Privileges-based consequences

Depending on severity and patterns, MSU may apply temporary restrictions (such as access limitations, schedule adjustments, or removal from leadership opportunities) to protect formation and community health.

Restoration pathway

Restoration is possible when there is repentance and fruit over time. Trust is rebuilt through consistent integrity, accountability, and honor.

Requesting a review

If a student believes a decision has been mishandled, the student may request a review through MSU leadership in a respectful manner.

9. Tuition, Fees, Refunds, and Withdrawals

MSU maintains a clear policy for payments, refunds, and withdrawals. Refunds are not automatic and require review and approval through MSU administration.

Payment obligations and consequences

Missing tuition payments may carry immediate consequences, including but not limited to suspension from attending classes, expulsion, and student dorm eviction, as determined by MSU leadership and administration.

If a residential student is unable to pay rent or required housing charges, that may also result in consequences, including eviction, in accordance with H.I.M. guidelines.

Withdrawal process

To withdraw, a student must submit a written request to MSU administration at msuoffice@mstarm.org and complete any required checkout steps.

Refund policy (general)

If a student withdraws before classes begin, MSU may retain a non-refundable administrative fee. If a student withdraws after classes begin, refunds (if applicable) are typically calculated on a pro-rated basis based on the withdrawal date and committed costs.

Travel and trip fees

Travel and special event fees often involve non-refundable commitments. For that reason, trip fees are typically non-refundable once reservations or purchases have been made.

Special circumstances

In rare cases (medical emergencies, family crisis, etc.), MSU may review special circumstances with discretion. Any exceptions must be approved by MSU administration.

10. Student Cabin Standards

The student cabin is a place for fellowship, rest, and healthy community. Students are expected to treat the cabin with honor and maturity.

Students must follow cabin hours and quiet expectations as posted. Violations will have consequences.

Students must maintain wise relational boundaries in the cabin. The cabin is for community, not private romantic space.

Students are responsible to keep the cabin clean, remove trash as instructed, and leave the space in good condition. Failure to follow cabin expectations may result in restricted access and other privileges-based consequences.

11. Housing and Bunkhouse Standards (Residential Students)

This section applies to students living in MSU housing. Additional housing procedures may be provided at move-in and orientation.

Access and privacy

Girls may not enter the guys' bunkhouses. Guys may not enter the girls' bunkhouses. These boundaries must be followed.

Cleanliness and monthly inspections

Students are expected to keep personal and shared living areas clean and organized. MSU conducts monthly housing inspections. Failing an inspection will trigger consequences, which may include required re-inspection and/or privileges restrictions.

Quiet hours

Quiet hours will be posted each semester and are enforced. Violating quiet hours will have consequences.

Visitors

Visitor guidelines and procedures will be provided. Students must report visitors in advance through the appropriate process (typically to the Dean of Students or the person overseeing housing administration).

Shared spaces

Shared spaces (including laundry areas) must be treated with honor. Students are expected to keep shared spaces clean and remove personal items from washers/dryers in a timely manner.