



K-5th GRADE HANDBOOK
2023-2024

First Academy
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“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:17

1. MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is pursuing academic excellence while growing in the grace of God's Word so that we may engage our community with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The educational philosophy of First Academy is based on the God-centered view that all truth is based on God's Word, the Bible. The Bible is the inspired and only infallible, authoritative Word of God which is the foundation for all truth. The purpose of Christian education is a vehicle for bringing the student into a relationship with God and developing that student spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially. First Academy is an extension of the parent and home to assist in biblical, Christian education. The outline of our basic beliefs guides our church and school by helping to align us with instructions in God's Word, the Bible. A more in-depth explanation of our beliefs along with the Bible references for each statement are provided below:

ABOUT MAN: Man is made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. He is the supreme object of God's creation. Although man has tremendous potential for good, he is marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin." This attitude separates man from God. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1,2)

ABOUT ETERNITY: Man was created to exist forever. He will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and hell are places of eternal existence. (John 3:16; John 2:25; John 5:11-13; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15; 1 John 5:11-12; Matthew 25:31-46)

ABOUT JESUS CHRIST: Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven's glory and will return again to earth to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. (Matthew 1:22,23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14,15; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14,15; Titus 2:13)

ABOUT SALVATION: Salvation is a gift from God to man. Man can never make up for his sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can man be saved from sin's penalty. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6; 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1)

ABOUT ETERNAL SECURITY: Because God gives man eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives this security. (John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control daily. (2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16, 17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:1)

ABOUT THE BIBLE: The Bible is God's Word to all men. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5)

3. PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

First Academy is an established and highly reputable preschool and an academic K-5 school which provides Christian education for children of the church and community members. The teaching and training of children through Christ centered curriculum will provide a foundation that strengthens the child, family and community.

DIVERSITY:

First Academy values and cherishes the differences of every student, family, and faculty member. Diversity in our student body, families, and faculty develops thinking that values alternative viewpoints and is sensitive to ethnic backgrounds, feelings, individual physical characteristics of others, as well as God-given talents and abilities.

First Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Embracing and capitalizing on the differences God has created in all of us enhances our school and church community at First Academy. Diversity is God's gift and tool given to people that they might know Him better and experience life as He designed it. We look to His Word for the

basis and context of the meaning of diversity to define the different parameters of gender, race, age, culture and economic status.

Regarding gender and race, we are ALL created in the image of God and are created individually as “male and female.” Genesis 1: 27 “And God created man in his own image... male and female he created them.”

Regarding age, we are created for HIS purpose and glory. Psalm 139:13-14 “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Regarding one’s culture, God shows no partiality. Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Acts 17:26-27 “And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.”

Regarding economic status, Mark 12:41-44 refers to the stewardship responsibility associated with the material wealth and possessions that He provides to each person. God owns it all!

Regarding marriage, we align with the Bible’s teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman. Genesis 2:24 “This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.”

4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The educational goals of the school are to provide a strong Christ centered academic program, as well as the care and development of each child’s spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, and social training within a loving, Christian environment. The goals and standards include mastery and enrichment of the curriculum concepts. The specific objectives for all students will be communicated to parents at the beginning of each school year at the Parent Orientation and through newsletters, calendars, report cards and conferences.

5. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

Administrators, teachers and support staff must be Christians, regular church attendees and have and display a genuine love for children. The staff members will be qualified to perform the position they hold as defined in the job description of their position.

Each staff member must undergo both a Child Maltreatment Record Check and a Criminal Record Check. They are also required to provide at least two personal and professional

references. Each preschool staff member is required to obtain at least 15 hours per year of in-service training or continuing education in the field of education, child development, administration, and/or health and safety. Grade school teachers will complete 36 hours of staff development.

6. ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

Admission into First Academy is a privilege. Admission and enrollment to our school is a partnership forming between family, school, and church. First Academy faculty and staff take this privilege and partnership very seriously and strive to see all students and families grow spiritually and academically. As admission and enrollment is a privilege, the steps and guidelines for admission and enrollment are detailed below. If at any time, a student or family fails to meet required steps or fails to meet minimum admission requirements, the student(s) will not be eligible to enroll.

- 1) **Campus Visit:** Families and students are encouraged to visit our school and tour the facility as well as meet the principal and other faculty. Contact the school office to schedule one.
- 2) **Apply Online:** Interested families should apply online using Renweb. A completed application is not considered accepted enrollment into the school.
- 3) **Student Shadow (Optional):** Interested students in 1st through 5th grade may choose to “shadow” a class for a full or part of a day. Arrangements must be made at least one week in advance through the school office.
- 4) **Academic Screening:** Students entering Kindergarten through 5th grade must complete a math and literacy screening using STAR assessments on a computer. Please schedule this through the office.
- 5) **Academic & Behavior Records Review:** Students entering grades 1st through 5th must have all pertinent academic and behavior records reviewed by school administration prior to approval for enrollment. This includes but is not limited to report card grades, testing results, psychological exams, behavioral reports, special education records including 504s and IEPs. Students exhibiting learning challenges, especially those with 504s and IEPs, may not be admitted due to the limited support resources First Academy currently has available. School administration will work with potential families and students to identify whether a successful academic plan can be created and maintained to support the student’s needs. Students should be in good standing with their prior school to attend FA.
- 6) **Meet with School Administration:** Potential families and students should expect to meet with the school administration as part of the admissions process. This could be done as part of the campus visit step.
- 7) **Decision from School:** Once potential families have been to campus and met the school administration and completed applications, screenings, and records review, they will

officially receive notification from the school on admittance and then be asked to complete official enrollment online through Renweb.

Students in kindergarten through 5th grade must complete all forms and steps in online enrollment via Renweb, complete a payment plan, pay the enrollment fee, and provide a copy of the student's birth certificate and immunization record.

Nondiscriminatory Policy: First Academy is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin. It does not unlawfully discriminate in the administration of educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs. As a private religious institution, however, FA reserves the right to deny admission to any applicant whose academic preparation, character or personal conduct is determined to be inconsistent with the purposes, objectives, and values of the school.

7. PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

First Academy strives to be an academic and spiritual based program guided by the Lordship of Jesus Christ through the study and application of Biblical principles and certain prudent rules which we believe are beneficial in establishing an atmosphere conducive to Christian growth and order. Members of our school's community are expected to live according to the Word of God, responding to one another in love. Those who join this community are asked to accept the responsibilities of membership by respecting and supporting its Christian distinctive and its standards of conduct.

The principle instilled within our students is: "Obedience is doing exactly what you're told to do, when you're told to do it, with a right heart attitude." Students are encouraged to be at the right place, at the right time, with the right materials, in a quiet manner, with an expectant and submissive attitude.

Discipline Policy Overview

The purpose of discipline in a Christian school is two-fold, to bring the student to maturity in Christ, and, second, to develop qualities of good citizenship. To help attain these goals, certain standards of conduct are established. Students are asked to discipline themselves in relation to this code because the best form of discipline is self-discipline under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the goal of all outward discipline is self-discipline within the framework of positive relationships between them.

Positively, the school seeks to cooperate with the home in forming good habits in the student such as cheerful obedience to authority, courtesy and respect for others, responsibility,

cleanliness and orderliness, truthfulness and honesty, morally correct conduct, and wise use of time, talents and material possessions. First Academy seeks to build godly character traits into the lives of its students and pursues an active program in doing so, both through instruction and example. A rebellious spirit or negative attitude, which is unchanged after much effort by the faculty, can be a poor influence on other students. Continued deliberate disobedience to a teacher or to school rules has an adverse effect upon the school's testimony.

Our commitment to parents/custodial parents and students is the following:

- Work alongside of parents within the process of discipline
- Provide an environment of order and respect that promotes an atmosphere conducive to learning
- Apply necessary and appropriate consequences for choices
- Guide in the restoration of relationships with Jesus Christ, the teachers, and its students
- Use relational influence to produce spiritual growth, correction, and right choices
- Operate in a context that seeks the best interest of both the involved parties and the student body as a whole

As a general rule, classroom actions which evidence disrespect, lack of courtesy, general disturbance, abuse of permission, incomplete homework, lateness and other offenses shall be handled by the teacher. Situations that the teacher evaluates as chronic, flagrant, or otherwise worthy of special handling will be referred to the principal. These situations will be dealt with as seems most helpful to the individual and the student body as outlined under the guidelines as outlined within this document.

Code of Conduct

In order to best fulfill the goals of the discipline process, First Academy has established a code of conduct that defines expected student behavior and establishes the procedure and process for addressing disciplinary matters. Please be aware that student conduct and behavior outside of the walls of the school (i.e., school field trips) can affect a student's standing at First Academy as well as the reputation of our school, therefore it is the expectation of the principal and staff of teachers that students adhere to the code of conduct at all times. It is therefore also understood that violations of the code of conduct both inside and outside of school may be addressed as a disciplinary concern by the principal. Students are specifically considered to be under school jurisdiction at any time at which they are under the direct supervision of First Academy and its employees, including when riding a school bus or attending a school function or activity.

In order to encourage independent self-discipline, students and staff will express feelings in a controlled, productive way. They will be encouraged to think through their actions and predict

the consequences and assume responsibility for their actions (good and bad). They will be encouraged to identify the causes of their misbehavior and change them to more appropriate behavior. Students will be encouraged to model desired behavior and will be assisted in practice of problem-solving skills.

Each teacher will establish and communicate to pupils the rules for behavior in the classroom. These rules, biblically based, and presented to the children as a part of God's plan for their lives, focus on areas including interaction with others, respect for persons and property, obedience and safety. Positive rewards may be used to encourage acceptable behavior. Students will be expected to know these rules and goals and communicate them: "I will demonstrate a Positive Attitude, Proper Respect, Personal Acceptance, and a Pure Heart." Emphasis is placed on discipline being a "skill to be developed rather than a rule to be broken." Good classroom control is the foremost responsibility of the classroom teacher. Consequences for not meeting the school expectations may result in a loss of rewards/incentives, quiet timeout, and/or walking at recess. Serious or continuous disciplinary problems will be referred to the principal and will result in a phone call to the parent.

Under no circumstance is a parent ever to approach a child not their own to question them about an incident or correct them concerning a disciplinary situation. Even though a parent may feel it necessary, we do not allow this interaction. The teachers and school administration are the only ones with permission to investigate and administer correction. The only exception to this would be when approved chaperones are directly supervising a small group of students for a school function. Even in these cases, chaperones are to use discretion in discipline and bring significant challenges to the teacher for the teacher to handle.

The following are those issues that would be subject to discipline by faculty and the principal:

Careless Behavior

- Running in the halls or in the classroom
- Purposely holding door to classroom closed, or slamming doors
- Horseplay
- Throwing or shooting objects in the building
- Improper behavior on the bus (school field trips)
- Disruptive behavior that impedes the educational process
- The use of cellular phones and other electronic devices during school hours
- Eating food or candy during class other than when approved by teacher
- Other items: Any item that disrupts a class (such as a wristwatch alarm or cell phone) will be taken to the office. Usually for the first offense, the student will be allowed to pick up the object in the office at the end of the school day. For subsequent offenses, parents will be required to pick up a confiscated item.

- Unauthorized possession of electronic equipment
- Misbehaving in class (including talking out of turn) or disturbing the class

Harassment/Intimidation

- Sexual harassment including all acts of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, which are unsolicited, unwelcome, inappropriate, and/or demeaning, which interfere with an individual's performance or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive atmosphere
- Physical harassment, including threats or intimidation of any nature, or inappropriate verbal or physical conduct which creates a hostile, offensive or fearful environment. Examples of threats or intimidation include, but are not limited to, provoking a fight, fighting, bullying, acts that inflict injury or damage, and/or acts intended to control by fear and/or intimidation

Verbal Behavior

- Language and/or gestures that are vulgar, obscene, offensive, derogatory or disrespectful will result in disciplinary action. The believer's talk should build up, not put them down.

Dishonesty

- Dishonesty in any form, including lying, theft, cheating, and plagiarism (note: indication of cheating on any assignment will result in a grade reduction and visit with parents and student)
- Forging signatures or altering documents
- Altering grade reports

Disrespectful Behavior

- Rebellious or disrespectful attitude
- Flagrant disrespect and disobedience
- Littering
- Disturbance or rude behavior in chapel
- Defacing of any kind of school, student, or faculty property
- Direct disobedience to any teacher, adult, or principal
- Deliberate destruction or damage to school, church, student, and/or faculty property
- Disrespect by word or action toward any faculty, staff member, or student
- Display of any advertisements of items in whatever form (e.g., posters/stickers on books, lockers or on any personal possessions brought into the school) that are in conflict with the values of the school as stated in our objectives

Prohibited Items and Activities

- Use or possession of weapons and/or dangerous items (i.e., guns, knives (including pocket knives), explosive devices, etc.) A zero-tolerance policy is in place on bringing any type of such weapons or explosives to school.
- The use and/or possession of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and the abuse of prescription medication. Violations of this policy may also result in random drug testing, per First Academy procedures, at the expense of the student's family.

The possession or use of any illicit drugs, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, etc. at school or any school function will be considered grounds for suspension and possible expulsion. Because of the harmful nature of these activities, the continuance in our school of any student involved in such activities in or out of school is in serious question. Students involved in the use, possession, or selling of drugs, alcohol or tobacco may also be turned over to the proper authorities.

Academic Behavior

- Not being prepared for class
- Failure to meet classroom responsibilities
- Failure to employ good study habits after repeated warning (not keeping a notebook, not taking notes, not keeping an assignment notebook, etc.)
- Failure to return documents by due date

Disciplinary Process

Disciplinary action will be taken for infractions of school policy and rules. These may include appropriate classroom discipline (losing a privilege in the classroom), visit with the principal with a shared plan of action to work on correcting the action and finding the root of the problem, conference with the parent and student, in-school detention, home suspension, or a final resort of expulsion.

1. The student will be redirected. This could be moving the student to another seat in the classroom, calling attention to the student, standing near the disruptive student, or making eye contact with the student.
2. Teacher and student will have a one on one conversation about the inappropriate behavior.
3. Teachers will communicate with the parents to inform them about what is going on in the classroom and to solicit the parent's assistance. A copy of the communication will be sent to the principal.
4. If the behavior continues, the principal will have the student personally communicate with the parent to explain what happened in class and his/her own behavioral choices and the principal will administer consequences for the behavior.

Progression of Discipline

It is important that we offer clear, firm and supportive guidelines for those students who occasionally fall short of our standard. Inappropriate student behavior is divided into three categories: Level I, Level II, and Level III. Types of infractions and possible consequences are listed below. This list is intended as an example and is not considered to be exhaustive. The principal will be the final authority on matters of discipline.

Level I Infractions

The following behaviors will be handled by the classroom teacher and will result in communication with the parent.

- Leaving the classroom without permission
- Consistent failure to obey classroom rules
- Continual disruption of class
- Consistent dress code violations

Level II Infractions

The following behaviors will result in the student being sent to the principal for intervention. Typically, the parent will be contacted, an apology from the student will be required and additional consequences employed such as walking laps at recess, quiet lunch, or in-school detention. Depending on the severity of the infraction, at-home suspension is a possible consequence.

- Inappropriate language
- Insubordination
- Disrespect of faculty, staff or classmates
- Cheating
- Theft
- Fighting
- Verbal altercations with another student

Level III Infractions

The following behaviors will result in the student being sent to the principal for intervention. One or more of the following steps will be taken: communication with the parent, after-school detention, in-school suspension, at-home suspension

- Bullying (as defined below)
- Cyberbullying
- Swearing/foul language

- Threatening remarks toward faculty, staff or classmates
- Accessing inappropriate material on the computer/bringing inappropriate material to school
- Possession of matches, fireworks or a weapon

Silent Lunch

Student will sit quietly in the office of the principal and will miss the opportunity to eat with peers.

Walking laps at Recess

In the effort to not impede necessary physical activity, students will serve a period of time during recess to walk the perimeter of the playground. This will be monitored closely by the classroom teacher on duty. Students will walk ONLY a portion of the recess not to exceed 15 minutes.

In-School Detention

Student will be assigned to serve a detention period during recess, and it will be a time where the student will provide a written reflection response to an assigned topic by the classroom teacher or principal followed by a discussion with the principal and classroom teacher about correcting future behaviors.

In-School Suspension

At times, students may be suspended from school for significant disciplinary infractions. For example, students in upper grades (3-5) will be sent to the office immediately on a first offense and suspended for any acts of intentional, physical aggression or foul language. Depending on the situation however, students in all grade levels are subject to suspension. Suspension is a warning that a student's privilege to remain enrolled at school is in danger if future behavior does not show significant improvement.

This time of in-school suspension will be spent in the office of the principal under close supervision where the student will complete all daily work assigned by the classroom teacher. If work isn't completed during the time spent in the office, the student will be responsible for the work completion upon returning to school the following day.

At-Home Suspension

This time of at-home suspension will be spent outside of school, where the student will complete all daily work assigned by the classroom teacher. The student will be responsible for

the work completion upon returning to school at the end of the suspension. Number of days will be determined at the discretion of the principal.

Any time a student is suspended, he or she is also placed on probation for nine weeks or longer depending upon the principal's decision. While on probation, a child's behavior and academic performance will be watched closely. Disciplinary infractions incurred while on probation will result in escalated consequences. Probation will extend for nine weeks any time a disciplinary action occurs during the probationary period. Typically, but not in all cases, suspensions are issued on an incremental basis. The first suspension is usually for one day. If a suspendable offense occurs during the student's probationary period, the student will be suspended for three days or up to five days, subsequently. If after a student returns from a 5-day suspension and commits another suspendable infraction, he or she will be referred to the school board for review. Upon review, the child may be removed from school. Throughout each step of the process, parents and students should show that actions are being taken to help the child find success at school.

Honor System

Each teacher is to teach the meaning and proper use of the First Academy Honor System. Each student is on his honor to tell the teacher, privately, when he/she hears or sees:

*Bullying *Swearing *Lying *Stealing *Cheating

Each child is also on their honor not to tell other students. The parent will be informed by the teacher if his/her child has been dealt with regarding any of the five areas listed above.

Bullying

First Academy considers bullying to be a grievous violation of God's command for man to "love one's neighbor as we love ourselves." (Matthew 22:39) It is an overt or omitted act intended to harm others that counters the nature of Christian character. In simple terms, bullying is a sin that hurts our deeply relational God. Further, it violates our First Academy principle of showing "Proper Respect." In this regard, it is important that we consider student behaviors carefully to determine whether bullying has occurred.

The definition of bullying we use as a guideline is as follows: *"a person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Such negative action is typically characterized by a real or perceived imbalance of power between the individuals."*

A one-time incident is unkind and will be dealt with appropriately. Bullying is absolutely not tolerated. If you believe your child is being targeted by a certain individual, please notify the

school principal. All other concerns you may have pertaining to disciplinary situations should be addressed by your child's teacher first.

If a student is found to be bullying, specific measures will be put into effect to ensure the safety of the students and to correct the behavior of the student who is the bully. Measures will include time spent with the principal which will include a referral for the student for ministerial or professional counseling. It is the desire to use measures which will help the student to identify those strong behaviors and channel them with appropriate guidance and discipline. It is our desire to grow leaders. If change does not occur in the student's heart and behavior, the relationship with the school will result in severance.

STUDENT/PARENT COMPLAINS AND GRIEVANCES

The primary purpose of this policy is to provide for prompt and equitable resolution of students/parents complaints and grievances.

LEVEL ONE: The resolution of a complaint through free and informal communications as close as possible to the point of origin is encouraged. A student/parent with a complaint shall first take it to the immediate teacher or principal depending on the point of origin. In the event the complaint cannot be resolved through free and informal communication a Formal Grievance may be filed by the student/parent.

The following steps shall be followed when filing a Formal Grievance.

LEVEL TWO: The student/parent filing the grievance shall contact the principal through a phone call or email. The principal shall conduct an investigation in a timely manner. The principal's decision shall be reduced to a phone call or a written email and presented to the student/parent. In no event, shall an appeal to Level Two be allowed without the involvement of the principal. The principal shall document his/her involvement with the problem.

LEVEL THREE: In the event the problem is not resolved at Level One, the student/parent may file an appeal in writing with the school board by completing a Grievance Report (attached). Such appeal shall be presented within ten (10) days of the Level One decision. The school board shall request a conference with the aggrieved or render a written decision within ten (10) days from the receipt of the grievance.

The aggrieved person may select a representative to accompany him/her, may state the facts in written form, and may request a written decision.

For the discussion and consideration of a grievance, time and place will be selected which will not interfere with regular scheduled classes or school related activities. The faculty and

administration shall make an honest effort to resolve student/parent grievances as quickly as possible at the most immediate level of supervision

In the event that a resolution cannot be reached between all parties, the school board can determine the dismissal of a student from the school.

Grievance Report: Name of Student, Names of Parents/Guardians, Nature of Grievance: (Include policy violated, if known) Action Sought: Pertinent Information: Additional Explanation: (If Needed), Signature, Date

8. PROGRAM INFORMATION

CLASS SIZE:

Maximum of 16 students in Kindergarten per class

Maximum of 18 1ST – 5TH grade students per class.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS' DROP-OFF/PICK-UP:



Morning drop-off and pick-up will be held in the south circle drive in front of the school entrance (see diagram). All cars will enter from the east side (interstate) and exit towards Bellview Road. Drop-off for elementary students is between 7:30 and 7:55 a.m. Students go to class at 7:50 a.m., and school begins at 8:00 a.m. Late arrivers will need to come through the office and be signed in. Dismissal car line

is at 3:15 p.m. at the school circle drive also. For pickup after 3:15 p.m., the student will be sent to after school care, and one day of after school care will be charged.

EARLY CHECKOUT:

If a student needs to be checked out early for an appointment or other need, the parent must sign out the student at the receptionist desk in the children's hallway. The receptionist or personnel in the administration office will get the student from class.

CARLINE SAFETY: For safety, DO NOT pass other cars in the car line. Also, by law we are required to remind you that NO cell phone usage is allowed in the car line or in the parking lot. Parents must ensure that children are within safety restraints before leaving the car line.

ATTENDANCE:

We urge you to have your child at school on time. Students will be considered tardy if they arrive after 8:00 a.m. Three tardies will result in a ½ day's absence. If a student arrives late, a parent must walk the student into the school and sign him/her in at the school receptionist's desk. A tardy slip will be filled out and sent with the student to class.

ABSENCES:

We strive to partner with parents in education and in the well-being of our children and families. Attendance is vitally important, so it is expected that families will schedule vacations and trips in the summer or during breaks when school is out. Occasionally, though, families do find it necessary to plan trips or activities on school days, and understanding how important family time is, we will try to accommodate those occasional times. We do, however, need a plan in place so that students don't fall behind or their grades suffer. Below is the policy, and there is a **form in the school office** that parents need to fill out for prearranged absences that last more than one day. This, of course, is not applicable to sickness and emergencies.

1. Parents must notify and get approval from the principal at least a week before the absences that will last more than one day and fill out the form needed for approval.
2. Parents must take full responsibility to ensure their child does his or her schoolwork during the absence, and make sure the student is prepared for upcoming tests over that material.
3. Students will be given one day for every day missed, with a maximum of three days, to turn in their missed work. Any work not turned in by that time will be given a zero. Teachers have discretion to schedule missed tests.

9. FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION

Field trips may be scheduled for elementary students. Parents will be notified of trips in advance. A permission slip will be required of any child participating in the outing. Parent volunteers will be requested for each trip to provide for greater safety, and background checks are required for parents driving and/or supervising children. Transportation details will be explained to parents in advance and will meet all safety standards pertinent to the transportation of children. Church vehicles will be used for all field trips.

10. TUITION AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE RATES

MONTHLY TUITION (August through May)

PK3, PK4, Half Day	\$330
Bridge Half Day	\$370
PK3, PK4, Bridge Full Day	\$480
Kindergarten-5th Grade	\$495

All students will have a supply fee added to their August tuition for classroom supplies.

A 15% discount on tuition will be given to the second child in a family. Families with more than two children will get a 20% discount on the third and younger children enrolled. A 10% discount will be given to church members. Each child may receive only one discount.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE (Monday-Friday 3:30-5:30 PM)

1 day/Week	\$ 60
2 days/Week	\$100
3 days/Week	\$140
4 days/Week	\$180
5 days/Week	\$220

Drop In fee for all students is \$20/day (must call to schedule)

LATE PICKUP FEES: \$1 per minute

We accept annual, semester or monthly payments. Tuition fees will be charged August – May. Monthly tuition is due by the tenth of each month. All checks are to be made out to First Academy, and automatic draft payments are available. All fees are NONREFUNDABLE. A late fee of \$10.00 is charged after the 10th of each month unless an auto draft payment is made on the 15th of the month. Drop in after school care charges will be added to the auto draft amount as incurred.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

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 will 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 are not paid in full by August 10 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.

WITHDRAWAL: If the decision is made to withdraw your child from the school for any reason, please follow these guidelines:

1. Submit in writing a notice of withdrawal.
2. Give a minimum of two weeks' notice.

NO tuition or after school care fees are refundable.

If you claim a deduction for the after-school care expense, the tax ID number is 71-0266956.

11. GRADING SYSTEM

Teachers will keep parents apprised of their child's progress through conferences, notes and phone calls. Kindergarten students will be graded in all areas of academic instruction, as well as character and work performance. The grading scale we will use is "E" for excellent, "S" for satisfactory, "N" for needs improvement, and "I" for is improving. Criteria for the grading system will be explained during the first quarter conferences.

First through seventh grade students will be graded as follows:

- A 90-100 Excellent Progress
- B 80-89 Above Average
- C 70-79 Average
- D 60-69 Below Average
- F Below 60 unsatisfactory progress

12. STANDARDIZED TESTING

Student assessment for kindergarten through fifth grade will be done on a quarterly basis through Star Renaissance 360 in reading and math performance. Testing is utilized to provide diagnostic information for teaching staff so that student strengths and weaknesses are addressed throughout the school year.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY

HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS: Health and immunization records are required for all students prior to attending. The health record is included as part of the student application. An updated immunization record must be submitted along with the application.

ALLERGIES: Please note any allergies your child has on the application.

FOOD BROUGHT IN: According to DHS requirements, "All food brought from outside sources shall come from Health Department approved kitchens and shall be transported as per Health Department requirements, or the food shall be in an individual, commercially pre-packaged container. (This does not include individual sack lunches brought from home.)"

MEDICATION: No medication will be given to children unless we have a signed parental permission statement that includes date, type, drug name, dosage and time, or permission to treat for specific medicines has been granted via Renweb enrollment. All medication must be in the prescribed container.

SUNSCREEN: Written permission is required for application of sunscreen at school.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS: Accidents and incidents, and any injuries, will be reported to the parents. All will be communicated to the parents in writing by way of an 'Accident/Incident Report' form. All parents must sign the "Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment" statement contained on the student application form. Every attempt will be made to contact parents and/or their emergency person in the event of illness or injury.

ILLNESS: Keeping children healthy is a partnership between parents, child care providers, the children themselves and the medical provider. Only a few illnesses require exclusion of sick children to ensure protection of other children and staff. If the child is experiencing symptoms such as fever, diarrhea, or vomiting, the parents will be notified to pick up the child.

If your child has a fever and/or is vomiting or has diarrhea, please keep your child at home until he or she is free of these symptoms for 48 hours.

LEAVING AND CALLING FOR A CHILD: Parents or a designee must leave and call for a child. Your child will be sent home only with a person known by the staff to be authorized to call for this child, unless you give direct written permission for someone else to do this. When picking up a child (other than regular dismissal), you must sign your student out at the receptionist's desk.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: In the event of a major disaster, staff will remain on campus to care for your child. We participate in emergency drills for a variety of situations (tornado, fire, and intruders) to help understand procedures and how to evacuate or locate a secure location quickly, safely and calmly.

CUSTODIAL/NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

First Academy presumes that the person who enrolls a student in school is the student's custodial parent. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide any documentation regarding the restrictions of a non-custodial parent. Unless otherwise informed, we assume that there are no restrictions regarding the non-custodial parent's right to be kept informed of the student's school progress and activities. If restrictions exist to the above rights, the custodial parent is requested to submit a certified copy of the court order which curtails these specific rights. The custodial parent who has lost custody of the child during the school year must sign his or her rights over to the new custodial parent.

Unless there are specific court-imposed restrictions, the non-custodial parent, upon request, will be given access to all of the student's educational records, including but not limited to, the student's cumulative file, records kept by the teacher, and the student's special education file (when applicable). Upon written request the non-custodial parent may conference with the student's teachers or meet briefly with the student. Under no circumstances will the student be permitted to visit with or be released to anyone, including the non-custodial parent without the approval of the custodial parent.

14. SCHOOL DRESS

- Students are expected to dress appropriately for modesty and safety. Flip-flops are not permitted as appropriate or safe attire. Shorts must be an appropriate and modest length. (One dollar width above the knees for girls and boys is considered appropriate length.) No spaghetti-strap top or ripped jeans with holes are allowed. Caps should not be worn indoors by boys or girls, and pants with large rips or holes are not allowed.
- Students must wear the prescribed school logo polo collared shirt on chapel day which is Tuesday. There are other special days throughout the school year that students will be asked to wear their polo shirt. If students do not wear appropriate prescribed dress for chapel days, by the third subsequent offense, students will be asked to call parents and request that the appropriate attire be brought to school for change.

15. ITEMS ON FILE

Procedures for suspected child abuse and child product safety are on file in the school office and are available to all parents. This is in compliance with Arkansas state law. All staff are by law mandated reporters if abuse is suspected for any child.

16. AFTER-SCHOOL CARE GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Admission Requirements

Reservations for after school care must be made for the intended day/days of stay in advance by registration. A \$40 registration fee is required along with a completed registration form. Reservations may not be cancelled and applied to other days. Days that are not attended but are registered for will be billed. One full month's fee for after school care will be charged September – May, and one-half of a month's fee will be charged in August. Students will only be accepted on days previously enrolled for unless a drop-in reservation has been made in advance.

Please dress your child appropriately for active indoor and outdoor play. Layers are encouraged, especially during cooler weather. Please keep in mind that your child will have the opportunity to work with paints, clay, glue, etc. Mark all your children's belongings clearly with your child's first and last name (i.e. lunch bags, back packs, all clothing, books, notebooks). Please DO NOT send toys, electronic games or devices, dolls, special sports equipment, etc., to be used in after school child care. If your child is bringing one of the afore mentioned items to school, the item must remain in the child's backpack during after school child care. The after-school program is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

After school care for elementary students is over at 5:30 p.m. Students must be picked up by this time or will be charged \$1/minute late fees.

Students must bring a snack for our after-school care. Snacks will not be provided.

Confidentiality

All information collected from children and parents will not be disclosed for any reason except for purposes legally permissible or directly related to the administrative function of the early childhood or after school child care program. If this information is requested for other purposes, the school principal will request written consent from the parent(s).

Dress and Personal Belongings

Please dress your child appropriately for active indoor and outdoor play. Layers are encouraged, especially during cooler weather and for elementary students who stay until 5:30 p.m. Please keep in mind that your child may have the opportunity to work with paints, clay, glue, etc. Mark all your children's belongings clearly with your child's first and last name (i.e. lunch bags, back packs, all clothing, books, notebooks). Please DO NOT send toys, electronic games or devices, dolls, special sports equipment, etc., to be used in after school child-care. If your child is bringing one of the afore mentioned items to school, the item must remain in the child's backpack during after school child-care. The after-school program is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

Unscheduled Days

Any additional or unscheduled days are considered "*drop-in*" days. These must be approved by a verbal phone call to the office for the day in need. Drop-ins will be permitted based on space availability and staff. The fee will be applied to the student's account.

Sign In/Out Procedures

When your child is enrolled in the after-school program, parents and guardians must provide First Academy with a pre-authorized list of individuals approved to pick up their child. All individuals on the pre-authorized list must be over 18 to pick up a child and will be required to show photo identification and sign the attendance sheet with full signature. In an emergency, the early childhood/after school programs director, or designee, may authorize someone under 18 to sign out a student upon receiving written authorization from the child's custodial parent(s) or legal guardian. Minors are not allowed to sign out themselves, or their siblings, from the after-school program. Only an authorized adult will be able to sign out your child. If a parent calls, requesting release to someone not on the pre-authorized release list, and staff can confirm the parent's identity by voice or other means, the child may be released to that person (with photo identification).

Thank you for choosing to partner with First Academy in caring for your child. We consider it a great privilege to serve you and your child.

18. Educational Freedom Account (LEARNS Act) Enrollment

Families who have enrolled and are receiving tuition and fees paid via the newly created Educational Freedom Account (EFA) as a part of the larger LEARNS Act through the Arkansas Department of Education agree to the policies of the school contained within this handbook, as well as the specific guidelines stipulated below. As the EFA process is new, First Academy retains the right to alter this agreement as needed within the LEARNS Act rules and our school values.

Admissions Information

All families seeking to enroll in First Academy through the EFA must comply with all present admissions policies in this handbook. Students in grades K through 5th grade must have transfer records, including academic and behavioral data, reviewed and approved by the administration before they are officially approved and enrolled. Students seeking enrollment must also be screened by completing a math and reading assessment through the STAR testing program currently used by the school. Based on reviews of records and assessment results, students will be approved or denied enrollment into the school.

Students seeking to enroll in First Academy in grades 1-5 using EFA funding and the special needs/learning disability qualification must provide all documentation and be approved by the administration and/or his or her designated committee before enrollment can be official. As First Academy has limited resources for students who have academic struggles, not all students can be admitted. It is the school's desire and core value to be fair and honest in the admissions

process with all families, and denial of admission due to its limited resources based on the needs of a student is possible.

First Academy will continue to comply with current admissions policies and missional values and beliefs specified in the admissions and enrollment areas of the current handbook, in addition to these specified here. Admission to First Academy can be denied if families and students do not comply, agree, or have shown evidence contradicting our core values and beliefs.

For the 2023-2024 school year, participating students must be eligible to enroll in public elementary or secondary school in Arkansas, have at least one parent who is a resident of Arkansas, and meet one of the following criteria:

- First time kindergartener
- Students who in the previous year were enrolled in an “F” rated school or “Level-5” district
- Students who in the previous year were enrolled in the Succeed Scholarship Program
- Students with a disability
- Students experiencing homelessness
- Current or former foster care students
- Children of active-duty military personnel

Students with Special Educational Needs and Learning Disabilities

As an independent, private, Christian school and ministry of First Baptist Rogers, FA strives to meet the needs of families and its students. Our school seeks to provide support for students in the regular classroom. We provide limited accommodations for qualifying students, but do not follow public school IEPs/504 plans. We generate our own plans and services based on our available resources and faculty and staff approval.

First Academy works with Rogers Public Schools and the Northwest Arkansas Educational Service Cooperative in order to assess and monitor students for possible learning challenges and needs. FA may also work with a family physician, counselor, or other professionals as it deems appropriate to determine a student’s possible learning challenges and needs.

Currently, special services provided include a limited set of academic accommodations and speech language therapy services served through Rogers Public Schools. Faculty and staff must agree to the accommodations needed and provided before the school will officially offer and provide them.

Parents must acknowledge our available resources and plans, if necessary, and agree to them as a stipulation of their child's enrollment into First Academy. If First Academy cannot provide specific resources a student needs to succeed, the family and school partnership may not be best. By acknowledging and agreeing to the school's written academic plan for students with documented needs, parents waive their right to procedural obligations and rights under IDEA.

Financial Information and Responsibility

While qualification and enrollment in EFA under the Learns Act should meet the financial needs of a student and family enrolled at First Academy, it is the family's sole responsibility to make sure they continue to meet all requirements of the program and ensure the school's tuition is paid in accordance with the program's quarterly schedule. If at any time a student and/or family fail to comply with program requirements and therefore lose funding, the enrolled family assumes all financial responsibility for tuition and additional fees that accompany enrollment and attendance at First Academy. If a family's financial account becomes delinquent, he or she is subject to the same rules and consequences of other families and students enrolled at First Academy specified in the financial policies in this handbook.

Due to possible and ongoing legal challenges to the LEARNS Act and Educational Freedom Accounts, if the program is challenged legally and financial support is halted, paused, or discontinued, affected families – i.e. those enrolled and utilizing the available EFA funds – will be required to remain in good standing according to the financial policies in this handbook or subject to the rules and consequences specified in the financial policies of this handbook.

The school accepts responsibility to maintain its eligibility in the EFA program and verify student progress and attendance through the platforms the Arkansas Department of Education currently stipulates through the EFA program rules.

If funding does not pay for all fees and required financial commitments of the school, the enrolled family must ensure that outstanding fees are paid. If those outstanding fees outside the scope or financial restrictions of the EFA program (expected to be near \$6,600 for tuition and limited additional fees), the enrolled family's financial standing will become delinquent after a set time specified in the financial section of this handbook, and therefore, the enrolled family is subject to all conditions and consequences of financial delinquency up to and including dismissal of the student from the school and the hold of all academic records and transcripts until payment or payment plan is agreed to by school administration.

Tuition and specific fee payments are to be made quarterly through the ClassWallet system, the vendor approved by the Arkansas Department of Education for the 2023-2024 school year.

Expectations and Discipline

All enrolled students and families are expected to follow and abide by school policies regarding behavior and rapport with staff, property, and peers as spelled out in this handbook. Failure to meet expectations could result in the separation of school and family where the student will attend another school. Students enrolled through the EFA program agree to comply with First Academy's core values and expectations, and the school will likewise follow all required policies and procedures described in this handbook. The expectations and consequences for failure to meet expectations are provided the same for all students.