



STAFF HANDBOOK GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

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*First Academy
First Baptist Church, Rogers, Arkansas
Updated June 2020

GUIDELINES

Organization

*First Academy (*First Academy/Shining Stars Pre-School (SSP) is organized and operated by the First Baptist Church (FBC) Rogers, Arkansas. The program is an organization of FBC and is part of the church's total ministry. The operation of the school is subject to all church policies. Fall of 2000 the name was changed from WEE School to Shining Stars Preschool. With the addition of the upper grades, the name was again changed to First Baptist Christian School. In 2021, the name was changed to First Academy and Shining Stars Preschool.

Purpose

The purpose of the school is to provide for the care and development of each enrolled child spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially. This is to be accomplished by providing learning and developmental experiences consistent with the Christian principles of the FBC of Rogers, based on the authority of the Bible.

Constituency

The principal will review and approve or deny applications for enrollment. No discrimination will be made because of race, creed or color. The principal will discuss problems in the application process with the school board.

Finances

The school will be financed on a nonprofit basis by registration fees, tuition from the students and gifts. Administration of the budget by the principal will conform to the policies of the School Board and the financial policies of the church. Expenditures will be made within an annual budget approved by the school board.

Staff

The staff will be qualified to perform the position they hold as defined in the job description of their position. The staff will be interviewed and hired by the school board based on the recommendation from the principal. The board should allow the principal to be included in the interview process with any new application.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Personnel

1. The school must always be a ministry of First Baptist Church, Rogers
2. All school personnel must have and display a genuine love for children. School personnel must be Christians who regularly attend church and are members of First Baptist Church, Rogers. Teachers hired before 2011 are exempt from the church membership requirement. New teachers who are not church members at the time they are hired must become members before their contracts are issued. Regularly attending church is defined as: enrolled in a Life Group with 50% plus one attendance for the year. This is subject to be checked through attendance records maintained by the church. Any employee who is serving in any capacity other than within a Life Group will need to submit his or her request with regard to serving in a ministry within the church other than a Life Group, to be determined by the board if that particular service is a satisfactory fulfillment of the requirement from all school and church personnel. Any teachers who do not meet the 50% plus one attendance to Life Group requirement will be placed on probation as determined by the board. A contract can be terminated if the teacher is not regularly attending. Teachers hired before 2011 who are not church members must verify that they comply with these attendance requirements at their respective churches.
3. Contracts for teachers will be issued in May or June of each year preceding the contract period effective with the upcoming school year. Contracts must be signed and returned to the principal within 10 days of issuance of the contract. Contracts may become invalid by written resignation if received from an employee within two weeks prior to termination.
4. All teacher contracts will be based on total contract time, degrees and years of experience. Missed days due to inclement weather are not considered contract days. Contracted workdays including class days, conference days, and in-service days will be determined on a yearly basis and approved with the school calendar. Salaries and raises will be based on income and enrollment during budget preparation and registration periods. The teacher agrees that this contract may be nullified by circumstances beyond their control, such as damage or destruction to school facilities, closure by state or licensing authorities, riot, terrorism, flood, fire, pandemic, or other catastrophic event.
5. In determining teacher contracts, primary consideration will include but not be limited to: class enrollment, FBC Rogers membership, certification/qualifications, performance,

and service time within the school. All will be taken into consideration when determining school needs on a year by year basis.

6. The elementary teachers will be paid on percentage based on years of experience in teaching. This percentage will be calculated on past teaching experience in both public and private systems, as well as the teaching experience accumulated at First Academy /Shining Stars School. This percentage is as follows: 2 years – 10%, 5 years – 20%, 7 years – 25%, 10 years – 30%

A maximum of 30% will be paid for teachers reaching the 10-year level and those who exceed 10 years.

7. Teachers will receive additional pay added to their base pay for college degrees. The percentages are as follows:
 - Any college degree – 8%
 - Education degree – 12%
 - Early childhood degree – 18%
 - Certified by state – 25%
8. Christmas bonuses will be issued according to funds available. Determination of this will be made by the school board.
9. All kindergarten – 5th grade teachers will be given a total of 10 days of personal and sick paid days. Three (3) of these days are designated for personal leave. Seven (7) days are designated for sick leave. For any additional days taken as personal leave or sick leave, the teacher may be permitted the time but must compensate the substitute teacher from personal salary. Any unused personal leave days at the end of the school year will be reimbursed at a rate of \$100 per day for K-5th grade teachers. Additionally, personal time off requires 48 hours' notice before the date of the leave and cannot be scheduled during blackout periods. The principal will be allowed 21 days of vacation/sick leave with five being allowed when students are present. In addition, the principal will be given the following paid holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Good Friday, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. If Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve or New Year's Day fall on a weekend, the day(s) immediately prior to or following the holidays can be taken.
10. For an extended illness, after sick leave has been used, a teacher would be allowed to pay a substitute for up to six weeks. If at that point, the teacher is able to return to full duty, the position would be available for him or her. If not, the teacher would be put on a Leave of Absence. A substitute would be contracted to fill the position and will be

paid a teacher's salary. A case by case basis would then be worked out with the teacher concerning the next year.

11. Health insurance will be offered to full time employees with the school paying 80% of the premiums and 20% paid by the employee.
12. Salaried employees will receive up to three funeral days for the immediate family members only. (Family within their household, grandparents, parents, siblings and the same for spouse's family members.) These days are not accumulated from year to year and will not receive pay for unused days at the end of the year.
13. Full-time, salaried teachers with children attending the First Academy will receive free tuition for all children enrolled. A larger registration fee to include books and other materials (\$600 elementary) must be paid for each student, however, by August 1. Due to the free tuition benefit, full time contracted elementary teachers must enroll their children in First Academy unless they request an exception due to special needs, etc. Full time church staff members will receive a 50% discount for their children with the church reimbursing the school 25%. Part time school staff members (20-29 hours per week) will receive a 50% discount, and employees working less than 20 hours per week will receive a 25% discount. Part time church staff employees will receive a 12.5% discount.
14. All staff members as well as substitute teachers will have a State/DHS background check.
15. The staff is to exhibit a Christian attitude in dealing with parents. Discretion should be used when discussing school business with parents or other church members. Parents with questions or concerns may be directed to speak with the principal as needed.
16. The staff is expected to be professional in appearance as well as attitude. To help foster a professional appearance, during the regular teaching work week teachers will not be allowed to wear shorts. Jeans may be worn on Fridays.
17. The school calendar is defined as the First Academy calendar for an academic school year consisting of four quarters and two semesters. The school calendar identifies the schedule for half day and full day students, vacation days, teacher in-service days and conference days.
 - (a) The teachers' version of the school calendar will include "black out days" defined as days which are not allowed to be counted as sick or personal days. These include:
 - (i) Days immediately before and after a holiday

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- (ii) The first two weeks of classes during each school year
- (iii) Following written notice of suspension or discharge
- (iv) Scheduled professional development days
- (v) Star Testing days

In the rare instance that it is necessary for a teacher to take off on a black out day, the request for personal days shall be in writing to the principal at least 5 days prior to the requested leave days. The principal may, at his or her discretion depending on the circumstance, approve the request as a personal day or as a day without pay. Approved requests should be for “once in a lifetime” type events and extremely limited.

- (b) The yearly school calendar will be developed and presented by the principal to the school board for approval no later than July 1 of the previous school year. This calendar will be included with teacher contracts as a reference.
- (c) Kindergarten and academic grades (full day) will observe make up days as needed to meet required number of school days. (Snow days will be followed the same as the Rogers Public Schools).

18. Teachers are expected to be in their classroom thirty minutes before class begins and 15 minutes following car line.
19. All teachers will keep a clean, neat and orderly classroom. Cabinets and storerooms will be kept in order. An inventory and clean up time will take place within a week after the last day of school.
20. Workshops or seminars will be provided for the faculty each year. Teachers of preschool and the principal are required to attend workshops to fulfill requirements of a minimum of 15 hours of continuing education per year, but teachers in the grade school/middle school will have 30-60 hours of staff development.
21. All substitute teachers will be paid at the same rate of \$50 per day for a half day and \$100 per day for a full day. All substitutes will be paid on the next pay period following the week they substitute. If the pay period is affected by a holiday, then the next pay period will be used. Social security will be deducted from all pay for substitutes. Withholdings will be deducted according to withholding information.
22. Teachers will be given a budget to spend on teaching supplies for their rooms each year. This budget could change each year based on income and enrollment. No purchases will be made by any teacher outside of the amount budgeted for their teaching supplies unless first cleared by the principal. New supplies and materials will not be purchased that are normally stocked items.

23. All teachers will be directly responsible to the principal or in the absence of the principal, the Administrative Director. Any matters unable to be resolved will be presented to the First Academy /SSP school board.
24. The Administrative Director and/or a head teacher (most senior with most years employed at First Academy) will be established in the event the principal is out of the building.
25. School guidelines will be reviewed with teachers yearly. The meeting may include the school board, if necessary.

School Board/Budget

The First Academy Board and principal will work with the church liaison in the following areas:

- Personnel.....hiring and dismissing
- Salaries.....starting salary, raises, etc.
- Pupil Fees.....registration, tuition
- Curriculum...adding, deleting, evaluating
- School expenses.....supplies, equipment, materials
- Policies.....adding, deleting, clarifying

The school board will be kept current with curriculum and school expenses by the principal and/or administrative staff. The principal will attend board meetings to work with the board on these areas.

- The budget plan for the following school year will be completed and approved by the board no later than July 1. The budget will be developed by the principal, administrative staff and board. Pre-enrollment for the next year will open at the end of February.
- The PTO arm of First Academy will make a recommendation to the principal and school board on how profit from a fundraiser will be used. The school board will have authority and responsibility to determine the best usage of these monies. The school board will make the final decision.

Fees, Tuition, Discounts

- Registration fee must be paid to insure placement. No refunds will be given after May 1
- After Christmas break, registration fees for any new students will be at a 50% rate.
- A \$10 late fee will be added to accounts that are not paid by the 10th of the month.
- Full-time, salaried teachers with children attending the First Academy will receive free tuition for all children enrolled. A larger registration fee to include books and other materials (\$600 elementary) must be paid for each student, however, by August 1. Due to the free tuition benefit, full time contracted elementary teachers must enroll their children in First Academy unless they request an exception due to special needs, etc. Full time church staff members will receive a 50% discount for their children with the church reimbursing the school 25%. Part time school staff members (20-29 hours per week) will receive a 50% discount, and employees working less than 20 hours per week will receive a 25% discount. Part time church staff employees will receive a 12.5% discount.
- Church members will receive a tuition discount for their children. Discounts for a family with more than one child attending First Academy (also for non-church members) will be at a 15% discount off the tuition of the younger children's tuition. There are no multi-child discounts for registration fees. Only one discount is allowed per child.
- Report cards and/or permanent records will not be released for students who have delinquent accounts until they are paid in full. An account is delinquent when any amount due is beyond 15 calendar days.
- After an account is declared to be delinquent (15 calendar days after due), the family must be notified that they have 30 days to work out an acceptable payment plan with the administrative staff or pay in full. After the 30 days, if a payment plan acceptable to administration or complete payment is not received, the student(s) will be dismissed from First Academy.
- Any student whose registration fees for the upcoming school year that are not paid in full by the first day of school will not be permitted to attend school. Any student whose tuition fees for the fall semester that were paid at 50% or less will not be permitted to attend the spring semester.

STAFF MEMBER SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read and received a copy of the Guidelines and Policies of the First Academy, a ministry of the First Baptist Church of Rogers. By signing this contract, I agree to the Guidelines and Policies.

Signature _____ Date _____

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