

# First Christian School

Parent-Student Handbook  
Kindergarten – Eighth Grade



2024-2025

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# FIRST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## Welcome

Welcome to our First Christian School family! We consider it a great privilege to have your children entrusted in our care as we seek to train them according to God's principles. The purpose of this handbook is to outline some of your responsibilities, as well as ours, so that you will have a clear understanding of our philosophy and purpose.

We count it a great privilege and solemn responsibility to be part of the First Baptist Church ministry. This is a position in which God has placed us. We thank Him for this opportunity to serve in this endeavor.

With a firm conviction that home, church, and school should be in harmony and not contradictory, First Christian School was developed as a dynamic trio emphasizing the pre-eminence of God in each area.

Proverbs 22:6 states, *“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it”*. Thus, we are in a training process of developing Christian character in a God-honoring environment while your child is in our school.

If we are to reach the goals and strive for ideals necessary for academic excellence and Christian maturity, there must be cooperation on the part of the parent, the teacher, and the student.

For God's glory, First Christian School provides students a setting for academic excellence in the Christian perspective, builds character, and develops the student's gifts for service in their world.

It is the sole purpose of First Christian School to play a major part in molding the lives of young people so they will be spiritually and academically qualified to assume their proper roles in society.

This handbook does not attempt to itemize details or be all-inclusive. We believe our standards and appearances must be above and beyond the standards of the world and should be based on God's standards.

# **Statement of Faith**

## **1. God**

There is but one God, the Maker, Preserver, and Ruler of all things, having in and of Himself all perfections, and being infinite in them all; and to Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.

## **2. Trinity**

God is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes but without division of nature, essence, or being.

## **3. The Mediator**

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the divinely appointed mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human form, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law, suffered, and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinners. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He lives forever to make intercession for His people. He is the only Mediator, the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church, Sovereign of the Universe.

## **4. The Scriptures**

The scriptures of the Old and New Testament are given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain, and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

## **5. Faith**

Saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatsoever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life. It is written in the heart by the Holy Spirit and is accompanied by all other graces, and leads to a life of holiness.

## **6. The Church**

The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is invested supremely all power for its government. According to His command, Christians are to associate themselves into particular societies or churches; and to each of these churches He has given needed authority for administering that order, discipline, and worship which He has appointed. The regular officers of this church are Pastors, Deacons, and other elected officers.

## **7. Baptism**

Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, who is to be immersed in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of His fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, for remission of sins, and of His giving himself to God, to love and walk in newness of life. It is a prerequisite to church membership.

## **8. The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, and to be observed by His churches until the end of the world.

## **9. The Lord's Day**

The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance, and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, resting from worldly employments; works of necessity and mercy only are accepted.

First Christian School abides by all by laws of First Baptist Church.

### **First Baptist Church Mission Statement**

In all humility, proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people through: Worship, Education, Fellowship, and Love.

### **First Christian School Mission Statement**

The mission of the First Christian School is to provide a structured, high quality education based upon Christian principles and values.

## Educational Philosophy

All knowledge is from God and is full of spirit and truth when made relevant to God's purpose for humankind. Children are uniquely created by God. Therefore, each child has God-given talents to be nurtured. Children advance at different rates through stages of cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual development. We, at First Christian School, intend to provide learning experiences to enhance and stimulate all developmental areas in each child. This will be accomplished by providing a quality education through:

1. **Inspiring** lifelong enthusiasm and love of learning, wisdom, and knowledge.
2. **Striving** for academic excellence in each child through the use of high quality scholastic tools and curriculum.
3. **Encouraging** children to learn responsibility by participation in age-appropriate decision-making.
4. **Establishing** a foundation of core Christian values and morals.
5. **Challenging** the child to respond to God in a personal relationship through Jesus Christ our Savior.

## Admissions

The following admission procedures are required for all students:

- Submit an enrollment application.
- Submit \$400 non-refundable registration fee to secure enrollment by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the incoming year. **Fee increases to \$500 after April 1<sup>st</sup>** (if a returning student).  
**Please note:** *The school board policy limits class sizes to keep student/teacher ratio low. Kindergarten – maximum 15 students (with aide) and 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade – maximum of 18 students.\*\*\* In order for a new class to open there must be six students on the waiting list.*
- Sign an enrollment contract, indicating desired payment plan.
- Submit the annual resource fee by August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- A copy of your child's state birth certificate must be presented in order to verify identity.
- Submit an Emergency Medical Authorization Form.
- Submit immunization dates showing inoculations for DPT, tetanus, polio, measles, rubella, mumps, and Hepatitis B.
- If a child is transferring from another school, parents must sign a release of records form.
- The grade level teacher must assess any student transferring to our school in order to determine if the student has the potential for success in our program.
- FCS reserves the right to assess incoming Kindergarten students in order to determine academic, social, or emotional readiness.

## Pre-registration Procedures

As indicated on the current school year calendar, students already attending FCS may enroll for the upcoming school year by the aforementioned admission procedures. Any student who registers after the pre-registration date may be placed on a waiting list if all spaces are filled for the desired class. Any outstanding debts **must be** settled before registration. If at any point in time during the school year, a student's tuition payment has exceeded **60 days**, the student's tuition for the upcoming year **must be paid in full prior to August 1<sup>st</sup>**.

## Withdrawal Policy

All withdrawals from the program must be submitted in writing in order to be released from the obligation of the tuition, otherwise you will be held responsible for the tuition and applicable fees. If withdrawal from the program is necessary due to a life-changing event, such as death in the family, long term serious illness or relocation out of the FCS area, then tuition refunds will be prorated by full month (less the registration fee and supply fees.) Refunds for withdrawal for other reasons must be approved by the School Board and are not guaranteed. Student records will be released when all debts are paid in full and all school materials are returned. Debts paid with check will require a two week hold on record release until the check has cleared the bank.

## Dismissal Policy

Students may be dismissed from FCS if he/she is unable to abide by the established rules and policies of the school. Dismissed students will not be considered for enrollment the following year and no refunds will be given.

## Financial Information

### **Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- \$5,200 tuition (a 25% deduction for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and any additional children – (this only applies to children in grades K-8.) The tuition applies if the children attend for the entire year.
- \$400.00 **NON-REFUNDABLE** registration fee due at time of registration to secure a place on the class roll (\$200 registration fee for 2<sup>nd</sup> child and no registration fee for any additional children) is due by April 1<sup>st</sup>. ***After April 1<sup>st</sup>, the registration fee increases to \$500 for the first child and \$300 for the second child (if returning students).***
- Resource fees will be determined yearly. The resource fee is due by August 1<sup>st</sup>
- Contact the school office at 447-2634 with any questions regarding finances.
- If a check is returned for insufficient funds, there will be a \$35 return check fee with a requirement that this payment and any future payments be made in cash. We will not redeposit the check or accept any further checks as payment.



- There will be a \$35 late fee charge per tuition payment/per child after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month if prior arrangements have not been made. Arrangements must be made prior to the 10<sup>th</sup>. Should payments fall more than 15 days in arrears past the 10<sup>th</sup> the student will not be allowed to return
- We do not send invoices each month.

## Academic Information

Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade uses the A BEKA BOOK Christian Academic and Bible Curriculums. Teachers uphold the school's Statement of Faith and Mission Statement. They display their commitment to Jesus Christ throughout the curriculum.

**Curriculum:** A BEKA BOOK Christian Curriculum, supplemented with curriculum from Bob Jones University, Positive Action for Christ, Harcourt (Holt) and Pearson/Scott Foresman Publications as well as Virginia Standards of Learning packets.

READING	LANGUAGE	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
WRITING	LITERATURE	BIBLE	HEALTH
PHONICS	VIRGINIA HISTORY		U.S. HISTORY PAST & PRESENT
SPELLING	MATH		PREALGEBRA
CIVICS	ECONOMICS		

### Additional Instruction:

PHYSICAL EDUCATION	MUSIC	FIELD TRIPS
ART	KEYBOARDING	

## Pledges

These are used at the beginning of each school day, school assemblies, and chapel services:

### Pledge to the Bible

"I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy word; I will make it a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path, and hide its words in my heart that I may not sin against God."

### Pledge to the Christian Flag

"I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands, one brotherhood uniting all Christians in service and in love."

### Pledge to the American Flag

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

*Prayers of thanks will be given by all students prior to snacks and lunch.*

## **Standardized Testing**

FCS utilizes the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, also referred to as ITBS (Iowa Assessments), for our end of year testing. It is given in the spring each year. The test is used nationally and has been in use for decades as a standard achievement test. This allows the school to measure your child's progress as compared to others nationally.

## **Bean Stack Reader Program**

This year FCS will be using Bean Stack to encourage reading and a positive reading culture. Bean Stack uses an app and a website for student and parents to document students reading. Each grade will have challenges to complete throughout the year. It is expected that the reported reading will be recorded accurately. Celebrations and treats are provided by the FCSA.

## **Spelling Bee Competition**

During the school year, students in grades 2-5 will participate in informal spelling bee competitions in their classrooms. Awards will be given on the last day of school.

## **Bible Teaching/Chapel**

As a Christian school, daily Bible teaching is an integral part of the curriculum. At FCS, we strive to provide a high-quality education based upon scholastic and biblical principles. Along with this are chapel services, which all students are required to attend. During chapel, the students will learn hymns, hear testimonies and value-building messages from the Bible. Parents are invited to worship with us during the chapel services. A schedule will be provided with the times and dates of your child's chapel.

## **Academic Conduct**

FCS values each child and commits to helping him/her develop solid academic skills necessary for future success. Academic conduct pertains to behaviors displayed during academic activities. Students will be taught and encouraged to display the following academic behaviors:

- ATTENTIVENESS
- COOPERATION
- EFFORT
- RESPONSIBILITY
- Textbooks, calculators, etc. owned by the school are the responsibility of the student (if lost or damaged, the student will be held financially responsible).

## Honor Code

**Academic Honor** requires respect for the intellectual and artistic property of others. The Honor Pledge should be written and signed by students on all class tests, papers, examinations, and other work which a faculty member designates as an honor assignment.

Honor Pledge: "I have neither given nor received help on this assignment."

### **Violations to the Academic Honor Code include but are not limited to:**

- Giving or receiving information in advance of a test when individuals or class sections have taken the test earlier
- Giving or receiving any aid during a test
- Giving or receiving notes, textbooks, or other sources during a test unless authorized by the instructor
- Representing another's work or ideas as one's own. Plagiarism is an especially serious offense. "Cut and paste" from websites is not acceptable (even when cited). Copying text, even with changing or rearranging works is plagiarism.
- Permitting another student to copy work

## Classwork Policy

All FCS students will be held to the following standards regarding classwork:

- All student work must be legible and neat. Teachers may refuse to accept work lacking in these two requirements.
- Students are responsible for completing all missed classwork. The student will be given 3 days per absence to complete missed assignments, beginning the day the student returns to school. Failure to complete missed assignments may result in a lower grade.
- Classwork is sent home to be reviewed and may require parent signature. All tests will be kept until the end of each nine weeks.
- If a student is absent from school, the work may be picked up in the office at the **end** of the school day.

## Homework Policy

All FCS students will be held to the following standards regarding homework:

- Homework must be legible and neat. Teachers may refuse to accept work lacking in these two requirements.
- Failure to complete and return homework has academic and disciplinary consequences. Encourage your child to complete every assigned homework task.
- Students are responsible for completing all missed homework. The student will be given 3 days per absence to complete missed homework assignments, beginning the day the student returns to school. Homework is not given as busywork. The assignments are relative to the material being studied in class and support the curriculum.

## Make Up Work Policy

- Students are responsible for completing all missed class work for an excused absence. The student will be given 2 days per absence to complete missed assignments up to but not to exceed six days for an excused absence, beginning the day the student returns to school. Failure to complete missed assignments may result in a lower grade.

- For unexcused absences that result from a vacation/trip, families are required to notify the teacher in writing a week before the trip. All written work that was sent home to complete is due the day the student returns from the trip. Students will be expected to make up assessments beginning the day he/she returns. No more than three make up assessments may be given in a day.

## **PE Curriculum**

### *Kindergarten - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade:*

Each student can earn 10 points each P.E. Class. The ten points will include:

**Participation (4 pts)**

**Sportsmanship/Behavior (4 pts)**

**Skills Tests (2 pts)**

On days that there are no skills tests, participation and sportsmanship/behavior will each be worth 5 points.

Points Grade (90-100 = O, 80-89 = S, 60-79= N, 0-59= U.)

### *3<sup>rd</sup> grade – 8<sup>th</sup> grade:*

Elementary students are expected to come to PE with the appropriate attire. Students are expected to wear:

- t-shirts/sweatshirts
- shorts/sweatpants or stretch pants

Students in grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade will receive letter grades.

**Sneakers are required for all students.** Students who do not bring the appropriate shoes will not be allowed to participate in the class activities.

Students will be given the opportunity to make up a daily grade should they come to class unprepared (ie: no sneakers and/or not dressing out) by completing the following assignments:

- Elementary grades - a worksheet.

**This is not an alternative to participating in P.E.** More than **two** unprepared days will result in a note home.

A written, dated, and signed note describing why the student cannot attend P.E must accompany excuses from participation. The note must be from either a parent stating the reason for not participating or a signed doctor's note. After 3 days, a doctor's note is required. The grade point system is the same as all core subjects.

**If a student does not participate in PE for any reason, he/she will not be able to participate in after school sports for that day.**

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are taken at various times during the school year to places of educational interest. The students are required to maintain the same level of discipline and dress away from the school as is required at school. There are times when parents may be asked to serve as chaperones or will desire to do so. Please let your child's teacher know of your availability. The school does require parents to follow the same standard of dress as is required of the students. Parents who are unable to attend a field trip may designate an adult chaperone for his/her child. The parent must sign an alternative transportation waiver in such cases. Each grade level will have specific field trips that are exclusive to that grade level. Refunds for field trips may not be possible because many trips require prepayment and do not offer refunds. Field Trips are considered a school day and attendance counts the same as a typical school day. If a student chooses not to attend the field trip and does not attend school, the student will be marked absent.\*\*\*

## **Report Cards**

FCS follows a nine-week grading period for K-5<sup>th</sup> grade. After nine weeks, a formal report card will be issued to students. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with their child's teacher concerning questions about the report card. The report card should be signed by the parent/guardian and returned within 2 days.

## **Grading Scale**

A	93% - 100%	O	- Outstanding
B	85 % - 92 %	S	- Satisfactory
C	76% - 84%	I	- Improving
D	69% - 75%	U	- Unsatisfactory
F	Below 69%		(this mark will keep a student off of the honor roll)

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Conferences are an effective way for teachers and parents to communicate. We have two formal conferences scheduled each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents or teachers may schedule a conference at any time. Our school encourages parental involvement through conferencing. If a conference is needed, the parent should make a **scheduled** appointment with the teacher. Scheduling appointments will ensure the best quality conference session.

## **Promotion/Retention**

Students who meet all academic requirements, including meeting attendance requirements, will be promoted to the next grade level. If a child has not failed a grade but is weak in certain areas, it is sometimes recommended that the child be **placed** in the next grade so that he or she may demonstrate proficiency at that grade level. If proficiency is NOT demonstrated, an academic review will be conducted prior to the end of the first nine-week grading period.

Our goal is to promote success and to develop a lifelong love of learning in our students; however, each child learns and develops at different rates and not every child is ready for academic advancement by year-end. The following situations may result in student retention:

- If a student fails one or more major subjects, the administration will review the students' academic situation to determine if the child is eligible for promotion.
- In some instances, a teacher may recommend that a student be retained in order to give that student the opportunity to master the skills and develop the emotional and social maturity necessary for success at the next grade level. In addition to teacher input, standardized testing information and a review of previous academic records and standings will be used in order to make an informed decision in the best interest of the child.

In the case of excessive absences (see attendance policy), a board review will be conducted in order to determine student advancement. In this situation, teacher recommendation, standardized testing information and academic records will be heavily relied upon in order to make an informed decision in the best interest of the child. Pending the board review, this could result in mandatory tutoring hours or retention.

### **Resource Teacher Services**

Students who are eligible for resource services, may request them throughout the school year. This may incur additional fees, which are not included in your tuition. Parents will be notified of the additional fees, if applicable, prior to the commencement of said services. Please note that resource services are not a substitution for tutoring.

### **Tutoring Services**

During the course of the school day, tutoring may be offered for students who need additional assistance in specific subject areas. The teacher and/or parent may request tutoring services throughout the school year. Some of our tutoring services require additional fees, which are not included in your tuition. You will be notified of the additional fees when applicable.

### **Mandatory Tutoring**

Mandatory tutoring may be required when a child has missed valuable instructional time due to excessive absences and/or evidence of academic struggles are identified and indicate that there is a lack of mastery of the grade level skills. When tutoring hours are required, the parent will be notified in writing. The hours must be documented and recorded by a trained educator and provided to administration prior to the start of the new school year. An assessment may be required to verify a child's readiness for the next grade level upon completion of the tutoring hours.

## **HONORS & AWARDS**

### **Report Period Honors**

Starting in the first grade, academic honors will be published each report period as an incentive to excel. Students putting forth the effort to achieve academic honors are deserving of the following recognition:

- Alpha List – 93 or above in each subject
- Honor Roll – 85 or above in each subject

### **End of Year Honors and Awards**

Honors and awards will be given at the end of the year at a special Awards Ceremony. Parents are encouraged to attend. Students are encouraged to be present on that day and take extra pride in their appearance for the ceremony. The following honors and awards are recognized:

- Alpha List – 93 or above in each subject each grading period; including conduct
- A/B Honor Roll – 85 or above in each subject each grading period including conduct
- Spelling Bee – First, Second, Third place winners
- Reading Awards
- Christian Living Awards
- Academic Excellence – This award is presented to 5<sup>th</sup> graders by Headmaster/Headmistress to any students who have maintained a 4.0 average throughout their elementary or middle school career.
- Academic Achievement – This award is presented to 5<sup>th</sup> graders by Headmaster/Headmistress to any students who have maintained a 3.5 average throughout their elementary or middle school career.

\*transfer students will be reviewed by the administration to determine eligibility

## **Attendance, Absence, Arrival & Tardy Policies**

We encourage our students to attend school regularly. There is no substitute for the uninterrupted personal contact between teachers and students in the classroom environment. We discourage absences that are not sickness related or family emergencies. Please make every effort to plan appointments after school hours. Occasional absences are unavoidable especially with sickness. *The student should bring a note from home explaining*

*the absence when he/she returns to school. This note must be returned within 3 days or will be considered an unexcused absence.*

For a student to be counted present, he/she must be in attendance a minimum of 3½ hours of the school day (either all morning or all afternoon).

### **Arrival Times:**

Elementary students must arrive prior to 8:25 a.m.

Students and families should make a concerted effort to arrive on time. Students are expected to arrive at school before the start of class, in order to ensure a smooth morning transition and as not to interrupt class instruction. All students who arrive after the required arrival time must be escorted into the office entrance and signed in. The student will be given an “admit slip” to class explaining whether the tardy is excused or unexcused.

**For every five unexcused tardies, one day's absence will be recorded. In cases of repeated tardiness, the parents will be called for a conference. A note must accompany the child when arriving late and the excused tardy must adhere to the list below:**

The following shall constitute a valid excused absence or tardy for part or all of a day, provided satisfactory evidence of the excuse is submitted to the school office in the form of a note or phone call from the parents (the note must be returned within 3 days):

- personal illness or injury
- death in the family
- impassable roads due to inclement weather/natural disasters/car accident
- car trouble
- medical or dental appointments (we strongly encourage appointments be made outside the normal school day)

***If a child misses 3 days or more due to sickness, a doctor's note is required in order for it to count as an excused absence.***

All schoolwork must be kept current and excuses must be submitted in advance, except for emergency appointments.

### **Excessive Absences**

If a student misses 15 days, parents will be notified that the child is in danger of not passing due to excessive absences. If a student accrues 18 absences, the headmistress will contact the parents to notify them that any additional absences will place the student on probation. When a student exceeds 20 days, the school board will review a student's records of excused/unexcused absences to determine if retention is necessary. Mandatory tutoring may be required for excessive absences, see page 19. (Please note that 5 unexcused tardies will result in 1 unexcused absence.)



## **Arrival/Dismissal Procedures**

Student arrival and dismissal site is located at the double doors on the side of the school building. Students should enter the building by themselves.

Access to school property when picking up and delivering students should be from Mecklenburg Avenue and forming two traffic lines in the parking lot to keep our traffic on church property. These two lines should merge forming a single line just prior to getting to the double doors. Cars from the two lines should alternate when merging into single file. **From 8:05-8:25 AM and from 3:15 – 3:30 PM, the traffic flow from the church parking lot toward the alley behind the school is a one-way traffic pattern.**

Due to safety reasons, no student is allowed to get out of the car until the doors are opened. Our goal is to start school in a timely manner. The door attendant will use his/her cell phone time and we encourage you to plan accordingly so there will be no concern about arrival time. Also, due to safety reasons, we cannot allow parents to walk between cars to pick up or drop off their children.

**Under no circumstances should a child be left outside the school building unsupervised.**

## **Late Pick-up Fees**

If your child has not been picked up by 3:30 PM, the child will be placed in Sonshine Station (After School Program). There is an additional charge for this service. Students that are attendees of the Sonshine Station Program are charged per week. A per-day rate is charged for occasional attendees. The daily fee is charged each time an occasional attendee stays.

## **Sign In/Sign Out Procedure**

Students must report to their classroom by 8:25 AM. If a student is tardy, the parent must accompany the student to the school office and sign the late arrival log. Parents must report to the school office if a student needs to leave school before 3:15 PM.

## **Visitation during School Day \*\*\***

All parents are welcome to visit during the school day provided arrangements have been made with the teacher. This will help our school run more effectively and improve student time on task. Under no circumstances should a parent visit the classroom without reporting to the school office first.

***Should you need to make an appointment with the teacher, please call the office or send a note to that teacher as to the time you prefer, and the teacher will then verify the appointment. Please note that from 8:00-8:30 am, teachers are preparing for class so no teacher appointments will be conducted during this timeframe.***

## Contacting Students

Lunches, books and other items should be left with the office to be delivered to your child's classroom. If you need to send a message during school, please call the office and a message will be delivered. Except for emergencies we **do not** call a student to the telephone. A message will be given to a student to call a parent during a convenient break (i.e. lunch). Parents are not allowed in the classroom after 8:25 am unless prior arrangements have been made.

## Health & Wellness Policy

### Illness/Injuries

You will be notified immediately if your child becomes ill or injured at school. Each parent fills out an Emergency Medical Authorization Form during enrollment, naming your physician and an alternative adult to call should we be unable to reach you. Every effort will be made to reach parents/guardians of students who are ill or injured and in need of emergency care. You are asked to complete an emergency form, which will release the school of any legal responsibilities and, at the same time, give permission for us to obtain medical treatment for your child in case of an emergency. Students who leave school due to illness must be signed-out at the office. Parents are responsible for updating contact information.

If a child has a fever or a communicable disease, the child is required to remain fever free without fever reducing medication for a 24 hour period before returning to school.

### ***ILLNESSES THAT REQUIRE EXCLUSION***

*In order to protect the health of other children attending school and our staff, we will be unable to care for your child if s/he has:*

- *A temperature of 99.6 degrees or more*
- *Symptoms of severe illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs.*
- *Severe cold symptoms*
- *Pink eye (**Must have been treated for 48 hours before returning to school**)*
- *Thrush*
- *Communicable disease (**Parents must provide proof of treatment and a physician's clearance for re-admission.**)*
- *Unexplained skin rashes or discharge*
- *Sore throat with fever or rash*
- *Diarrhea and/or vomiting*
- *Persistent abdominal pain lasting more than 2 hours*
- *Rash with fever or behavior change*
- *Lice or nits*
- **Does not feel well enough to participate in normal activities**

*Your child may return when:*

- *Fever free for 24 hours\* **without** the aid of fever reducer*
- *Vomiting/Diarrhea has subsided for 24 hours*
- *Child feels well enough to participate in school activities*

*\*Please note that when dealing with a fever, we will follow the “fever today, gone tomorrow” rule.*

**Special Exclusions:**

*If your child has an illness such as influenza, pneumonia, bronchitis, strep throat, or a “stomach virus”, then they must stay home for 2 school days **and then** if they meet the above criteria, they may return to school.*

*A student can be sent home at the discretion of the teacher/administrator based on unusual behaviors, symptoms, complaints, etc.*

*Please keep your child home for recovery for at least one full week following surgical procedures like a tonsillectomy or an appendectomy.*

***\*Please note that a note from the doctor stating the child may return does NOT override these guidelines. The policies set forth in this handbook are for the protection of the students and the staff.***

**Administration of Medication**

If a student must take any medication at school, prescription or over-the-counter, the parent must bring the medication (along with the instructions for dosage and times) to the office and complete all necessary paperwork. All medication must be administered by a trained MAT employee. The student will be sent to the office to take all medication. All prescription medication must be in its original dispenser.

**It is the policy of the school to not furnish items such as but not limited to fever reducer, pain reliever, cough drops or topical ointments or other medication. Medicine will be administered only if the parent furnishes it and gives specific directions and all proper forms are completed by the physicians and parents.**

**Head Lice Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the prevention and control of head lice in the students and staff attending First Christian School & Sonshine Station.

At any time during the school year, a school designee and/or a registered nurse may inspect students for head lice. If nit or lice are identified during the inspection, the following procedure will be implemented:

- The student will be removed from the classroom and a parent or designated guardian will be called to come to the school to pick up the student.
- A packet of written instructions will be given to the parent or guardian as well as the student before the student leaves the building. It will be the parent's responsibility to follow these instructions to rid the student of lice and nits so that he/she may be re-admitted to the school/Sonshine Station.
- After treatment has been completed and ALL nits have been removed, the parent shall call the school/Sonshine Station to set up an appointment for re-inspection of the student prior to re-admission.

- After the student has been cleared to return to class/Sonshine Station, the designee will continue to check for nits occasionally over the course of a two-week period

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT & DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

The word discipline is derived from “*disciple*” and refers to the act of teaching and guiding. The appropriate use of discipline can be an extremely effective method for teaching children socially acceptable ways of behaving. At First Christian School, we strive to support the children as they grow socially by using positive forms of discipline.

### **Student Conduct**

Order is necessary in any school to maintain control and to effectively teach. To teach self-discipline and respect for authority, certain standards of conduct are maintained at FCS. Students are expected to comply with the standards and regulations of the school with a positive attitude. They are encouraged to use “Yes Sir” or “Yes Ma'am” when conversing with a teacher or other adult. Correction by the teacher should be accepted without argument. If there is a question concerning the violation of a rule, the student should discuss it with the teacher privately. Courtesy and respect for fellow students is also expected. A student who does not respond to corrective discipline and who displays an attitude, which is consistently out of harmony with the spirit of the school, will be considered for dismissal.

### **DISCIPLINE NOTICES:**

The purpose of discipline notices is to point out to the student and parent a behavior and/or action that does not meet the FCS conduct standard so that the student, with the support of his/her family and teachers, can endeavor to grow, learn and prevent any future conduct infractions. Discipline notices may be issued for any of the following reasons. This list is **not** exhaustive:

- Severe chapel misconduct
- Excessive class disruption
- Aggressive behavior
- Severe lack of class responsibility
- Disobedience/disrespect/sassiness/offensive body language
- Fighting
- Leaving class without permission
- Possession of inappropriate items (magazines, tapes, tape or CD player, cell phones, blackberry, iPod, tablet, apple watch, or any electronic device with internet accessibility, etc.) Student disrespect to teacher and/or another student (including his/her property)
- Vulgarity, profanity, offensive language
- **Cheating:**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> offense – teacher will take original grade and average with a zero to get actual grade
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – parent conference required/student will receive a grade of zero on the assignment

- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – referral to school board
- **Biting:**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> offense – the parent will be contacted and the student will receive a discipline referral.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – the student will be sent home for 1 day.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – will require 3 days out of school.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> offense a student may be referred for dismissal from school.

- **Bullying:**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

- A child-friendly definition of bullying: ***Bullying is when you keep picking on someone because you think you're cooler, smarter, stronger or better than them.***
- **Physical bullying** includes: hitting, punching, poking, shoving, pinching, jabbing, kicking, choking, unwanted touching, blocking, chasing and cornering, tripping, vandalizing, stealing, and writing graffiti (on both public and private property and by use of computers or other technological devices).
- **Emotional bullying** includes: name-calling; threatening; taunting; malicious and incessant teasing; spreading rumors; mocking; public humiliation; stalking; making faces or obscene gestures; making offensive racial, religious or sexual comments; ganging-up on others; belittling; persistently excluding others from a group or activity (shunning); ignoring and lying.
- **Cyber bullying** - students who participate in Facebook postings and cell phone texting must never make negative comments about classmates, teachers or school (*this includes outside of school hours*)
- **Regarding lower grades (K-1):** Young children asserting their will is not uncommon and can sometimes mimic bullying behaviors (i.e.: grabbing toys, shoving, ignoring others and ganging up on others). In lower level classes, the discipline process will begin with teacher redirection and discussions prior to moving to the formal discipline referral process in order to allow the child the opportunity to grow and mature.

The following are the consequences for each discipline notice issued during the course of the academic school year. Please note, an infraction that qualifies under the severe clause (see below) will bypass the discipline notice process:

1 <sup>st</sup> Notice	Note or phone call to Parent
2 <sup>nd</sup> Notice	Mandatory parent conference
3 <sup>rd</sup> Notice	Letter grade dropped on conduct for the nine weeks
4 <sup>th</sup> Notice	1-3 days out of school suspension/or afterschool detention
5 <sup>th</sup> Notice	3-5 days out of school suspension
6 <sup>th</sup> Notice	Expulsion

## **SEVERE CLAUSE:**

The Headmistress will bypass the above discipline notices and will refer student to School Board for immediate expulsion for severe offenses. This may include but is not limited to habitual offenders (such as those who pick, tease, or harass another student).

## **Expulsion**

The recommendation to expel any student is made by the Headmistress and the School Board makes the final decision. A student may be dismissed immediately for any of the following reasons:

- Possession of any weapon or ammunition
- Possession of any drug or medication without authorization from a parent
- If the parent does not cooperate with the school
- When six discipline notices have accumulated
- If the absence or tardy policy is abused
- Habitual cheating
- Lying or deception
- Theft or vandalism
- Possession of any form of pornography
- Smoking or use of tobacco products
- Possession or use of alcohol
- Habitual profanity
- Threatening other children/adults
- Cyber bullying such as, but not limited to, students who participate in Facebook postings and cell phone texting which makes negative comments about classmates, teachers or the school (This includes outside of school hours)

## **Building and Grounds Care**

All school property is being provided through the sacrificial giving of the church, friends, and the parents. All of this has been dedicated to God and therefore belongs to Him. Because of this, it is vitally important that we work together to keep the property in good condition. Any damage done to the facilities by the students will be repaired at the student's expense. Anyone who willfully damages, defaces, or destroys church property will face appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Dress Code**

Proper dress attire at FCS is considered any type of clothing, which is neat, clean, properly (completely) covers the body and is appropriate for a school day. All students are expected to adhere to the following dress code guidelines as outlined:

- Girls and boys may wear their hair any length as long as it is neat, clean and does not block vision by hanging in front of his/her eyes.
- Shirts and tops must extend below the beltline even when sitting or bending. Shirts and tops worn with leggings must completely cover the student's bottom, even when sitting or bending.
- Any article of clothing that is designed with suggestive pictures or words, slogans with gross overtones or sexual references, depictions of alcoholic beverage including advertisements, or drug references is prohibited.
- Hats or caps are not to be worn in the First Christian School or church building.
- Muscle shirts are not to be worn by boys without a shirt underneath.
- Girls will not be allowed to wear backless blouses, sundresses, midriffs, halters, or tank tops. All sleeveless shirts must be at least two inches wide on the shoulder.
- For reasons of health and safety, shoes must be worn at all times.
- Tennis shoes are strongly encouraged for safety on the playground and are required on P.E. days. **No flip flops or crocs** may be worn at P.E.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Grade and up:**
- Shorts, including bicycle shorts, skorts, dresses, and skirts must be finger tip length.
- Students are not allowed to wear pants that are torn, ripped, or slashed above the knee without leggings, shorts, or other cloth underneath.
- Form-fitting pants or shorts (Bicycle shorts), stretch pants, yoga pants, and leggings must be worn with a shirt that completely covers the bottom.

Violation of this dress code will result in a phone call to his/her parent immediately and the parent will be asked to provide a change of clothing. A warning slip will be given. If a student continues to violate the dress code, then the administrator will meet with the parents to develop a plan to alleviate the problem.

## **Safety**

### **Fire/Tornado Drills**

Fire drills are held periodically. When the signal is given, all class activities must cease and students must exit promptly. A fire drill chart is posted in each room. Observe the following rules:

- Walk quickly in single file but do not run or push.
- No talking in or out of the building. Listen for the teacher's directions.
- The last person out of the classroom should turn off the lights, close windows and close the door.

The Commonwealth of Virginia Fire code requires the school to have five (5) fire drills within the first twenty (20) days of school and one per month thereafter.

\*Tornado drills are conducted twice a year.

### **Insurance**

FCS has accident insurance on all children enrolled. This covers the student at school and during school field trips. However, parents/guardians should keep in mind that if they

have personal insurance, the school's policy would be secondary coverage. Personal insurance will be the primary coverage.

### **Peanut Free Policy**

All snacks and sides that are served by our kitchen are peanut-free. We also refrain from purchasing items that have been made in a peanut factory. Unfortunately since we are a shared facility, we cannot guarantee that peanut products will not be used at some point in the kitchen; however, we make every effort for children with peanut allergies to be safe. Additional reminders about any food allergies in the classroom will go home prior to any parties or festivities where parents bring food to school.

### **Snacks**

Every child is allowed to bring a snack. Please be mindful of the Peanut Free Policy. There is to be no sharing of food. In order to promote healthy habits, no sodas/coffee/energy/carbonated drinks are allowed.

## **Social Media Guidelines for First Christian School Employees & Students**

First Christian School recognizes that many of our staff, students, parents and community members are active social media users. As a school, we are also incorporating social media as part of our communications strategy.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help you to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation, and the reputation of FCS, and that respects the relationship between teachers, students, and parents.

For the purposes of this document, social media includes, but is not necessarily limited to, social networking and media sharing sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, Tumblr, and YouTube. It also includes blogs, comments on web sites, discussion forums, and any other activity online involving connecting or communicating with other users. These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet that are in place at FCS.

### **Your Personal Responsibility:**

We encourage responsible participation in social networking sites, subject to existing policies concerning the use of social media during work hours and other applicable policies, including, but not limited to those concerning non-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-bullying, and copyright/fair use. We ask that you carefully consider the very public forum you are participating in and act in a way that properly represents both your professional reputation and FCS. Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Seek to build trust and responsibility in your relationships. Avoid insulting others, including students, staff, parents, our extended school community, or other schools. Do not use racial slurs, innuendos, obscenity or other inappropriate content. Avoid posting, sharing, commenting, or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information. Represent FCS and the teachers, students and parents you serve in the best light. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. You are responsible for what you post and communications that would be deemed inappropriate or actionable if they occurred inside, or outside of the classroom do not become



acceptable merely because they are made online. Always bear in mind that once posted, you cannot take it back. Some specific guidelines we expect you to follow:

- Use common sense when posting online. While these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to comment upon the workplace/school place, it remains good practice to never post anything that would embarrass you or FCS, or would call your reputation into question.
- You are personally responsible for the content you publish online. "Content" includes personal comments, links, photographs, audio or video, and content created by other users that you choose to share or re-post.
- Be mindful that any content you publish will be public for a long time. Not only can your content show up in Google and other search engines, but the FTC allows private corporations to store publicly accessible Facebook posts for a period of some seven years to be used in employee background checks made by current or potential employers. Moreover, even posts that are "private" may be subject to discovery in legal actions.
- You should also be mindful that once something is posted, you cannot take it back. In most instances deleting content will not make it disappear. Deleted content can still show up in online searches, or with the click of a button, other users can take a screen shot, re-post, or share your content with others. Even if you share your content with a very limited number of people, nothing prohibits your contacts from sharing the information you post.
- Before you post or share content, ask yourself if you would want to see that content in the newspaper or on the evening news. Would you feel comfortable if your content was read by colleagues, your students, parents, your pastor, or the School Board? If the answer is "no," then the content is best not shared.
- Special care should be taken when posting personal photographs. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality and reputation. All photographs should be posted with the assumption that they could end up in the public realm.
- As an employee and student of FCS, content you post should not include provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, content showing or promoting the excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol or use of drugs, or any activity you are legally prohibited from doing. Remember, even with privacy settings in place, your content could be seen by teachers, students or parents or find its way into the public realm.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the online world. When you are online, you may be connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Sometimes those connections may be direct and obvious. Other times the connections may be indirect or via mutual connections. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work and studies at FCS.
- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration you apply offline.
- Protect your privacy. You are responsible for understanding and controlling privacy settings on each social network you use. Always assume default settings will make your profile and any content you share publicly accessible. You should also understand that even with maximum privacy settings in place, content can still find its way in to the public domain.
- Use your personal email addresses on social networking sites and while engaging in social media activities. At no time, except with prior consent from the Head Mistress, should you claim to be speaking or issuing opinions on behalf of FCS.
- While FCS respects the rights of its employees and students to exercise their rights, no one should make any derogatory statements about teachers, students, parents, or the Board that would reflect badly on your reputation or the reputation of FCS. You are ultimately responsible for your comments and FCS recommends that you thoughtfully consider your rights and responsibilities prior to posting.

- Do not create any social media account, blog or website intended to represent FCS without express, prior consent from the Head Mistress. It is important for us to protect the schools brand, ensure certain brand standards and content guidelines are maintained, and ensure any new accounts fit overall communications and education standards established by the school.

### **Employee-Student Relations**

FCS recognizes the role that communication and collaboration between employees and students plays in the educational process and experience. The school further recognizes that the advancement of electronic communication and social media technologies creates greater opportunity for interactions between employees and students, and provides these additional guidelines for your own and the students' protection.

- Employees are discouraged from connecting with students on social media sites.
- Employees are never under any obligation to accept friend or follower requests from any student, or to use personal social media accounts to engage with students or participate in district projects. In addition, you should bear in mind that unless your account has privacy settings correctly configured, everything you post may be publicly accessible to your students whether you are connected to them or not.
- Employees must exercise great care in connecting with students on any social media channels. Do not send permission-based friend or follower requests to students, for example Facebook friend requests. Use discretion and carefully consider the guidelines provided by the district before accepting any permission-based friend or follower requests received from students. It is the school's recommendation that if an employee decides to accept friend or follower requests received from students that they should accept all such requests, and not selectively limit their interactions to what could be perceived as a few preferred individuals.
- Any employee-student communications or relationships via social media should be of an appropriate professional nature, have content that is appropriate for both the communications medium and the audience addressed, and must not violate any provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. With each communication, ask yourself if it's something you would feel comfortable being printed in the newspaper, read by parents, colleagues, or the School Board. As with content, always assume any communication can easily end up in the public realm.
- Employees who are connected to or communicate with students via social media must understand they may be granting those students access to all content in their personal social media profiles and should consider the guidelines the school has provided to ensure students are protected from exposure to inappropriate content or content that might compromise the employee's professional reputation.
- Employees are also responsible for ensuring any relationship and all dialogue with the student is kept professional in its nature and for immediately reporting to the district any inappropriate communication received from a student. This is as much for your protection as the student's. Any content or communication generated either by you, or by a student, which would be inappropriate in the classroom should also be considered inappropriate when shared via social media.
- The school recognizes there may be certain limited exceptions to these guidelines, such as a student being a family member or relative, or in those instances where an employee's interaction with a student is as a result of certain extra-curricular activities such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, religious organizations or other similar relationships.
- Respect the privacy and rights of both colleagues and students. Confidential student or personnel information should not be posted online. Be sure not to violate any provision of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- Do not use any school logo or image without permission.

- Do not create any social media account, blog or website intended to represent FCS.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Actions that are in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action. For employees and students, this may include a verbal warning, a written warning, suspension, or termination from the school. At the discretion of the Head Mistress, violations of the social media policy may also impact a student's conduct grade.

### **Cell Phone and Smart Watch Policy**

We recognize that parents provide their children with cell phones for safety reasons; therefore, we understand that students will bring their cell phones to school. Cell phones must remain turned off and be turned into the office during the school day. Smart watches must be turned into the office; and students are not allowed to have them during the school day.

Cell phones and smart watches that are being used to make calls, text (parents or peers) or play games during the day will be confiscated and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

Students are not to call, text, or message their family members during the school day. If students need to reach a member of their family, they can use one of the phones in the main office.

Students may not photograph or take videos of any staff members or other students inside or outside of the building.

## **Closings & Delays**

### **Inclement Weather**

The Headmistress, along with a member of the building and grounds committee, will make decisions concerning the closing of school, due to inclement weather or other emergency situations.

### **The announcement will be made through the following means:**

School Facebook Page

Brightwheel Message

The options most used are **one hour or two hour delays**. The option to **close school** may occur in extreme weather conditions. When school is delayed or closed, SonShine Station's early bird and after school program will be closed as well.

Please do not call teachers or administrators for information. Information concerning unscheduled early dismissals will be announced through the same means.

## **Other**

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

FCS welcomes and encourages parent volunteers. Any parent wishing to volunteer should contact the school office and inform the school administration of the desire to volunteer. Teachers or administration may also request specific types of volunteer needs throughout the school year. Parent volunteering strengthens the school-family relationship needed for student success.

### **FCSA**

Our parent- teacher organization (Family Christian School Association) meets every other month. The FCSA is a wonderful way for parents to show their support of our school and our students. Parents are encouraged to get involved with school improvement projects and share ideas for fund raising events.

**First Christian School**  
Parent/Student Handbook  
School Year 2024-25

I have reviewed the 2024-25 Parent/Student Handbook and I understand the information and requirements expected. I agree to abide by these rules and regulations. I also understand that when items (i.e. textbooks, calculators, etc.) owned by the school are issued to the student we are financially responsible for these materials if they are lost or damaged.

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Student Signature

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Parent Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_