



# **FAMILIES OF FAITH**

## **CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

### **K-12 HANDBOOK**

#### **Revision Policy**

Families of Faith Christian Academy reserves the right to change any policy or procedure in the dress code at any time when, at the discretion of the staff and administration, it deems the change to be in the best interest of the school.

Rev. 07/23/2024



## FAMILIES OF FAITH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

John Cichy—Headmaster

Melanie Wilkerson—Administrator

Rachal Ayers—Principal

Eliana Acosta—Office Administrator

Danielle Larson—Secretary

Jorge Acosta—Athletic Director

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### **Mission Statement**

To work with families in bringing their children to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, educating them from a Christian worldview, and preparing them for a life of service to Christ and their world.

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## **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God, inerrant in the original writing, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and practice.

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is fully God and fully man.

We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God in hell.

We believe all human beings are born with a sinful nature.

We believe that God is the holy, righteous, and immutable Creator (Gen. 1-2). In His image, He wonderfully creates each person as a biological male or biological female (Ps. 139). These two distinct, yet complimentary sexes together reflect His glory and goodness. Both males and females are completely equal in dignity, values and worth, yet differ in role. Because of sin, culture's understanding of these differences sometimes creates confusion. However, because of the preeminence of God and the sufficiency of the Gospel, we do not affirm or celebrate this confusion. We acknowledge God's wisdom in creating us male or female and seek His wisdom in fulfilling the role for which He designed us.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our own sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified, by faith in Him, on the grounds of His shed blood.

We believe in the imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the lost.

## **STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

True Christian education will recognize that:

A differentiation must be made between earthly wisdom (1Cor. 1-2; Jam. 3:15) and spiritual wisdom (1Cor. 1:30, 7:10-16; Jam. 3:13,17), while acknowledging that the source of all true wisdom and understanding is God Himself (Prov. 1:7, 9:10, 15:33; Col. 2:3).

The purpose of Christian education is to convince the student of his need for a personal, saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, to nurture, admonish, and encourage the student to live in conformity with the revealed will of God through a life of service, wholly dedicated to and dependent upon God (Rom. 12).

The process of Christian education requires the natural integration and consistent application of God's Word into every area (academic, extracurricular, administrative, etc.) of the school program (Eph. 4:4-6).

Parents bear the sole responsibility for the education of their children. Christian parents, in particular, should be aware of their duty to raise and educate their children in accordance with God's way and experience the resulting blessing of obedience or consequences of disobedience which will result from their decision regarding the provision of a God-honoring education (Deut. 4:10, 6:6-7, 20:17-18; Psalm 106:34-37; Jer. 10:2; Matt. 12:30; 2 Cor. 6:17; Eze . 44:5; Ezra 7:25; Prov. 22:6).

God has ordained one woman/one man marriage, the family (Gen. 2:27,28; 3:18-24), and the Church (Matt. 16:13-18; Eph 5:23-32) as the institutions, which He desires to use to accomplish His divine will on Earth. Local gatherings of believers, called churches, serve their families in the area of education by training and equipping parents to be the primary providers of spiritual instruction for their children. To assist parents in this area, there are two types of schools: the Sunday school and the Monday through Friday Christian school. The Christian school also provides a well-rounded program of Christ-centered academics and extracurricular activities. The goal of the three, parents, church, and Christian school, is to work together to carry out the mandate of Scripture to "Train up a child in the way that he should go. Even when he is old, he shall not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

The Biblical and philosophical goal of Families of Faith Christian Academy is to develop students into mature, Christ-like individuals, who will be able to exhibit a Christ-like life. Of necessity, this involves the school's understanding and belief of what qualities or characteristics exemplify a Christ-like life. Even though parents may personally believe differently, while enrolled at Families of Faith Christian Academy, all students are expected to exhibit the qualities of a Christ-like life that will be taught by the school and to refrain from certain activities or behavior. Thus, Families of Faith Christian Academy retains the right to refuse enrollment or to expel any student who engages/supports in immoral practices, such as: sexual immorality, homosexual/bisexual behavior, substance abuse, theft, gang affiliation, bringing weapons to school, etc. (Exod. 20:15; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 5:3)

## **STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE**

Families of Faith Christian Academy seeks:

- To guide each student toward a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- To offer a quality co-educational program from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade that is both God-centered and educationally sound.
- To provide learning experiences which develop the student's maximum spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, and emotional potential.
- To prepare students for life in this world and the eternal world, which they will one day enter.
- To meet the individual needs of the student through utilization of proper placement, ability grouping where appropriate, and continuing guidance regarding the ongoing selection of a student's course of study.
- To instill in students a respect for God, themselves, and others.
- To foster an attitude of personal responsibility for one's actions.
- To equip students to be able to make sound decisions based on high moral and ethical standards.
- To develop within each child a healthy, respectable self-image.
- To encourage a discipline of daily devotions (prayer and personal Bible study) that will produce a happy, joyful, victorious Christian life.

## **STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

Families of Faith Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to FOFCA students. We do not discriminate based on sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admissions procedures, and scholarship awards, athletic and other school administered programs. We do, however, reserve the right to deny admission to any individual who cannot benefit from enrollment based on past academic achievement, disqualifying disability, or whose personal lifestyle is not in harmony with the stated philosophy and purpose of Families of Faith Christian Academy.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **ACCREDITATION**

Accreditation is “the act of certifying an educational institution or program as meeting all official formal requirements of academic excellence, facilities, curriculum, etc.,” (Webster). Schools choose whether to be accredited. Many public and private schools have chosen not to accept state accreditation. The goal of accreditation is to create an “acceptable” standard for quality education. Since we don’t agree with many of the state’s “acceptable” standards, we have chosen not to be state accredited.

We don’t want to be merely a school, but a school of excellence. We cannot be that school by following government mandates. State curriculum is subpar at best. We use a phonics-based reading curriculum that gives young readers a solid foundation in the English language which research has proven to be the most beneficial method for reading instruction. We always want to maintain the highest of standards that qualify our graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions and our curriculum and tailored focus on writing prepares our students for excellence at the next level!

Our K-HS teachers hold a Bachelor of Science degree, Bachelor of Arts degree, or are in the final steps of completing that degree. Our preschool teachers have a minimum of an Associate’s degree. New teachers are assigned a veteran teacher to mentor them also. Often our teachers complete CEU’s during the summer and additional training throughout the school year. They are qualified to instruct, train, and most importantly, teach students the Gospel and proper application of Scripture to their lives.

### **ENTRANCE GUIDELINES**

Students entering preschool 3 must be three years old by September 1st, entering pre-kindergarten 4 must be four years old by September 1st. Both three and four year old preschoolers must be fully potty trained to be in school.

Students entering kindergarten must be five years old by September 1st.

In most cases, these cut-off dates will be what is best for these students. However, exceptions can be made for certain circumstances after careful consideration by parents, teachers, and administration. The final decision lies with the administration. Modified placement based on age does not guarantee continued modified placement. Based solely on the best interest of the student, an additional year may be required.

We have developed an entrance exam based on our curriculum standards for students entering pre-kindergarten 4 through high school. We administer this test to all new students to gain an understanding



of their prior learning, to assess any gaps in their education, and to create a plan for helping students to succeed at the next level of their education. It is typical for incoming students to have difficulty with some of the problems on the exam and it is not an assessment of an individual student's ability to learn.

## **BIBLE**

Bible study is of prime importance in Christian schools. Each student is required to take a daily Bible class. It is not our purpose to advance any denominational position or church dogma. The course content will focus on learning what the Gospel is and who the Gospel is for, seeing their need for salvation and receiving it, then loving God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, developing an understanding of the whole of Scripture, and applying the Scriptures practically to their daily life. Scripture memory, homework assignments, Christian service, and unit examinations will form the nucleus of the grading structure for Bible courses.

## **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum used at FOECA is carefully selected from a variety of different curriculum, both Christian, and secular. Abeka Book is our main curriculum supplier. We believe in a solid, traditional mathematics foundation and strong, phonics-based reading program.

## **CHAPEL**

Chapel time is an integral part of our school curriculum and is required for all students. Mandatory dress (see dress code handbook) is required on all chapel days.

Our chapel times are designed to provide a positive, meaningful experience for all students at FOECA. Disrespect, mockery, or inappropriate behavior (such as completing homework assignments, talking, sleeping, etc.) will result in immediate removal from chapel and is noted as a minor violation. It is expected that students will be courteous and respectful to chapel guests at all times. Parents are welcome to attend chapel at any time; please be sensitive to being a distraction to the students—if you have small children, please sit in the back of the room.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is assigned for the purpose of review and the enforcement of concepts. Homework assignments not turned in when they are due will be considered late. Late assignments will lower the student's grade average. We request parents' full cooperation in seeing that the homework assignments are completed.

K-6<sup>th</sup>: Elementary students are to take their planners home daily for review. Parents should sign their student's planners each day to acknowledge that the assignments were completed. Homework assignments that are not turned in when they are due will result in a homework notice and receipt of a zero for that assignment. If the assignment is turned in within three days, students will receive late credit. If the assignment is not turned in, the grade will remain a zero. Parents will receive a JupiterGrades notification for missing homework assignments. Four missing homework assignments will result in a detention.

7-12<sup>th</sup>: Homework assignments that are not turned in when they are due will result in a receipt of a zero for that assignment. If the assignment is turned in within two days, students will receive late credit. If the assignment is not turned in, the grade will remain a zero. Late homework assignments will lose 50% of the grade each day they are late. Teachers may (but are not required to) make exceptions.

Turned in on time—100% credit possible

Turned in one day late–50% credit possible

Two days past due–no credit possible

### **ACCOMMODATIONS/MODIFICATIONS**

Accommodations/modifications are academic changes made for a specific student because of a diagnosed learning difficulty. Accommodations are a change of the curriculum for a specific student. Modifications are an adjustment of academic goals involving classroom setting, schoolwork, and homework for the purpose of helping a student become successful. No accommodations or modifications will be made without administrative approval. Any student receiving accommodations and/or modifications will be put on an ISP (Individual Service Plan) to be shared with administration and staff for the purpose of goal-setting and monitoring.

### **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

Standardized achievement tests will be given during the spring semester of each year. Dates will be published, and student attendance is required. Parents will not automatically receive the results of standardized testing, but may request a copy if desired.

### **INDEPENDENT STUDY**

High school students who are interested in taking a course that FOCCA does not offer may do so with administrative approval. All independent study courses must be contracted and paid for by the student. FOCCA administration will determine if the course of study the student suggests meets the philosophy and objectives of the school. In addition, they will determine the amount of credit the student will receive upon successful completion of the course.

### **TUTORING**

Additional tutoring may be offered (for a fee), and in some cases required, for students needing more individualized assistance. A tutor may be required by:

- The administration, based on student academic performance.
- The teacher, based on student academic performance.
- The parent, please contact the individual teacher to determine the days and times available for your student.

For students in grades 7-12, please note that the teachers are always willing to help a student during study hall.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Students will have the opportunity to attend field trips throughout the year. Permission slips will be sent home in advance. Students are not required to attend any of the field trips; however, if a student chooses not to attend, they will be the responsibility of the parents and will be considered absent. At the discretion of the teacher, specific field trips may be used as a class grade.

Families of Faith Christian Academy greatly depends on the involvement of parents for transportation and chaperoning of field trips and other off-site events. Please notify your student's teacher if you would be willing to serve in this manner. All drivers and chaperones will be asked to read school guidelines, complete paperwork, present a current driver's license, show proof of auto insurance, and abide by all policies and procedures.

## Dual Credit

Juniors and seniors are permitted to pursue dual credit through an online university or local community college. Students who are interested in this opportunity must contact administration for approval. College courses successfully completed will receive credit for both high school and college and in high school, will receive an additional GPA point.

### GRADE SCALE K – 8<sup>th</sup>

A+	100 – 99	C+	84 – 83
A	98 – 95	C	82 – 79
A-	94 – 93	C-	78 – 77
B+	92 – 91	D+	76 – 75
B	90 – 87	D	74 – 71
B-	86 – 85	D-	70 – 69

### GRADE SCALE 9–12<sup>th</sup>

A+	100 – 99	C+	79 – 78
A	98 – 93	C	77 – 73
A-	92 – 90	C-	72 – 70
B+	89 – 88	D+	69 – 68
B	87 – 83	D	67 – 63
B-	82 – 80	D-	62 – 60

### HONOR ROLL

Highest Honor Roll: Students who have maintained all A's throughout the year.

High Honor Roll: Students who have maintained all A's throughout the year with no more than one (1) B.

Honor Roll: Students who have maintained A's and B's throughout the year with no more than one (1) C.

### JUPITER GRADES

Jupiter Grades allows students and parents to check their current grades and homework online anytime. Each parent and student receive their own password, so all records are confidential. You may access Jupiter Grades from any device with internet access. Attendance will be kept on Jupiter Grades, and students can generate an assignment calendar for all their classes on one page, including any missing assignments. All parents should regularly check Jupiter Grades and sign up for alerts. All grades and Code of Conduct violations will be recorded in Jupiter Grades and it will be our primary form of communication in regards to grades and discipline.

## **REPORT CARDS**

The school year is divided into four quarters. Report cards including teacher comments are released at the end of each 9-week quarter. These are not printed, rather parents will receive a text notification when grades are final. However, parents need not wait until quarter's end to be made aware of student progress. Jupiter Grades is kept updated by each teacher regularly.

## **FINAL EXAMS**

Comprehensive final exams from each semester will be given in all classes during the last week of the semester. Middle and high school final exams will count as regular test grades. Juniors and seniors who are earning an A at exam time may not have to take the final exam for that class.

## **AWARDS**

Each month throughout the school year, we highlight one character trait we would like to see developing in our students. At the end of the month, teachers submit students who have demonstrated the given trait and those students are awarded for their exemplary character.

Awards will also be given at the end of the school year for all students who have received special honors in school-related activities such as Highest Honor Roll, High Honor Roll, Honor Roll, and Perfect Attendance (being in school every day without absence and fewer than three tardies for the entire year). All elementary students receive a class award given by their teacher during the end of year awards ceremony. Students in 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade may receive a class award given by their teachers based on class performance, improvement, or character.

## **ACADEMIC PROBATION**

Academic probation is not a punishment. It is a reminder to students and parents of the seriousness of schoolwork and the need to stay caught up in each class. When a student is placed on academic probation, the administration will notify his/her parents, and grade reports will be sent home weekly. In addition, parents are encouraged to regularly contact teachers regarding their student's progress. Our goal is to work together to help students succeed. To achieve this goal, all students on academic probation will be issued a weekly grade report. (We will assume the parent is receiving these weekly reports. Please call the school office if questions arise.)

Academic probation can begin prior to the beginning of a semester or at the quarter grading period breaks. Any student failing two classes at the end of the quarter grading period will be placed on academic probation for the remainder of the semester. Any student displaying a pattern of failure will be reviewed and evaluated in order to determine the causes of academic difficulty. Recommendations to the parents will then be made. The following provisions exist for students on academic probation:

1. Students on probation are ineligible for extracurricular activities if failing any class during the probation.
2. If students on probation are failing two or more classes at semester end, they may be dismissed with no tuition refund.
3. Academic probation will continue for the following semester if one class is failed for the semester.
4. Students will only be removed from probationary status if they are passing all course work at the semester end.

A teacher or the administration may request tutoring. All students failing three or more classes at the conclusion of the semester will be subject to review and possible dismissal. Students and parents will be notified after the end of the semester concerning their current academic probation status. If you have a child who seems to be struggling with his/her work, contact the administration to arrange for a meeting to determine what options are available.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Summer school is divided into two, three-week sessions. Students in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade who fail the entire year's course of any subject will be required to take summer school. Students in high school who receive a failing grade in a semester are required to take one session of summer school per failed semester. For example, a student who fails one semester of science will be required one session of summer school science to recover the credit. A student who fails both semesters of English must take both sessions of summer school to recover the credit. Failure to take summer school will result in a failed grade and possible retention or inability to graduate. See the summer school handbook for more details.

### **GRADUATION**

At the end of the year, we hold a graduation program for students in pre-kindergarten 4 and kindergarten. The dates are published on the school calendar and families are encouraged to attend. We will hold 8th Grade and High School Commencement Exercises to honor successful completion of the student's corresponding program of study.

## **ATTENDANCE**

**Punctual and regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between the student and their parents or guardians. Regular attendance prepares the student for the world of work and adult responsibilities. FOECA expects all students to attend school, to be punctual to school and to classes, and to bring appropriate school materials with them. State of Illinois policy states, "A child may not be absent from a public school without valid cause for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular days or nine days." Please note that is nine days for the full school year.**

### **ABSENCES**

*A student will be limited to a total of ten full day absences (excused and unexcused combined) per semester. All absences, including illness and family vacations apply toward the 10-day attendance policy. Any exceptions to the 10-Day policy will be determined by the administration.*

On the tenth absence there will be a review of the student's status. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, when a student accumulates eleven full day absences (excused or unexcused), the student will be dropped from the attendance roll. School personnel will review the reasons for absences prior to the student being dropped.

Arrangements for absences due to doctor appointments, court appearances, vacations, etc., should be made in advance.

For an absence to be excused, a student will be required to provide documentation the day they return to school.

It is necessary that parents call or text the office to verify and explain the absence before **9 AM on the day** of

the absence.

Absences due to in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, extenuating circumstances, (including, but not limited to deaths in the immediate family) and health-care-provider-verified medical excuses for absences due to chronic illness will not be applied toward the 10-day absence count.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

**Unexcused absences:** Any work missed or due on the day of an unexcused absence must be turned in and any missed quizzes or tests taken on the school day the student returns. Teachers may (but are not required) to make exceptions.

**Excused absences:** If a student is absent, they will have one day per day of absence to make up the classwork, tests, quizzes, and homework (one day missed equals one day to complete make-up work, two days missed equals two days to complete work, etc.). This policy does not apply to student athletes who leave school early or miss school entirely due to an away game or tournament. Please see the athletic handbook for more details.

### **ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES**

Regular attendance is essential for academic success and is required in all classes held at Families of Faith. The state laws of Illinois are very specific concerning the matter of pupil attendance. It is assumed that students will always be in school except for cases of illness or serious family crisis. The guidelines of the State of Illinois regarding attendance are as follows:

- Absent 30 minutes or less will show as a full day present
- Absent 31 to 210 minutes (3.5 hours) will show as one-half a day absent
- Absent 211 to 360 minutes (3.5 – 6+ hours) will show as a full day absent

Parents should contact the main office if there is a question of extracurricular eligibility due to an absence.

### **CLOSED CAMPUS**

All students are to report to their scheduled locations and are to remain in school until the end of their scheduled school day. No one is authorized to leave the school without a note or phone call from home and properly signing out of the school office. Students who leave the building without following the proper procedure will be considered truant, which is a major violation in our Code of Conduct.

### **EXCUSED & UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

**Excused absences will include but may not be limited to:**

- Illness
- Family emergencies
- Pre-arranged college visits
- Death in the immediate family
- Pre-arranged family vacation (that does not fall during testing or final exams.)

Please arrange family vacation times during holidays and scheduled days off. It is difficult for students to miss multiple days of school while classes are in session. Though they may be able to make up classwork and homework from that time, they are unable to repeat lectures and in-class activities.

**Unexcused absences will include, but may not be limited to:**

Habitual car trouble	No transportation	Ditch Days	Oversleeping
Truancy	No parent call or letter on absence		

**EXTENDED ILLNESS**

Parents are asked to notify the office when they first learn of the possibility of an extended illness. The office needs to be contacted no later than 9:00 AM on the day of the absence or beforehand. Arrangements for schoolwork can be made through the main office or directly with the child’s teacher(s).

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ATTENDANCE**

All participants must be in attendance the day of and the day after any event. Participants must attend at least ½ of the school day to be eligible to participate in the next event of that program. School administration or department leads may make exceptions as appropriate..

**SPECIAL ABSENCES**

**College Visitation Days:** Juniors and seniors may use up to three college visit days. A parent phone call is necessary, and a college adviser or counselor must verify the visit in writing. College-printed material or apparel will not be accepted as sufficient proof for a college visit excused absence.

**Court Appearances:** Family court visits to solve family problems or summonses to serve as a witness are generally excused. A summons for personal violations of the law will be unexcused.

**TARDIES**

A student is considered tardy when arriving to school after 8:30 AM and will be given a tardy for each unexcused violation. We realize that some families may be driving a great distance to school or dealing with various family dynamics that may cause students to be tardy and we want to be understanding and gracious of these things. Please communicate with the office regarding these circumstances **prior** to the student’s receipt of a detention or fine. Examples of unexcused tardies include, but are not limited to: oversleeping, car trouble, traffic, running errands for a parent, stopping to get coffee/breakfast, etc. **Parent notification of a student’s impending tardiness does not automatically cause the tardiness to be excused.** Each unexcused tardy to class will also be noted as a tardy violation and recorded in Jupiter Grades. (See Code of Conduct and the Discipline & Consequences Chart)

**TRUANCY PREVENTION INITIATIVE**

**Four semester absences—parent letter**

A brief letter will be mailed from the school office seeking parental assistance.

**Seven semester absences—parental contact and student meeting**

Parents receive a second letter and a phone call home. The second letter is more direct than the first letter. Students in grades 7-12 will meet with the administration on the importance of attendance and disciplinary action may follow.

**Nine semester absences—parent letter and conference**

This formal letter requests that the parents come in to have a conference with the School Administration and the student.

**Ten semester absences—parent letter**

The parent is presented with all of the documentation that the school has attempted to improve the student's absenteeism.

### **Eleven absences—dropped from roll**

When a student accumulates eleven full-day absences (**excused or unexcused**), the student will be dropped from the attendance roll and students will have to repeat the semester. If there are rare, extenuating circumstances in which a student misses their allotted absences, they may be allowed to attend summer school to receive tutoring in the core courses to make up the work missed and receive the needed teaching instruction. These grades will be added to their present report cards.

## **STUDENT LIFE**

### **GUM, CANDY, AND FOOD**

Students are to leave chewing gum at home since they should not be chewing it at any time before, during, or after school in any part of the building. Candy may be eaten only in the cafeteria during the lunch period or as provided during class. No food or open drink, except the student's daily lunch, may be kept in school lockers.

### **LUNCHES**

Students should bring lunch to school. In the event in which a student does not bring lunch to school, they are to let the office know. At that time, a parent will be contacted for permission to purchase a sack lunch with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and chips for \$5 charged to the FACTS account for emergencies only. This is not a service that is to be utilized daily. If you are aware that your child has forgotten their lunch in the morning or your student has peanut/gluten allergies and cannot have the sack lunch we are able to provide, you are welcome to bring your child back their lunch or to order food for delivery.

### **CAFETERIA RULES**

1. Students should follow all directions of cafeteria staff and monitors
2. Students may not cut in line to get service
3. Students are responsible for their disposable materials and the general cleanliness of the area in which they are sitting
4. Students may not leave the cafeteria, go to their classrooms, or to the parking lots during lunch periods
5. Students are to stay on campus for lunch
6. Due to food allergies and other dietary restrictions, students are encouraged to NOT share their lunches with others

### **HALLWAY PROCEDURES**

All students are required to have a hall pass when not in a classroom or chapel. Any student without a pass will receive a minor violation. Students in grades 7-12 must not be in the elementary wing of the building without special permission or escort by a teacher or other staff member.

### **MUSIC INSTRUCTION**

At FOFCA, we believe students need to be taught the importance of using music to honor God. We teach that music is an act of worship. We encourage students to give the best of their musical talents to the Lord. There are opportunities for FOFCA students to use their gifts and talents musically. One is to be part of Eagle Notes Choir (student interest pending) as well as serve in the worship band in various chapels and other special



events. We strive to find quality music instructors from which our students may take lessons. There is an added expense for this.

It is the policy of our school to encourage wholesome and uplifting music. No sensual or suggestive music or music which tends to encourage rebellion to authority will be used or allowed to be a part of any activities related to our school.

## **PATRIOTISM**

As a Christian school in America, we have a unique responsibility to respect and uphold the authority of our country's leadership because we recognize that ultimately, they are there by God's sovereign authority. At the same time, we have a responsibility to our democracy—to protect and defend our freedom and the freedoms of others by being informed and wise voters. We may not agree with the things that a particular leader may do, say, or support. However, we will teach our students to be respectful of our government leadership regardless of our personal opinions. We expect students to speak respectfully of our country. Students will be asked to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and for the presentation of our national anthem.

We stand firmly on God's Word. Where Scripture and political discussions/debates intersect, we will always teach the truth of Scripture. We will pray for God to grant our leaders wisdom and the grace to lead well. In addition to that, we will remember that our government leadership are image-bearers of God and worthy of our respect as people. There are genuine Christ-followers on both political sides, and we will be respectful of each other regardless of our differences. Politics and patriotism are not ultimate—the glory and honor of Christ is ultimate. We can accept people of differing political beliefs from our own because we are united by Christ.

## **LIBRARY**

We are pleased to provide a quality library and media center for our students. We do all we can to make sure the books are age-appropriate. In our current culture, children's literature is often being infiltrated with values and beliefs we do not support. If you find something inappropriate in any of the books, please let the office know.

Use of our school library is a privilege, which may be revoked because of improper behavior in the library or repeated failure to return materials on time. If a student has outstanding fees in the library, that student will not be able to check out additional books until the fees are paid. See tuition & fees delinquency notice.

## **LOCKERS**

Students are to use their assigned lockers only. Each student is responsible for keeping his/her locker clean both inside and outside. Pictures and advertisements displayed in lockers must be in good taste and not advertise alcohol, drugs, tobacco, gang symbols or activity, illegal activities, hate messages, sexual innuendos, or vulgar words and gestures. Damages caused by misuse will be charged to the student responsible. Any locker malfunction should be reported to the school office for repair. For safety purposes, each student is encouraged to keep their locker combination private. Students and parents should note that lockers are property of FOFCA and at any time, school staff reserves the right to inspect a student's locker.

*Backpacks are to be stored in the student's locker and not brought into the classroom.*

## **LOST AND FOUND**

The school will maintain a lost and found. The school assumes no responsibility for lost items. Lost and found items will be donated locally if not picked up by a date provided in advance. Please be sure all personal items are properly labeled.

## **STUDENT PRESENCE IN OFFICE AREA & TEACHER'S LOUNGE**

Students should be in the office area only when dealing with school business, for emergencies, or for illness during school hours. Students are not permitted in the teacher's lounge. Usage of the office computers for homework is prohibited. Student use of office or teacher's lounge appliances is prohibited.

## **TELEPHONE MESSAGES AND USE (OFFICE)**

Please arrange all matters ahead of time with your student. In case of emergencies, the secretary will take the message and notify the student. Students will be allowed to return emergency calls.

## **ELEMENTARY SPECIALS**

Students at the elementary level have special courses that they take approximately once each week with their classroom teacher, another teacher in the building, or from a volunteer. These classes are typically PE, music, art, and library.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

Once a year, typically in the spring, FOECA students present an exhibition of their hands-on learning in one of three areas: science, history, and the arts. This is done on a scheduled rotation. All students in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade present their work at a science fair, significant historical figure at a living history wax museum, or showcase their writing and art talent. Elementary students in grades K-6 often complete and present their projects as a class. Students in grades 7-12 prepare and present individual assignments. These are required tasks on which students spend much time preparing and their hard work will be reflected in their grades!

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Students are required by law to participate in physical education. Those students who are unable to participate in the regular physical education program must bring to the school office a written order from their doctor. The doctor's order must state any restrictions related to medical, surgical, or injury and must include an end date or date of next appointment. Parent requests for a one- or two-day excuse are to be presented directly to the office.

Students in grades 7-12 have a uniform requirement (a \$20 fee) for PE classes, please see the course syllabus for details.

## **DRIVER'S EDUCATION**

Due to the prohibitive cost of operating a driver education program, classes will not be offered at FOECA. Students may also take driver education classes at the high school in their district of residence. Upon completion, please send records to the principal so that students may receive credit (0.5) for the course.

## **PARTIES**

The school may schedule parties throughout the school year such as the high school formal. School-scheduled parties are the only ones that FOECA sponsors and/or endorses. There will be **no** school

parties hosted in private homes without permission from the administration that will be considered a school function. Use of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol will, in no way, be a part of any FOECA event (before, during, or after the event). If this is violated, the disciplinary consequences listed under major infractions will be implemented.

## **HOLIDAYS**

There are many holidays and other special days throughout the school year that we like to celebrate and enjoy! Holidays are good gifts to us from God and we celebrate them to remember the truth behind their foundation. Each holiday season helps us to remember different aspects of this same truth—God has been good to us. Some holidays we celebrate at school are: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, and Easter. Classroom teachers may invite parents to help host classroom parties. Please be mindful of any allergies in the class whilst preparing these activities for students.

During the fall, we enjoy fun harvest-themed activities like pumpkins, candy corn, apples, etc. However, we do not acknowledge Halloween in our school. Please do not send treats or candy branded with Halloween images or sayings.

While we know that the celebration of holidays in our culture introduces such characters as Santa and the Easter bunny, these fun characters are not the climax of the holidays themselves. We can (and do!) enjoy them, but they are not to be the sole focus of our classroom celebrations—Christ is!

## **STUDENT DRIVERS**

Driving is a privilege. Failure to drive safely or follow FOECA posted signs may result in the loss of this privilege. The administration reserves the right to inspect any vehicle driven by a student to school. Students and parents will be required to sign a student driver form, provide a valid driver’s license, and proof of insurance.

Those students who drive to school must follow the following regulations:

1. Students may only park in assigned student parking areas.
2. Students may not enter their vehicles during the school day without office approval.
3. Students must always observe a speed limit of 5 mph while on school property and operate vehicles in a safe manner. Violation of this will result in the withdrawal of the driving privilege.
4. If a student has no extracurricular activities, they must leave the campus by 3:15 PM.

To facilitate transportation of students to and from extracurricular activities, students often wish to ride with or drive other students. It is the parents’ responsibility to provide adequate insurance coverage for their vehicles if their student is driving either alone or with others to school, extra-curricular events, or any other school related activity. It is also the parents’ responsibility to monitor with whom their student is riding.

If a student is leaving the building to go to their car midday, they must let the office know, and exit and re-enter through the main office.

## **ATHLETICS**

FOECA will offer athletics for boys and girls. A participation fee is mandatory for each sport to offset costs involved. Participating students must have had a physical examination within the past year. Athletes and their parents must attend a mandatory team meeting with their coaches. All athletes are expected to

exemplify Christ-like values in conduct, sportsmanship, effort, and attitude. Any student athlete displaying qualities contrary to these values will be suspended from all athletic practices and events.

Athletic letters will be awarded to student athletes who participate in school sponsored athletic programs. The requirements below are in addition to school eligibility requirements.

1. The athletic program must be sponsored by FOCCA and therefore offered to all students of the same grade level or range.
2. The athlete must be eligible in the grade range (in high school to get a varsity letter).
3. The athlete must be enrolled in FOCCA at the time of the awards ceremony..
4. The athlete must meet specific letter qualifications for each sport.

It is an honor to receive a letter in athletics. The letter is designed to recognize the hard work and dedication an athlete puts in during the season. The letter also recognizes the sacrifice required to be at practices and games while also maintaining academic requirements to be eligible.

### **ATHLETIC INELIGIBILITY**

At FOCCA, academics are second only to spiritual growth. Although we believe that extra-curricular activities are important in a student's development, they do not supersede the importance of academics. Therefore, eligibility rules have been established to provide more time for students to focus on improving their academic standing. Every Monday, the administration will check for academic eligibility. To be eligible to participate in FOCCA Athletics you may not have two D's or one F in any class. In addition to academics, the following may prohibit an athlete from participation: unpaid fees or one-month-past-due tuition, outstanding detentions or suspensions and unexcused absences. More information on eligibility can be found in the Athletic Handbook.

### **GYMNASIUM RULES**

Families of Faith practices respect for its facility as it is considered a blessing from God. To insure the best practices of our facility as it is related to our gymnasiums, the following rules shall apply: FOCCA events take precedence in the use of this gymnasium; people using the gymnasium for any reason should be certain to clean up any items from use—no balls or other equipment should be left in the gymnasium; people using the gymnasium are to wear athletic (non-marking) shoes only; outside equipment not belonging to FOCCA (basketballs, etc.) must be approved before use on the gymnasium floor; no food or drinks are allowed at any time in the gymnasium unless purchased from concessions.

## **HEALTH, SAFETY, & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **HEALTH FORMS AND IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

All students will be required to fulfill the State of Illinois requirements concerning health examinations (entering grades K, 6th, 9th, annual sports physicals, transfer students, etc.) and immunizations.

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

- An Emergency Card must be signed by a parent/guardian and kept on file in the office for each student. This card provides the school with emergency phone numbers and authorization of emergency medical treatment and an acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen release option.

Acetaminophen is commonly sold in drug stores under the brand name of Tylenol. Ibuprofen is commonly sold in drug stores under the brand name of Advil.

- If your child should need to be on medication during the school year, we ask that you leave it in the office for safe and controlled distribution. Bring the medication to the office in the prescription bottle (you may request two bottles from your pharmacist: one for home and one for school).
- Be prepared to give directions for medication administration including the date, name of the medication, dosage, and time for administration.
- If the office is not open, give the information to the before or aftercare worker on duty.
- If the medication is over-the-counter medication, bring the store bottle with your child's name clearly marked on it. No envelopes or bags.
- If your child is at school and it is determined that they have a fever or are vomiting, we ask that you arrange to have your child picked up within 30 minutes of notification. Also, a child should not return to school if they are still exhibiting symptoms of the prior illness. Please keep your child home if they show any signs of fever, diarrhea, vomiting, etc. They must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

## **HEALTH GUIDELINES**

We have compiled the following information for your convenience so you will know our school's policy regarding these conditions:

*Chicken Pox:* All the chicken pox must have a dry scab and no new pox must have appeared for the last three or four days.

*Pinkeye:* Eyes must be clear with no redness or secretion and must be on medication for 24 hours.

*Ringworm:* Contact the physician, the child must be receiving treatment (medication) and the ring must be completely covered by a bandage. After 48 hours of treatment, it is no longer contagious.

*Strep Throat:* We must have a doctor's note; the child must be on antibiotics for a minimum of 24 hours and be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

*Head Lice:* When a case of head lice is found in the school, all students in the class will be inspected. If another student in the class is found with head lice, a note will be sent home from the office. The office will need to check the child before he returns to the classroom. Students must be nit-and-lice free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Every medication dosage administered will be documented in your student's record. This record is available for your review upon request. If your student has a fever, the office will contact you immediately. You will also be contacted if your student habitually requests acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

## **ACCIDENTS & INJURIES**

All accidents which occur during the school day or on any school-sponsored trip will be reported to the office and logged. Minor injuries will be treated in the office. Students with serious injuries will be taken immediately to the hospital and parents will be notified by phone. A medical release form and emergency card must be signed by a parent/guardian and kept on file for each student. This form provides the school with emergency phone numbers and authorization for emergency medical treatment.

## **ALLERGIES**

All student allergies should be reported to the office administration and teachers. If your child has severe or life-threatening allergies requiring an epi-pen, this may be kept in the office or with the classroom teacher.

As needed, separate lunch tables may be a safe accommodation for students with severe allergies.

### **CHILD ABUSE POLICY**

The State of Illinois requires FOECA to report allegations of suspected child abuse to the proper governmental authority when there is reasonable suspicion or reasonable basis for believing that physical or emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, inadequate supervision, or other forms of abuse have occurred. While the school is expected to communicate with parents/guardians regarding the well-being of their children, the administration is placed between the parent/guardian and the state, acting on behalf of the parent/guardian and in accordance with state law. It is the school's policy not to contact parents/guardians in advance of making a report to legal authorities. Appropriate school staff will make such reports in the best interests of the affected child and do not, once reasonable suspicion is established, have any legal alternative except to make the report to the proper authorities for their investigation and review. The school may also undertake an inquiry prior to making a report to determine whether there are sufficient grounds to require reporting.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

Families of Faith Christian Academy will remain open unless hazardous road or other emergency conditions (including utility problems, electricity, or natural gas outages) necessitate a closing. A decision to close will normally be made (but is not required to be) by 5:30 AM and will be based upon weather reports, police reports, and administrative inspections of major highways. A text alert and email will be sent to all parents if school is canceled, delayed, or closing early due to weather or a general safety concern or precaution (as in the case of the smell of natural gas). We also will update our social media pages with school closing details. Please keep your personal information updated with the school office, especially your phone number and email address.

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Several practice drills will be held each year for fire, tornado, and terrorist threats. Appropriate signs are posted in each classroom. Once the alarm has sounded, students will be escorted to the appropriate location and attendance will be taken. Teachers are trained in each of the emergency plans and keeping your child safe and calm is their highest priority in those circumstances.

### **INSPECTIONS**

The administration reserves the right to search student backpacks, desks, coats/jackets at any time. If materials are found and determined to be offensive, inappropriate, or illicit, they will be confiscated. Administration or teachers will communicate with the parent regarding what was found. Appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken according to the Code of Conduct policy. Police dogs will be brought in for routine inspections of the school, as well as students' cars.

### **AUTOMOBILE SEARCH**

Any vehicle parking on school property is subject to search by school authorities and law enforcement personnel working with them. Such a search may be conducted without warrant for any reasonable purpose. Search of the vehicle includes all compartments and components. Once the search begins, the person in control of the vehicle will not be permitted to remove it from the premises.

## **VISITORS**

Any person other than students, staff, support staff, administration, or board members are considered visitors on campus and must come directly to the office to sign in, turn in their driver's license or state ID, and acquire a visitor's pass before going anywhere in the building. We use the sign in log to calculate volunteer hours. Any parent or adult without a visitor's pass will be directed to the office. Parental visitation to the classroom is not encouraged during school hours without prior administrative permission.

## **SKATEBOARDS, ETC.**

In-line skates, wheeled shoes, skateboards, and any other items that could be damaging to persons or property may not be used during school hours.

## **WATER BOTTLES**

Proper hydration is important for student health. Water bottles with closing caps will be allowed in the classroom. These bottles must be made of plastic or another unbreakable material and filled with water *only*. Note: Flavored water is NOT allowed. The policy for permitting water bottles in the classroom is at teacher discretion. Students may be instructed to keep their water bottle in their locker as opposed to at their desk.

# **TECHNOLOGY**

## **CELL PHONES**

Research shows that kids and teens do better without access to their cell phones during the school day: when students don't have access to their phones, they are more engaged both socially and academically. Having access to smartphones often distracts students from what is ultimate during the school day—learning and engaging with other students. The use of phones also often make students feel isolated. What counteracts these feelings of isolation? Students having in-person interactions with their friends, classmates, and teachers.

At FOFCA, we're committed to ensuring that each student feels known, loved, and valued! We believe greatly in the importance of our shared community—face-to-face, together! We do not permit cell phone use during the day because we believe that our students connecting with one another is vitally more important during school than students connecting to their phone. We also know that pursuing rigorous learning requires academic engagement and specific habits, and cell phones don't support these habits.

Our policy may appear a little unusual compared to the expectations of other schools, but for us, it's one clear example of how our commitment to students and families is different. Simply put, cell phones don't support our school community's connection and growth, so we do not permit them.

Over time, students do need to learn to manage technology and build healthy habits. We have iPads available for our elementary students to use to enhance the lessons they are being taught in class and computers for our 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade students to use as needed for research and writing.

Students are discouraged from bringing their cell phones to school at all. However, if, for a legitimate reason access to a cell phone is needed (such as for athletic events/practices before or after school), students may bring it to school and leave it in the pouches provided in each classroom, in their lockers, or in teacher-designated spaces on their desks. Cell phones are not to be used in the hallway between classes, in

the lunchroom, nor in the bathroom. Students found to be using their phones will be warned to put it in the pouch one time. After that, unauthorized possession and/or use may result in disciplinary action and potential confiscation of the phone for pick up after school in the office by a parent or guardian. See the Code of Conduct for specific details regarding consequences for violating the cell phone policy.

Teachers may authorize cell phone use for research and activities in their classroom at their own discretion and approval, but upon completion of the assignment or activity, the device is to be returned to the teacher-designated area for the remainder of class.

## **ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

Electronic equipment (iPads, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, etc.) are not to be brought to school without prior parent and teacher permission. On occasion, school-related projects or programs may make allowance for laptop and or tablet use. Handheld video games, tablets, or other games may be brought to school and played only before 8:15 AM and after 3:25 PM for all students K-6. Students in 7-12th grade may have access to their devices until school begins at 8:30 AM and when dismissal begins at 3:10 PM. All devices must be clearly labeled with the child's names. All games are to be age-appropriate; inappropriate materials will be confiscated. The toy is to be the child's responsibility, and therefore, any electronics brought to school are done so at your own risk—FOFCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Any student violating this policy will have the item taken away and the parents must pick it up from the office.

## **INTERNET/WIFI ACCESS**

Internet use at FOFCA is accessed through computers and iPads and is monitored by FOFCA staff. If you do not want your student to have access to the internet, please contact the school office and your child's teacher(s). Violation of the internet policy will result in disciplinary action, which may include loss of computer/iPad privileges, suspension, or legal prosecution. The following uses of our internet are not permitted:

1. Social networking including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, other apps or websites in which instant messaging, video messaging, etc. is accessible
2. Accessing, displaying, or sending offensive messages or pictures
3. Usage of obscene language
4. Harassing, insulting, or attacking others
5. Violating copyright laws or plagiarizing
6. Employing the network for commercial purposes

Student access of school Wi-Fi is not permitted on personal devices. Students may access the guest Wi-Fi which is not password protected. Parents/guardians who allow students to access our guest Wi-Fi do so at their own risk and assume all responsibility for use. Illicit content can be tracked and students accessing such things will be held liable.

# **PARENTS**

## **STATEMENT OF COOPERATION**

The following statement is printed on each parental agreement. Parents will be asked to affirm the statement with their signature on the application form.



We understand that enrollment in Families of Faith Christian Academy is not a right, but a privilege, and do affirm that there are standards that must be maintained for the welfare of each student, as well as, for the entire school. Therefore, we give permission for our teachers and/or other school personnel to make and enforce school regulations in a manner consistent with Christian principles of discipline as set forth in Scripture and the Parent/Student Handbook. We will continue to uphold the authority of the teachers and staff of FOFCA by recognizing their right to use appropriate disciplinary measures.

I have read FOFCA's discipline procedures and expectations. I agree to encourage my child to comply with the rules and conduct expected at all times. Furthermore, I agree to provide a home environment which supports FOFCA's expectations.

I understand and agree to the school's right to provide consequences—including suspensions or separation from the school, to my child, for violations of FOFCA's discipline procedures and expectations, which occur at any time while my child is enrolled at FOFCA.

I agree to provide FOFCA with any and all information regarding arrests or convictions pertaining to my child while enrolled and understand that this information may be used by FOFCA to determine consequences.

### **ORIENTATION**

Orientation is conducted during the evening in the first week of school. Important policies and procedures will be reviewed, and any changes to prior policies discussed. Parents will need to fill out an emergency card and an agreement stating their understanding and agreement of the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook and in our dress code. Attendance will be taken; all students and their parents are required to attend.

### **BEFORE AND AFTER CARE**

We provide before and after school care as a convenience for parents for an additional fee. Operation is contingent upon enrollment. Before school care hours are from 7:00 to 8:15 AM; after school care hours are from 3:25 to 5:30 PM. For more details, contact the school office.

### **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

#### **ARRIVAL TIMES (8:15 AM – 8:30 AM)**

- Please do not enter the building for simple drop-off/pick-up procedures.
- Stay in your car and use the pick-up line. Drop your student off at the designated door, one vehicle at a time.
- Students arriving before 8:15 AM will be escorted to before care, where the appropriate fee will be applied.

#### **DISMISSAL TIMES (3:10 PM – 3:25 PM)**

- Please do not enter the building for simple drop-off/pick-up procedures.
- Stay in your car and use the pickup line.
- A member of FOFCA staff or faculty will meet you at your vehicle, input your student's name into our dismissal system, and the students will be released to your vehicle.

- Parents/guardians conducting school business or making teacher contacts at the end of the day need to pick up their students prior to doing such business. Always call the office to make an appointment regarding teacher or staff meetings.
- Students not picked up by 3:25 PM will be escorted to aftercare, where the appropriate fee will be applied.
- Parents will have to enter the building to sign the student out.
- Students may only be released to parents/guardians or those listed on their arrival/dismissal form. You MUST call the office to change the pick-up person and a photo ID will be required.

### **CARPOOLS**

If desired, parents are responsible for forming carpools for the purpose of transportation of their children to and from school. The office will provide a listing of all school families living in your area at the beginning of the school year upon request. The school cannot be responsible for the safety of the child in any carpool. It is the parents' responsibility to provide adequate insurance coverage for their vehicles if they or their student are driving others to school, extra-curricular activities, or any other school related activity. It is also the parents' responsibility to monitor with whom their student is riding. All students are to be dropped off on school property and are not to leave campus until picked up by the carpool in the afternoon.

### **CUSTODY**

It is the policy of Families of Faith Christian Academy to communicate educational and personal information about a student only with the custodial (enrolling) parent or guardian. It is the responsibility of the non-custodial parent to seek copies of this information from the custodial parent. A non-custodial parent may be placed on the school mailing list to receive general information, such as newsletters or check the website for a school calendar of events. In the event of joint custody, communication will be made with the enrolling parent. If both joint custodial parents enroll the student, it is their responsibility to designate a primary contact.

### **CONFLICT**

Because we live in a sin-stained world, conflict is unavoidable; but God has given us a way to handle conflict. We teach and encourage our students, teachers, and staff to follow the Biblical model of handling conflict (Matthew 18:15-17). We also want conflict solved at the *lowest level* and *involving the fewest people* possible. FOECA strongly urges parents to refrain from gossip; as such conversations are destructive to the administration, students, and the parents. Parents are expected to take the following steps to resolve a problem:

1. Go directly to the appropriate teacher or staff member if there is a problem in your child's class
2. Go to the principal if a problem arises that the teacher cannot handle, happens outside the classroom, or if you believe the situation is not being resolved.
3. If you believe the situation was not resolved by the principal, go to the administrator.

### **FIELD TRIP CHAPERONES**

Parents will be notified if chaperones are needed on a field trip. If you choose to assist the teacher, no younger children or other individuals are permitted to attend the trip. Grandparents are welcome to attend as chaperones, but please arrange this with the teacher before the trip.

The following are guidelines for chaperones:

1. If I am driving children other than my own on a field trip, I will submit to the office a copy of my valid driver's license and current verification of automobile insurance. I will make sure the dates of expiration are legible and valid for the date of the field trip (the office will photocopy these). I will submit these before the day of the field trip.
2. If I have access to a cellphone, I will bring it with me on the trip for safety reasons. I will notify the teacher of the phone number, so he/she knows how to contact me. I will not talk or text on my cellphone while driving FOFCA students.
3. Students will be in seat belts at all times (note that only one child is permitted per working seat belt).
4. I am aware of the airbag restrictions in my vehicle, and I will comply with the rules for safe transportation of children regarding airbag restrictions.
5. I will follow directions to the destination. I will obey the rules of the road in speed and driving procedures. If I arrive early to the destination or back at school, I will keep the students with me and adequately supervise them. If I become lost or experience car trouble, I will call the school for instructions if the teacher is not available.
6. I will be aware of the music being played in the car. All music must be family friendly! We recommend 104.7 or 89.7.
7. If a bus is being used, I will help in adequately supervising the students.
8. If I have volunteered to chaperone and an emergency or change takes place making me unavailable, I will notify the teacher as soon as possible by calling or texting the office if necessary to get the message to the teacher.
9. The classroom teacher is in charge. As the leader of my group, I will maintain control of my group. If a child disobeys, I will notify the teacher. My role is to supervise my group every single minute of the field trip. I will go where they go, and they will go where I go.
10. I am to be impartial if my own child is in my group. I will be fair and consistent with all.
11. I understand that this field trip is for the children in the class. I will not bring other children that are in my care on this trip.
12. I will bring a watch, noting meeting places and times to avoid making the group wait.
13. I will comply with the dress code as written in the dress code handbook unless other arrangements have been set for the day.
14. I will not chew gum or hand it out to the students unless they have permission to chew gum.
15. I will not bring or spend money on treats or souvenirs for the group.
16. I will not smoke on this field trip.

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held twice each year. Official parent-teacher conference dates are printed on the school calendar and prior to conference time, parents will be able to schedule a time to meet. Please contact the office if you must change or cancel your appointment due to an emergency. If you feel that you need a parent-teacher conference mid-year, please reach out to your child's teacher to schedule a time to meet.

### **PARENTAL REQUIREMENTS & INVOLVEMENT**

FOFCA strives to meet the needs of the total child and complement the role of the parents as the primary educators of the child. This can only be accomplished when the parents are involved in their children's formal education from the beginning, including participation in the activities of the child's school.

When enrolling a child at Families of Faith Christian Academy, parents agree to work with the teaching staff and become involved with their child's overall development. Both parents, where there is no separation, agree to attend orientation, join scheduled parent-teacher conferences, and respond to communications from FOFCA.

Our school could not function well without our volunteers! Parent volunteers are encouraged to share a part of their time on a regular basis to assist with lunch duty, staff the library, provide maintenance, help run fundraisers, etc. Please call the school office if you are available and would like to know how you can help.

Parent volunteer hour requirement: seven hours for part-time preschool parent, 15 hours per child for full-time preschool-high school student with a maximum of 30 hours per family or pay the appropriate amount in lieu of volunteering (\$10 per hour).

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

We have a private Facebook group for FOFCA parents, staff, and some older students/alumni. It is a fun and safe place to share pictures and event information, ask questions, and connect.

On your own personal pages, please refrain from posting pictures of students without permission from that child's parents.

If you have an issue with a student, staff member, or administration, please follow the steps to resolving conflict as printed in our handbook. Use of social media to slander Families of Faith Christian Academy is not appropriate and will be addressed on an individual basis.

### **VOLUNTEER DRESS CODE**

While volunteering at FOFCA or on a field trip, we expect you to comply with the FOFCA dress code. It is very important for our parents to set a good example. This includes wearing shorts with a 5" inseam minimum, wearing shorts or leggings beneath dresses and skirts which are above the knee, and no visible undergarments. See our dress code handbook for specific details.

### **YOUNGER CHILDREN AT SCHOOL**

When volunteering, we appreciate your full attention. Having a young child present seriously limits the volunteer's ability to serve and can put our students' safety at risk. Please arrange other childcare for your younger children.

## **TUITION & FEES**

Families of Faith Christian Academy is committed to keeping tuition rates as reasonable as possible without sacrificing the quality of education. This is an investment in your child's future. It is also a serious financial commitment. We want to provide the best teachers and educational experience possible for your children. We are committed to being affordable for families seeking Christian education.

### **CHARTER MEMBERSHIP**

FOFCA is excited to be able to participate in a program that affords families an opportunity to secure placement of their child/children in an innovative and dynamic Christian education program. Upon execution of a Charter Agreement and tuition paid in full each participating year, Families of Faith Christian

Academy agrees to recognize the student as a Charter Member of FOCCA; receives guaranteed placement for every consecutive year attending FOCCA; and tuition guaranteed for K-12th grade at the rate of the present year's tuition for the grade the student will be entering (elementary, junior high, high school). The Charter Member family agrees to the following: pay the charter fee up front; register on Family ID and pay registration and material fees during re-enrollment week; and be faithful to pay the student's yearly tuition in-full and on-time. A charter membership is a privilege and is non-transferable.

### **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The operating budget of FOCCA is funded by tuition, fees, and contributions. Capital improvements are funded principally by gifts. Parents are asked to consider making both annual and capital gifts as an expression of their interest in and commitment to Families of Faith Christian Academy.

Parents are expected to pay their bills on time. If you know you are going to be late, please let the office know within seven days so that arrangements can be made. If we do not hear from you, students whose accounts are 30 days past due will be restricted from attending classes, participating in extracurricular/athletic events, graduation exercises, and/or receiving report cards or transfer of records until the account is brought current. Your communication is imperative! *We operate on tuition payments!* .

In event of academic failure, disciplinary reason, expulsion, or an extenuating circumstance all tuition monies, deposits, and fees already paid will be forfeited. Parents/guardians have entered into a contractual relationship with FOCCA for the payment of all tuition and related fees for the entire school year.

A parent's obligation to pay the fees for the full academic year is unconditional as stated in the signed contract. No portion of fees paid (registration, materials, tuition, etc.) or outstanding will be refunded or canceled in the event of absence or dismissal from Families of Faith. In the event of a geographic relocation of the family beyond a 60-mile radius of Channahon, IL, a prorated refund of tuition will be given. If a student withdraws before the first day of school, only paid tuition will be refunded. All other fees are non-refundable.

### **FINANCIAL AID PROBATION/SUSPENSION**

All members of an applicant family receiving financial aid are required to remain in good standing and meet all other obligations as required in this handbook, parent-agreement, and grant contract throughout the school year. If these obligations are not being met, see the delinquency section below. Additionally, if the financial or volunteer commitments are left unfulfilled, grant applications for the following school year may not be accepted.

### **FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES**

If you have extenuating circumstances that are impacting or may impact your financial obligations to FOCCA, please contact the administration immediately. Early and frequent communication is the key to resolving difficult issues.

### **DELINQUENCY**

All payments must be made on a timely basis as established by the school and administered by FACTS Management Services. Should you have difficulty in meeting your tuition obligation, information on the tuition assistance application procedure is available upon request from the school financial manager.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month, the school's financial manager will check all accounts. If the family's account is not current, the following may apply:

- ◆ Academics—On the first of each month, students may be suspended from classes.
- ◆ Extracurricular Activities—Students may not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities including athletics, class/field trips, fine arts, etc.
- ◆ Graduation—Preschoolers, kindergarteners, 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and seniors may not participate in commencement exercises until the school account for the family is paid in full.
- ◆ Report Cards/Transfer of Records—Students may not be allowed to take exams; and all student records and report cards may be withheld.

### **FACTS MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

All tuition and fees are paid through FACTS Management Systems. Tuition and/or Incidental Fee Accounts with FACTS must be set up by the family at the time of registration and may be done through the link on our website [www.fofca.com](http://www.fofca.com). There is a FACTS enrollment fee of \$55 for automatic payments and \$100 for invoiced payments, and \$25 for families who pay their tuition in full. Incidental Accounts are free with a tuition account, or \$25 for Incidental only. Please note that registration and FACTS payment fees are nonrefundable.

Parents who are delinquent at any grade level regarding educational expenses for their student(s) face the probability of student suspension until the deficit is removed. Families of Faith Christian Academy reserve the right to dismiss a student from school or take other appropriate action until all tuition and fees are paid.

### **FEES PAID AT SCHOOL**

Most school fees will be charged to your FACTS Incidental account. However, there may be a time when you may need to send a payment to the school directly. Whenever you plan to leave money with the school office or send it with your student, please send it in a sealed envelope and clearly mark your check or envelopes containing cash with detailed student and payment information.

### **RETURNED CHECK POLICY**

If a check is returned to the school unpaid for any reason there will be a \$30 fee payable to the school and no further checks will be accepted for the remainder of the school year. All further payments must be made in cash, certified funds, or money order.

### **RE-ENROLLMENT**

All currently enrolled students and their siblings will be given the opportunity to re-enroll before the public. To take advantage of our family priority re-enrollment and guaranteed class placement, we encourage all our returning families to enroll during our re-enrollment week (date and times can be found on the school calendar). This will be your one chance for special discounted fees. Open registration will begin the following Monday. Charter members must enroll this week to remain a charter member.

### **WITHDRAWALS**

All withdrawals must be made by completing the *Withdrawal Form* which is available in the school office. All accounts (tuition, before/after care, fees, etc.) must be paid in full before official records or report cards will be released. We hire teachers based upon enrollment and have entered into a contract with them.

Withdrawing your student(s) does not automatically guarantee a stop of tuition payments. As a portion of the withdrawal form, you must formally request a stop of your FACTS account with a letter submitted to FOCA administration which is subject to approval. If your request is approved, tuition is due for the full month regardless of the day of the month the student withdraws from FOCA. A \$500.00 withdrawal fee will be assessed for the breaking of the contract..

## CODE OF CONDUCT

**Our standards of conduct are based on three driving principles: respect for God (Rev. 4:11), respect for authority (Rom. 13:1), and respect for others (John 13:35).** The discipline plan below is designed to serve as a guide for administering consequences to students that are not adhering to the aforementioned standards of conduct. These standards provide a framework to help to maintain a safe and orderly school that promotes learning and glorifies God above all. Examples are given for minor and major violations, however it is understood that some acts of misconduct may arise that are not listed or categorized. Additionally, some circumstances may lead the administration to deal with an offense differently than indicated below.

Administration reserves the right to determine the consequence and or deviate from the discipline plan as they deem fit. FOCA may, but is not required to, take disciplinary action in response to actions occurring off campus or outside of school hours when an incident hinders FOCA from accomplishing its mission, the incident reflects negatively upon the school, or erodes the trust and Christian testimony of the student.

Detentions and suspensions may be given at any time by the administration if deemed necessary. The administration has the authority to determine whether a given disciplinary situation warrants expulsion from the school. Disciplinary procedures will be in effect at all FOCA functions. Parents will receive notification of all minor and major violations and any assigned consequences via notification through Jupiter Grades.

*Please note that administration also reserves the right to show grace at any time they deem it to be appropriate given the circumstances of the incident.*

### MINOR VIOLATIONS

All minor violations accumulate per semester. If a student reaches the third detention (eight violations in arrival tardies, class tardies, or dress code referrals, and/or seven minor violations) the administration will outline consequences for the second semester and a student may be put on a code of conduct probation. Minor violations include, but are not limited to:

- Classroom disturbances
- Disrespect to a teacher, staff member, or any adult in charge (i.e. lunchroom helpers)
- Lying
- Lack of class preparedness
- Off-task behavior in the classroom
- Food outside the cafeteria
- In the hallway without a pass
- Unauthorized use or possession of cell phone or another electronic device
- Throwing of objects
- Public displays of affection (PDA)

## **MINOR VIOLATION GUIDELINES**

See Discipline and Consequences matrix on the following pages for specific guidelines in kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade and for grades 7-12<sup>th</sup>.

## **MAJOR VIOLATIONS**

Major violations include, but are not limited to:

- Behaviors, actions, or words that are antagonistic to the basic goals and objectives of the school, or have an adverse effect on other students (illicit sexual behavior, gambling, etc.)
- Bullying or intimidation (this includes social media)
- Cheating (giving or receiving any information on any daily assignments, quizzes, or tests)
- Plagiarism
- Endangering the health, safety, or well-being of oneself or others
- Forgery
- Harassment
- Racism
- Insubordination (refusal to comply to a reasonable request from school personnel)
- Insolence (attitude of contempt)
- Mockery (**malicious** insults and/or teasing, etc.)
- Off-campus illegal activity
- Profane, vulgar, or obscene language or actions
- On-campus possession or use of fireworks, lighters, etc.
- On-campus possession of knives of any kind (excluding plastic used for lunch)
- On-campus possession of obscene and/or offensive materials
- Possession, use, sale or distribution of tobacco, marijuana, or vape products on or off school property.
- Theft
- Threats of violence or retaliation
- Willful destruction or defacement of school property or private property (student or parents will pay for repairs)

## **MAJOR VIOLATION GUIDELINES**

The precise consequence(s) of major violations will be determined by the administration given the nature of the infraction, but will result in a minimum of one of the following: immediate detention, immediate in-school suspension (number of days to be determined), immediate out-of-school suspension (number of days to be determined), or expulsion.

## **ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY**

Families of Faith Christian Academy has a ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY for the following violations:

1. Any gang affiliations
2. Possession, use, sale, or distribution of alcohol on or off school grounds
3. Possession, use, sale, or distribution of drugs including, but not limited to: marijuana, vape, and tobacco products
4. Possession or use of explosives, firearms, or any other weapons at school

If a student is found in violation of one of the zero-tolerance policies, they will immediately be considered for administration recommendation and possible expulsion.



## **CODE OF CONDUCT PROBATION**

After evaluation and consultation with administration, faculty, and parents, circumstances may warrant that a student be placed on Code of Conduct probation. The administration also reserves the right to extend probationary status and/or a behavior contract at any time to any student that warrants such, regardless of the students' position in the Code of Conduct system. A student who is placed on Code of Conduct probation at any time during the school year may be disqualified from taking part in all extracurricular activities, including athletic involvement, music programs not required for a course grade, talent shows, plays, competitions, meets, fairs, festivals, etc., for the probationary period.

Probation will be for a minimum 9-week period but may extend longer at the discretion of the administration. Each student placed on probation will be issued a behavior contract. The administration reserves the right to dismiss a student on probation at any time should the behavior warrant.

At the end of the 9-week period there will be an evaluation meeting at which time the administration will determine if the student is to remain on probation, to be removed from school, or to be released from probationary status.

## **DRUGS**

Drug use (including, but not limited to marijuana and vaping) amongst FOCCA students is absolutely prohibited. FOCCA reserves the right to test all athletes representing our school according to IHSA guidelines. In addition, if we have reasonable suspicions that a student is using drugs of any kind, parents will be notified, and the student may be required to be tested. If students are found to be using drugs through a positive drug test or student admission, they will be considered for administration recommendation and possible expulsion.

## **HARASSMENT**

Families of Faith Christian Academy is committed to maintaining a safe academic environment in which all individuals treat each other with due dignity and respect, and which is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation, and harassment, including sexual harassment. The school is prepared to take action to prevent and correct any violations of this policy. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to, and including expulsion. Our policy prohibits employee-student harassment, student-student harassment, and student-employee harassment.

We desire for our students to conduct themselves properly in electronic communications (social media, text messaging, group chats, etc.) however, student use of these things is heavily discouraged until students are in high school and is not maintained or monitored by school staff. If students are using communication tools on an electronic device, it is the parent's responsibility to help them navigate the difficulties that may arise on such platforms. If harassment or bullying is occurring on these devices, proof will be required to create documentation. If we have reasonable suspicions or proof that a student is misusing or mistreating other students through electronic communication, we have the right to notify parents of our concerns. School consequences may or may not be assigned depending on the nature of the incident.

## **DETENTION**

The goal of all discipline at FOCCA is to restore the student to right conduct. It is our hope that students learn from their mistakes and correct their behavior for the future to avoid consequences. However, we have a responsibility to hold our students to high standards of conduct. Detentions are not given lightly; they are

earned by student misconduct. Therefore, it is imperative that the detention is served in a timely manner. When a detention has been earned, the notification will come from Jupiter Grades with details such as the date and times of the detention with a minimum of one day's notice prior to the detention. Forgetting or not knowing about a detention is not an acceptable excuse for missing detention.

For elementary students, detention is to be served during lunch and recess, but upon receipt of the sixth minor violation in a quarter, the student will receive an hour detention either before or after school.

For students in grades 7-12, a detention is a 60-minute period scheduled and served before or after school in which students will serve the school with physical labor such as cleaning or otherwise improving the school facilities. Detentions may also be correcting the behavior with natural consequences such as reflecting on appropriate classroom conduct, apologizing to teachers or classmates with written communication, or making a plan to arrive to classes on time. Teachers have the right to assign detentions as they determine appropriate regardless of where a student falls on the matrix below. If a student is given a teacher-assigned detention, the teacher will communicate the details with the student and parent. Teacher-assigned detentions are for 30-minute periods before school, during lunch, or after school.

If the date and time create conflict for the family, the detention supervisor may reschedule it. However, it is the parent/student's responsibility to let the office know immediately if a detention cannot be served. Three missed or rescheduled detentions will result in an in-school suspension. Often, the office will text a reminder of pending detentions the day before it is to be served.

### **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

We believe that teamwork with parents is both Biblical and essential. Parents are the primary teachers in a child's life! We care about our students and want to see them be their best! Our teachers and staff work with students, often giving students multiple opportunities to correct problems before resulting in writing referrals. Should a serious problem arise with a student, we will do our best to clearly communicate our concerns to the parents. We will work with the parents to resolve the situation. ***Yet, should the overall attitude of the parents be one of continual blame-shifting, denial, or defensiveness, it will not be possible to work together for the good of the student.***

If the parents demonstrate an unwillingness to cooperate, their student may be asked to withdraw from our school. At FOECA, it is our conviction that to achieve success in the lives of our students, the school administration, staff, parents, and students must work together within the objectives and purpose of FOECA.

### **TARDY VIOLATIONS**

Punctuality is imperative for life skills and preparing oneself for future success. Therefore, students who arrive to school or to class late are held accountable. Every arrival tardy will receive a referral. After four arrival tardies in a semester, the student(s) will serve a detention. For students who are not yet driving themselves to school, parents may opt to pay a \$10/child fine in lieu of detention.

Students in grades 7-12 will be rotating classes during the school day. If a student is late to class, they will receive a class tardy referral. After four class tardy referrals in a semester, the student will serve a detention. Tardy referrals will be recorded separately in two categories: arrival tardies and class tardies. The fifth and any accruing tardy referrals will result in further consequences.

## **UNAUTHORIZED CELL PHONE/ ELECTRONICS USAGE**

If there is an emergency, students may request to use their phone to send a message to their parents. Any other use of the cell phone during school hours, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM, (not including arrival/dismissal times) will result in an unauthorized cell phone/electronic use violation. All violations will result in confiscation with a written incident report for each case. Students may pick up their device from the office at the end of the day. On the third violation, parents or guardians will be expected to make arrangements to pick up the phone or electronic device from the school office. The third violation will also result in losing cell phone or electronics privileges during before and after school care, for FOCCA journalism or yearbook classes, etc. See the cell phone and electronics usage section for more details on our policy.

## **DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES MATRIX**

Each specific column on the following pages will not be combined. For example, tardies and homework notices will each be addressed separately. Dress code and minor violations will be recorded separately as well. A coaching means that the student advisor, conduct assistant, or principal will be meeting with the student regarding their discipline issues.

Academic excellence is not the only goal of FOCCA's education. We want to prepare students for a Godly life well beyond their formative years. God disciplines those He loves, so FOCCA disciplines those we love, our students. The goal of all discipline at FOCCA is to bring a child to a place of repentance where they recognize the fault in their actions, turn from them, and then ultimately come to a place of restoration. God's heart for His creation is restoration and restoration is what we want for our students. We will hold them to high standards of accountability for their conduct so that they are well-prepared for life. Therefore, parental support is vital.

# ELEMENTARY (K-6<sup>th</sup>) DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES

Unexcused arrival tardies, uniform/mandatory dress violations, homework notices, and minor violations will each be recorded separately and reset each *quarter*. For every violation, a referral will be generated and entered into Jupiter Grades. Parents and students will receive a notification for each incident and any assigned consequences. Please be sure you are signed up and using Jupiter Grades regularly so you are aware of any referrals your students may be receiving. Please note the following chart:

<b>UNEXCUSED ARRIVAL TARDIES</b>	<b>MISSING HOMEWORK</b>	<b>DRESS CODE*</b>	<b>MINOR VIOLATIONS*</b>
1. Warning 2. Warning 3. Warning 4. Lunch & recess detention/\$10 fine optional for K-6th grade (Fifth and following, repeat steps 1-4)	1. Warning 2. Warning 3. Warning 4. Lunch & recess detention (Fifth and following, repeat steps 1-4)	1. Warning & parent call* 2. Warning & parent call* 3. Warning & parent call* 4. Lunch & recess detention/\$10 fine optional for K-1st grade (Fifth and following, repeat steps 1-4)  *If a student is found to be inappropriately dressed, they may be sent to the office where they will remain until their parents can bring them dress-code acceptable clothing.	1. Warning 2. Warning 3. Warning & coaching 4. Lunch & recess detention 5. Warning 6. After-school detention 7. Administration recommendation & teacher-parent meeting  *Please note that elementary teachers will have their own classroom management plan which they will explain to you in their classroom information packet provided at orientation. Students may have progressed through the steps laid out in their plan before a minor violation occurs.

# GRADES 7-12 DISCIPLINE & CONSEQUENCES

Unexcused arrival and class tardies, dress code referrals, and minor violations will each be recorded separately per semester. For every violation, a referral will be generated and entered into Jupiter Grades. Parents and students will receive a notification for each incident and any assigned consequences. Please be sure you are signed up and using Jupiter Grades regularly so you are aware of any referrals your students may be receiving. Teachers have the right to assign a student detention at **any** time. Please note the following chart:

UNEXCUSED ARRIVAL TARDIES	UNEXCUSED CLASS TARDIES	DRESS CODE*	MINOR VIOLATIONS	UNAUTHORIZED CELL PHONE USE
1. Warning 2. Warning 3. Warning <b>4. Detention (\$10 fine optional for non-driving students)</b> 5. Warning <b>6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Detention (\$10 fine optional for non-driving students)</b> 7. Warning <b>8. 3<sup>rd</sup> Detention (\$10 fine optional for non-driving students)</b> 9. Administrative suggestion	1. Warning 2. Warning 3. Warning <b>4. Detention</b> 5. Warning <b>6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Detention</b> 7. Warning <b>8. 3<sup>rd</sup> Detention</b> 9. Administrative suggestion	1. Warning & parent call* 2. Warning & parent call* 3. Warning & parent call* <b>4. Detention</b> 5. Warning <b>6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Detention</b> 7. Warning <b>8. 3<sup>rd</sup> Detention</b> 9. Administrative suggestion  *If a student is found to be inappropriately dressed, they may be sent to the office where they will remain until their parents can bring them dress-code acceptable clothing.	1. Warning 2. Warning 3. Warning <b>4. Detention</b> 5. Warning w/ coaching <b>6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Detention</b> <b>7. 3<sup>rd</sup> Detention</b> <b>8. One day in-school suspension, student will be placed on a behavioral probationary period.</b> <b>9. 3-5 days out of school suspension</b> 10. Administrative suggestion	1. Warning 2. Confiscation of device (student may pick up at the end of the day) 3. Confiscation of device (parent must pick up at the end of the day) 4. Confiscation of device (parent must pick up) and <b>detention</b> 5. Student is not permitted to bring the device to school or must leave it in the office each day

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