



# **FIRST ACADEMY**

## **PERSONNEL HANDBOOK**

**“First Academy partners with families to provide a Christ-centered, academically challenging education as we develop disciples for Christ.”**



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# **HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND MISSION**

## **SCHOOL HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

First Academy Christian School (First Academy) is a ministry of First Baptist Church, Douglas, GA. The history of First Baptist Church dates to 1893 when nine charter members approved the Church Covenant and Articles of Faith and elected Rev. T.P. O'Neal to serve as Pastor. Since that time the church has expanded to share the love of Christ and help meet the spiritual needs of the Douglas-Coffee County Community.

God led First Baptist Church to start the First Baptist Preschool which included classes for 1, 2, 3, and 4-year olds as well as kindergarten. In 2014, the church felt led to extend the weekday preschool programs to include First Academy. Throughout its history, First Academy has been, and continues to be, committed to a Biblical worldview of education which focuses on bringing home, church, and school into a partnership for training up our future generations. First Academy is collaborating with parents to provide a Christ-Centered, academically challenging education as we develop disciples for Christ.

Within this handbook the school's policies, procedures, and guidelines are outlined to provide structure, accountability, and direction for the entire school family. Understanding and adhering to these parameters will provide students with greater success in standing firm on God's principles and weathering the pressures found in today's secular culture.

## THE OPERATING CONSTITUTION OF FIRST ACADEMY

God has established First Academy for the purpose of impacting students' hearts and minds for eternity through a Biblically based, Christ-centered, education. First Academy's mission statement clearly articulates this purpose. First Academy's mission statement, supported by six essential core values and a series of operating principles, provides the First Academy with an operating constitution that will guide all of the school's policies, procedures, and practices. We serve preschool, elementary, middle school, and high school students.

### **Purpose Statement**

First Academy is a ministry of First Baptist Church reaching into the community ministering to people where they live, work, learn, struggle and play leading them into a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The church, the school and parents maintain necessary and equal purposes:

- The church's role is to provide Godly counsel in educational matters.
- The school's role is to provide spiritual and academic excellence.
- The parent's role is to choose a church and a school that closely matches their own values and beliefs.

### **Mission Statement**

As a ministry of First Baptist Church, First Academy will partner with families in order to provide an environment of academic excellence with Biblical knowledge, while preparing our students to be young people of character who represent our Lord Jesus Christ in all walks of life.

### **Vision Statement**

First Academy's vision is to impact our world by preparing students to become Godly warriors, as we implement discipleship (Matthew 28:16-20), encourage integrity (Psalm 15:1-5), and expect excellence (1 Corinthians 10:31).

### **Philosophy Statement**

First Academy is a ministry of First Baptist Church, Douglas, GA. As such, it adheres to the Doctrinal Statement of First Baptist Church. All administrators, faculty, and staff must be born-again Christians who have a personal relationship with Christ and are, therefore, striving to be Christ-like in all walks of life, knowing their lives serve as examples to those who they teach.

Recognizing that the primary, God-given responsibility for education rests with parents (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Psalm 78:5-6), First Academy serves as an extension of the family to aid parents in this task. As such, First Academy adheres to Biblical principles related to child rearing and discipline (Ephesians 6:1-4, Proverbs 22:6; Colossians 3:20-21). First Academy adheres to the 14 Biblical Principles of Education as presented in the book, *Kingdom Education: God's Plan for Educating Future Generations - 2nd Edition (2006)*. (see Biblical Principles of Education)

The educational philosophy of First Academy is based on the Biblical truth that man's ultimate purpose is to glorify God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31). First Academy exists to assist each student to reach his/her full potential by striving to help him/her develop spiritually and morally, intellectually, physically and socially (Luke 2:52). The administration, faculty and staff recognize that only when a student accepts Christ as their Savior and yields to His Lordship can one realize one's own unique potential (Romans 10:10-13).

Education and learning are Biblical mandates (Deuteronomy 6:6,7; Proverbs 3:1-9); therefore, all instruction at First Academy is Biblically-based (Deuteronomy 4:2-9) and Christ-centered (Colossians 1:9). The specific content grows from the following realities:

1. God mandated at creation for man to have dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:1, 26-28). This mandate requires students to master the subjects of language, mathematics, the physical and biological sciences, technology, history and the fine arts.

2. With the fall of man, sin entered the world and man finds himself in a fallen, hostile world. This condition intensifies the student's need to understand more deeply all-curricular areas, as well as the social and health related areas of study and a thorough study of the Bible, God's written Word.
3. Christ commissions are for Christians to evangelize the lost and to disciple believers (Matthew 28:18-20). This further elevates the need for the student to master all subject areas of learning.

First Academy seeks to develop young men and women who think and act according to a Biblical worldview (Psalm 24:1) and strive to be Christ-like leaders in their homes, churches, communities and workplaces.

## **Biblical Principles of Education**

First Academy operates according to a Biblical philosophy of education as outlined in *Kingdom Education: God's Plan for Educating Future Generations*. It is the desire of First Academy to have all school committee members, administration, faculty, staff and parents know, understand, and commit themselves to the 14 Biblical Principles found in *Kingdom Education*.

These principles are:

1. *The education of children and youth is the primary responsibility of parents.*  
Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:18-21; Psalm 78:1-7; Psalm 127:3; Proverbs 22:6; Malachi 2:13-16; Ephesians 6:4
2. *The education of children and youth is a 24 hour-a-day, 7 days-per-week process that continues from birth till maturity.*  
Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19; Proverbs 22:6
3. *The education of children and youth must have as its primary goals the salvation of and discipleship of the next generation.*  
Psalm 78:6-7; Matthew 28:19-20
4. *The education of children and youth must be based on God's Word as absolute truth.*  
Matthew 24:35; Psalm 119
5. *The education of children and youth must hold Christ as preeminent in all of life.*  
Colossians 2:3, 6-10
6. *The education of children and youth must not hinder the spiritual and moral development of the next generation.*  
Matthew 18:6; 19:13-14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17
7. *The education of children and youth, if and when delegated to others by parents, must be done so with utmost care to ensure that all teachers follow these principles.*  
Exodus 18:21; I Samuel 1:27-28; 3:1-10
8. *The education of children and youth results in the formation of a belief system or worldview that will be patterned after the belief systems or worldviews of the person's teachers.*  
Luke 6:40
9. *The education of children and youth must lead to true wisdom by connecting all knowledge to a Biblical worldview frame of reference.*  
Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1; Proverbs 4:5,7; 3:19; 9:10, Psalm 104:24; 136:5; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 11:33; Luke 11:52; Colossians 2:3; 1 Corinthians 8:1; 13:8; Romans 1:28
10. *The education of children and youth must have a view of the future that includes the eternal perspective.*  
Colossians 3:1-2; Matthew 6:19-20; 2 Timothy 4:6-8; Acts 20:24; Hebrews 11:13; Colossians 3:23-24
11. *The education of children and youth must have as its primary focus the increase in knowledge of God.*  
John 17:3; Romans 1:20; Romans 11:33-36; Psalm 19:1-6; Ephesians 1:16-19; 3:15-19; 4:13; Philippians 1:9; 3:8-10, 13-14; Colossians 1:9-10; 2:2-3; 2 Peter 3:18; Proverbs 2:5; Hosea 4:1; 6:6; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
12. *The education of children and youth results in performing work in fulfillment of God's will for their lives*  
Genesis 1:26; Matthew 6:10, 33; Ephesians 5:17; Hebrews 10:36; 13:20-21; Colossians 1:9-10; Romans 12:1-2; Proverbs 3:5-6; 20:24



13. *The education of children and youth must be characterized by the pursuit of Biblical excellence based on Godly character resulting in competent performance.*

2 Corinthians 8:7, 10:12; Philippians 1:9-10, 4:8; 1 Timothy 6:11; Psalm 8:1; Ecclesiastes 9:10

14. *The education of children and youth must equip them to fulfill God's highest purpose for man; to glorify Him and enjoy Him in life and eternity.*

Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16-17; Genesis 1:26-27; Isaiah 42:8, Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20; 10:31

## **Core Values**

To fulfill its mission, First Academy will honor the following core values.

- The Bible
- The Christian Family
- Quality, Bible-based education
- The Church
- Christ-likeness
- Stewardship

## **Core Values & Operating Principles**

The school's daily operations will be guided by the following principles to fulfill its mission in line with its core values.

### **Core Value #1 – The Bible (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105)**

*The Bible is the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God found in the original manuscripts. It provides one with God's absolute Truth and gives direction for becoming a Godly leader in all of life.*

First Academy will:

- Incorporate Biblical principles into the everyday operations of the school.
- Operate under Board-developed policies that are based on Biblical principles.
- Encourage all board members, administration, faculty and staff to study God's Word and apply its principles to everyday life.
- Conduct regularly scheduled faculty devotion times for all staff.
- Require all administration and faculty members to earn the required professional and Bible continuing education units (CEUs) for ACSI certification.
- Develop and follow a structured Bible curriculum at each grade level that will cause every student to study and memorize God's Word.
- Provide teachers with the training needed to be effective in integrating Biblical truth into all classroom instruction.
- Integrate Biblical truth into First Academy's total curriculum.

### **Core Value #2 – The Christian Family (Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:6-9; Deuteronomy 6:6-9)**

*The Christian family is the God-ordained institution that is the foundational (basic) unit of society whereby children are trained to know and serve Christ.*

First Academy will:

- Select and/or employ committee members, administration, faculty, and staff that model God's standard for the family.
- Develop policies and procedures that affirm God's standard for the family.
- Encourage all staff members to guard the family by keeping a Biblical balance between their home, work and church responsibilities.
- Develop strong home-school relationships through regular contact with parents.
- Develop and maintain unity between home and school through the parent-teacher organization.

- Teach all students through First Academy’s curriculum God’s ideal for the marriage relationship and the family.
- Pray for and with its families.

### **Core Value #3 – Quality, Bible-based Education (2 Timothy 3:14; Proverbs 22:6)**

*A quality education is based on the absolute truth of God’s Word and designed to guide each student to achieve their God-given potential.*

First Academy will:

- Design an educational program that will meet the spiritual, mental, physical and social needs of each student.
- Design and use curriculum and teaching methods that are grounded in God’s absolute truth.
- Challenge all students to reach their full potential in all aspects of their school life.
- Employ, develop and retain Godly teachers who strive for excellence in all areas of their lives.
- Provide the necessary resources and equipment to meet the needs of all the school’s educational programs.
- Provide a loving and safe environment conducive to learning.
- Teach all students that man is born with a sin nature and in need of Christ. The students will learn that God wants to have a personal relationship with each one of them and fulfill His plan for them.
- Provide teachers with the necessary training on the Biblical philosophy of education found in kingdom education.
- Provide teachers with the training necessary for them to effectively plan and implement Biblical worldview integration in the classroom instruction.
- Develop an educational program that will equip students to engage all areas of the culture for Christ through the gifts and talents they have from God.

### **Core Value #4 – The Church (Ephesians 4:11-12; Ephesians 3:10-11; Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:24)**

*The church is the Body of Christ and the expression of His kingdom to a lost world. Christ will return again for His church (bride).*

First Academy will:

- Develop policies and procedures that will honor the purpose of the local church.
- Recognize that it is a ministry of First Baptist Church and submit to the church’s spiritual authority.
- Require all committee members, administration, faculty and staff to be active members of a local, evangelical, Bible-believing church.
- Encourage all school families to become active members of a local, evangelical, Bible-believing church.
- Teach all students through First Academy’s curriculum God’s purpose for the church so that students will understand the importance of being an active member of and serving in a local church.
- Continually work at developing strong relationships with local churches in the Douglas area.

### **Core Value #5 – Christ-likeness (1 John 1:7, 2:6; Romans 12:2; Colossians 1:10; 2:6-10; Philippians 2:5; Hebrews 12:2)**

*Christ-likeness is the ongoing process of aligning one’s thoughts, attitudes and actions with the mind of Christ.*

First Academy will:

- Hire/select, develop and retain committee members, administration, faculty and staff who exhibit Christ-like attitudes and behaviors.
- Seek and follow the mind of Christ when making decisions and setting policies and procedures for the school.
- Strive to instill Godly character in all students through all of the school’s educational programs.
- Design activities specifically geared for the character development of students.

- Encourage administration, faculty, staff and students to model Christ by serving others in the school and community.
- Develop and enforce the school's discipline policies that will emphasize the importance of Christ-like behavior.
- Expect all committee members, administration, faculty and staff to practice servant leadership when fulfilling their everyday duties.

## **Core Value #6 – Stewardship**

*Stewardship is the spirit-led administration of First Academy's God-given gifts of time, talent and treasure.*

First Academy will:

- Develop and administer an annual written budget that reflects Biblical principles of finance.
- Provide, develop and maintain all facilities in a way that honors the Lord and meets the educational needs of students.
- Encourage students and their families to be active members of a local church.
- Select, develop and maintain a Godly, qualified staff who will diligently work to fulfill the school's mission.
- Provide students with a quality, Bible-based education that will develop the whole child – spiritually, mentally, physically and socially.
- View every employee and student as a stewardship responsibility from God.
- Hold administration, faculty and staff accountable to fulfill their duties in a way that will honor the Lord and assist the school in achieving its mission.

## **STATEMENT OF DOCTRINAL BELIEFS**

As stated on the *Statement of Support*, the parents and/or guardians and the student acknowledge receipt of these doctrinal beliefs. Each faculty member will sign a statement affirming his or her adherence to these doctrinal positions as well. This is only a synopsis of our beliefs that are based on the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* in which First Academy affirms as a ministry of FBC Douglas. The statement of doctrinal beliefs does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe.

1. **THE SCRIPTURES**: We believe that the entire Bible, all 66 books of the combined Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired by God and are inerrant in the original writings. Through the providence of God, the Word of God has been protected and preserved, and is the only infallible and authoritative rule of faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
2. **GOD**: We believe that there is only one true, living, sovereign, holy, and eternally existent God. He exists in three co-equal persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each being a distinct person and with a distinct function, but all of one essence and all possessing the same nature, perfections, and attributes. The triune God is the creator and sustainer of all things, the source of all truth, and is worthy of worship, confidence, and obedience (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Genesis 1:31).
3. **JESUS CHRIST**: We believe that Jesus Christ is God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed many miracles, shed His blood on the cross to pay the debt for our sins, was buried, bodily resurrected, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and will return literally, visibly, and personally, in glory and power (John 1:1-3; 14; Matthew 1:18-25; Philippians 2:5-9; Colossians 1:15; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Acts 1:11).
4. **HOLY SPIRIT**: We believe that the Holy Spirit is God, co-equal and co-existent with the Father and the Son. He is the chief convicter of sin, the chief agent of regeneration and sanctification. The Holy Spirit lives within every believer and empowers every believer to live a godly life (John 14:16-19; 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 8:9,11; Titus 3:5).

5. **MANKIND**: We believe that in the beginning God created mankind in His image, and is not in any sense the product of evolution. Mankind was originally created with the ability to live perfectly for God's glory (Genesis 1:27; 31).
6. **SIN**: We believe that Adam, the first man, sinned by disobedience. This act resulted in the fall of all mankind; therefore, all people have sinned and lost their ability to live for the glory of God. Every person's sin incurs both physical and spiritual death until there is forgiveness and salvation by the grace of God (Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 3:10-23; 5:12-21; 6:23).
7. **SALVATION**: We believe the salvation of lost and sinful people is a free gift of God's grace apart from human works, based solely upon Christ's vicarious and atoning death, affected by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and received only through faith in the person and finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and His resurrection from death (Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
8. **THE CHURCH**: We believe that the church is the body of Christ and the family of God. It is made up of saved and baptized believers, who regularly join together for worship, fellowship, and ministry. (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Hebrews 10:25).
9. **EVANGELISM**: We believe that it is the responsibility and privilege of every Christian to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and seek to make growing disciples (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).
10. **THE HOME**: In addition to these important beliefs, we also believe that God has given the parents and the home the responsibility to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6). We believe that a consistent and complete education will occur when home, church, and school work closely together and are in agreement on the basic concepts of faith and life. This partnership is paramount to our collective success with your child(ren).

## **STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND GENDER IDENTITY**

This seismic shift in the cultural landscape poses new challenges and opportunities for Christ-centered institutions that hold to a historical Biblical interpretation of gender assignment and identity, the covenant of marriage, and the expression of human sexuality, requiring such institutions to examine and affirm their convictions and clearly communicate their positions to anyone who inquires about where they stand on these issues. Thus, the purpose of this statement is to reaffirm First Academy's alignment with the historical Biblical interpretation of these matters, consistent with our affiliate church, First Baptist Church Douglas, and to communicate its positions to anyone interested in the school's beliefs and teachings.

First Academy bases its beliefs and teachings on Holy Scripture because we believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God, serving as the source for faith and practice for all people. In all matters, we seek to point our students to God's Word as the source of truth. We believe that all truth is God's truth, and we endeavor to teach our students to understand the world, relationships, and issues based on God's Word, the Bible. Accordingly, we seek to provide the scriptural basis for which we form our foundational beliefs regarding gender identity, marriage, and sexuality.

### ***Marriage***

Marriage is a covenantal relationship created and entered into by God and a man and a woman. We believe that God's perfect design for marriage, as revealed in the creation order, has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). This is the divinely designed relationship for the birth and rearing of children and is a union made in the sight of God, and takes priority over every other human relationship. This is validated by Genesis 1:27-28; Isaiah 54:4-8; 62:5b; Jeremiah 3:14; Malachi 2:14; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:9; John 2:1-2, 11; 1 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Timothy 5:14; and Hebrews 13:4. Furthermore, we believe that God's Word makes use of the marriage relationship as the supreme metaphor for his relationship with his covenant people and for revealing the truth that relationship is of one God with one people. Examples of "marriage" as a metaphor of God's relationship with his covenant people: Jeremiah 2:2, 31:31-33; Ezekiel 16:8; Hosea 2:16, 19-20; Matthew 9:15, 25:1-13; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-33; Revelation 19:7-9, 21:1-3, 9.

We believe that the Bible is the final authority regarding sexual behavior. Examples of sexual behavior forbidden by Scripture may be found in the following passages: Genesis 2:24-25; Exodus 20:14, 17, 22:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Hebrews 13:4; Leviticus 18:22-23, 20:13,15-16; Romans 1:18-31; Matthew 15: 18-20, 19:4-6, 9; I Timothy 1:8-11; Jude 7. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct) is sinful and offensive to God.

Since First Academy believes and follows the Scriptural teachings on marriage, we must affirm that sexual relationships outside of Biblical marriage and sexual relationships between persons of the same sex are not Biblical. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, First Academy will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman.

### ***Gender Assignment, Identity, And Expression***

It is God who assigns our fundamental human identity and gender. We believe that God created the human race male and female, and each reflects the image of God. A person's gender is sacred and has a divine purpose. We also affirm that God loves all people, including those who struggle with their gender assignment, identity, and expression. Therefore, we are to love all people, regardless of their struggles.

The Bible describes human gender in binary terms. Genesis 1:27 provides the definitive statement: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Regardless of one's anatomical parts or feelings about them, all humans have the same responsibility for stewarding physical attributes and abilities. Our bodies are God's dwelling place. In the context of discussing sexual identity and behavior, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Therefore, First Academy will uphold the Biblical view of gender and will adhere to its position on gender issues in its teachings, curriculum, and treatment of students.

## **STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL TRUTH AND LIFESTYLE AND SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE**

### ***Biblical Truth and Lifestyle Statement***

First Academy stands firmly upon Biblical truth and moral foundations of Christianity. This includes the Biblical definition of marriage, the attendant boundaries of sexuality and moral conduct, and the clear Biblical teaching that gender is both sacred and established by God's design. As a religious institution providing an education in a distinct Christian environment, First Academy believes its Biblical role is to work in conjunction with the home to mold students to be Christ-like. On occasions in which the atmosphere or conduct within a particular home or the activities of the student are counter to or in opposition to the Biblical lifestyle the school teaches, the school reserves the right, within its sole discretion, to refuse admission of an applicant or discontinue enrollment of a current student. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, living, practicing, condoning, or supporting sexual immorality; including, but not limited to, sex outside of marriage, homosexual acts, bi-sexual acts, gender identity different than the chromosomal level at birth, and promoting such practices; or otherwise not supporting the moral principles of the school (Leviticus 20:13a, Romans 1:27, Matthew 19:4-6).

First Academy stands firmly upon the historical truth claims and moral foundations of Christianity, including boundaries of sexuality and moral conduct, and upon the clear Biblical teaching that gender is both sacred and established by God's design. Parents understand and agree that First Academy will teach these principles and Biblical values. Parents or the legal guardians, who choose to enroll their children at First Academy, are agreeing to support these and other basic Biblical values derived from historical Christianity.

First Academy pledges to guide the school community toward understanding and embracing their God-given sexuality as reflected in this statement. Any deviation from a Biblical standard of sexual behavior is sin and therefore is an opportunity for repentance, grace, and redemption, so that as a community we might honor one another and glorify God. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10;

1 Corinthians 6:9-11.). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31).

### ***Sanctity of Human Life Statement***

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Psalm 139).

### **STATEMENT OF COOPERATION**

The State of Georgia requires First Academy 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 regarding the well-being of their children, the administration is placed between the parent and the state, acting on behalf of the student and in accordance with state law. It is the school's policy to refrain from contacting parents in advance of making a report to legal authorities. Appropriate school staff will make such reports in the best interests of the 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 or not there are sufficient grounds to require reporting.

### **CHRIST-CENTERED CONFLICT RESOLUTION (CCCR)**

It is imperative that our students learn to interact with all types of people. The (CCCR) method will be taught to the students; therefore, we as adults should model this process for them. Matthew 18 addresses the issue of dealing with problems within the church. With minor modifications, however, various church organizations, including Christian schools, should effectively and efficiently apply the standards of this scriptural passage.

Literally thousands of interpersonal relationship opportunities exist to either violate or fulfill the principles of Matthew 18. A common violation involves parents not willing to discuss a problem with a teacher, but instead, attempting to take the matter directly to the Headmaster or other uninvolved parties.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE PREROGATIVE**

The intent of this handbook is to give general, overall guidelines to be adhered to by all First Academy staff. Sometimes new situations will occur, or circumstances will arise that are not covered specifically in this handbook. The administration reserves the right to exercise its administrative prerogative in responding to these new situations. First Academy reserves the right to make changes, amendments and corrections to the rules and policies of the school, at any time, with or without prior notice.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

Since God's love extends equally to all people, First Academy admits students of any race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. First Academy does not discriminate based on race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin in its administration of educational, admission, athletic, or financial policies or in any school programs.

As a Bible-based educational institution, First Academy adheres to the Biblical teaching that homosexuality is not an acceptable lifestyle. First Academy does not employ teachers, staff, or accept students and parents/guardians who are homosexual (including same-sex marriage) or bi-sexual or who live in co-habitational arrangements with members of the opposite gender. If such information is revealed after employment/admission, the individual will be terminated/withdrawn from First Academy

# OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

## SCHOOL HOURS

<b>Office Personnel Hours</b>	7:45 AM - 3:30 PM
<b>Preschool Staff (1 YO - 3 YO) Hours</b>	7:45 AM - 12:15 PM
<b>PreK, Elementary &amp; Upper Staff Hours</b>	7:45 AM - 3:15 PM
<b>Preschool (1 YO - 3 YO) Student Hours</b>	8:00 AM - 12:15 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Drop Off: 8:00 AM - 8:15 AM</li><li>● Pick Up: 11:45 AM - 12:00 PM</li></ul>
<b>PreK - 12th Grade Student Hours</b>	8:00 AM - 3:05 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Drop Off: 7:45 AM - 8:00 AM</li><li>● Pick Up: 3:00 PM - 3:15 PM</li></ul>

\*Early drop off begins at 6:45 AM for \$30.00 per month.

\*Early Release Days: Dismissal at 11:30 AM

### Extended Day Pickup

Extended Day Option 1:	Pick up by 3:15 (3 Year Olds)
Extended Day Option 2:	Pick up by 4:15
Extended Day Option 3:	Pick up by 5:15

Students not picked up by their designated time will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes that the student remains past their pick-up time. The \$5.00 fee will apply to students who are not registered or not eligible for extended day. **There will be no extended day during early dismissal days.**

Faculty members need to remain after school to be available to provide assistance, meet with parents, confirm assignments, etc. When, because of special circumstances, you need to leave prior to the close of the work day, **please notify the Headmaster for approval.** Office personnel start/dismissal times will vary based on their work assignment.

Teachers are expected to fulfill contract hours of 7:45 AM to 3:15 PM, unless otherwise informed by the Headmaster. All faculty and staff are required to attend staff meetings, devotionals, trainings, and Bible studies. Absence from any of the above will require notification to the Headmaster.

The school office is open until 3:30 PM. We operate on abbreviated hours during June and July.

## GUIDELINES FOR STAFF WITH CHILDREN

First, we want to say that First Academy welcomes parents of children attending the school to work at the school. To make this situation work, we must have a clear set of policies concerning staff and their own children.

1. Students attend the school between the hours appropriate for their class. Your children are your responsibility **at all other times** when you are at work. Do not ask other staff members to watch your children for you.
2. Children of staff attending First Academy are the responsibility of the parent after 2:55 PM each day. Aftercare is available at no cost for these students until 4:15 PM. Please see the

- administrative assistant to make arrangements if you want your children in aftercare.
3. Children are not to be left alone in any room of the church.
  4. If your child is sick, they are bound to our school policies just as other students are. We cannot allow your child to stay in your classroom with you if they are sick.
  5. Children of staff members attending school elsewhere are welcome to come to First Academy after being released from their schools. **For security purposes, students must always remain in their parent's classroom. No child should be left alone or unsupervised.**
  6. If a staff member transports a friend's child to school, that student must report to the early morning drop off location and stay there until class begins. The parent will be responsible for paying the monthly fee.
  7. Children of staff members are not to interrupt parent's classes or job duties during the school day. Likewise, staff members are not to interrupt the classes of their personal children during the school day.
  8. Children of staff members will not be allowed on campus during pre-planning, post-planning, or staff development days. Childcare **WILL NOT** be provided.

## **PLANNING PERIODS**

Teachers should try to schedule appointments after school as much as possible. If the need arises for a teacher to leave campus during the school day, he/she should discuss the matter with the Headmaster. Planning periods should be utilized for planning, parent communication, assessing/grading student work, etc.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

All personnel are employed subject to assignment and reassignment by the Headmaster at any time. All personnel may request reassignment to other employment positions within the school but such changes are not guaranteed.

## **DUTY SCHEDULE**

Teachers are assigned various duties to supervise students at different times during the school day per an approved duty schedule. It is imperative that you keep the assigned duty. If you cannot keep a duty schedule due to a conflict, get a co-worker to switch with you. When absent, please leave instructions for your sub to complete your duty assignments. **Be sure to not leave students unsupervised.**

**\*\*Duties include but are not limited to the following: early drop off, aftercare, drop off and pick up duties, and recess duty.**

## **SUPPLEMENTAL DUTIES**

Any supplemental duties assigned to an employee for which supplemental pay is received may be modified or discontinued at any time by the Headmaster. An employee who requests to relinquish a paid supplemental duty may do so only with the consent of the Headmaster. This policy does not create any contractual obligation to any employee; employees shall hold no expectancy of continuing employment in any assigned supplemental duty.

## **CHAPEL**

The spiritual development of our students is one of the school's highest priorities. Chapel attendance is required of **students and teachers**. Please model the type of behavior we expect from our students during chapel. Reading, grading papers, working on lesson plans or conversing with other teachers sends a message to our students that chapel is not important.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Staff development activities will be conducted throughout the school year including pre-planning and post-planning days (check calendar for these required days). Some sessions will be formal in-service sessions;



however, most sessions will be devoted to instructional effectiveness. **Attendance is required for each faculty member unless previous arrangements have been made with the administration.**

## **CUMULATIVE RECORDS FOR STUDENTS**

A cumulative academic and personal record is maintained for each student in the office. Teachers are encouraged to use these records to learn as much as they can about the students assigned to them. Teachers are to consult the Headmaster if they need assistance in the interpretation of the information included in the cumulative records. All cumulative records are confidential; therefore, teachers are not to discuss the information with others nor take them off the premises.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

It is the responsibility of the teacher to contact parents about students' progress and **return all phone calls and emails from parents within 24 hours. Teachers are to communicate during their assigned planning time.**

A parent contact log should be kept for documentation purposes. Praxi Portal and Google Workspace Apps (Sheets, Docs, Calendar) are ideal ways to maintain this documentation.

**\*Parent contacts must be made in a timely and regular manner concerning students who are doing poorly including students earning F's or who are falling into a pattern (3) of not turning in assignments.**

## **CELL PHONES**

**To maintain professionalism and a proper learning environment, calls or texts on your personal cell phones may not be taken during assigned class time.** These calls/texts may be returned during your planning time or lunch break. If a very important call (personal or professional) needs to be answered during class time, seek a colleague to cover your class for you. If one is not available, get permission from the Headmaster first and then notify your students that you are expecting a very important call. This will address the issue of creating a double standard in the Upper School.

Calls that come in for you during the school day, messages will be taken, but you will not be interrupted during class unless there is an emergency. Please return calls from parents at the first opportunity.

## **MAILBOXES**

Teachers' mailboxes are in the teachers' workroom. Each teacher is asked to check his/her mailbox daily and remove the contents. **Do not send students to the teacher mailbox area for any reason.**

## **EMAIL**

Your email account is provided to you for the primary use of school business and is governed by the **First Academy Employee Acceptable Use Policy**. The use of our e-mail system to send out messages to groups, such as the entire faculty, must be cleared through the Headmaster. We all must be sensitive to the time consumption or temptation this creates to read everything that comes to us over email. First Academy staff shall strictly adhere to ensuring that no email will be sent or forwarded that breaks school confidentiality, specially involving personnel issues, etc. We must protect the privacy of teachers, students, and families and not use email in an unprofessional manner. Teachers should limit using the First Academy email system for personal communication and should not be involved with forms of chain emails. **The First Academy email system may not be used for political or other purposes that are not directly related to the educational programs or First Academy. Because your email account is school property, it is subject to inspection at any time at the discretion of the administration.**

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Emergency drills are held periodically. These include **monthly fire drills and severe weather drills**. Lockdown drills and evacuation drills are held annually.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS**

### *FIRE*

In the event of a fire, the teacher should follow the evacuation map posted inside the door of the room being used. The class will then proceed to the parking lot areas on Sellers Street or Cleveland Street. The 1-year old class and all children under the age of 2 should be put in the fire safety baby beds and wheeled out the door.

**In the event of an emergency, please do not attempt to enter the building until the area is secure. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety of all children present.**

### *SEVERE WEATHER*

In the event of severe weather, the teacher should follow the evacuation map posted inside the door of the room being used. Proceed to the designated location and assume a safety position.

### *ACTIVE SHOOTER*

In the event of an active shooter, the faculty will follow the active shooter plan that has been developed and practiced for each classroom.

## **STUDENT VISITORS**

Student visitors must be approved by a member of the administration to visit First Academy including attending chapel, various programs, lunch, or visiting staff members. **Student visitors to classes are not allowed unless special permission has been granted by the Headmaster (i.e., former students, etc.).** Students who come to the campus unauthorized will be sent home. Permission is granted for prospective students to shadow in classrooms during the school day as a part of the admissions process. **Student visitors must obtain a visitor sticker and must be in appropriate attire to visit First Academy.**

## **ADULT VISITORS**

Parents, church leaders, and other such adult visitors may obtain a visitor's pass through the First Academy office to attend chapel, various programs, and lunch. Former students/alumni may visit during the school day with permission from a member of the administration. Like any visitor, they must sign in at the First Academy office.

## **PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### *CHURCH MEMBERSHIP*

The local church is one of the school's six core values. First Academy highly values the New Testament church as described in Acts 2. To receive God's blessing and guidance, First Academy's administration, faculty and staff must be active members of a local, Bible-believing church.

Since First Academy is a ministry of First Baptist Church, its direction is very much influenced by the direction that God leads the church. To develop a unified spirit between First Academy and First Baptist Church, new employees hired from outside the Douglas area are encouraged to become active members of First Baptist Church.

**Members of the administration must be members of First Baptist Church unless a spouse serves on the pastoral staff at a local church or other special ministry situation.**

Active membership in a local church is characterized by the following:

- Regular attendance at the church's worship services each Sunday.
- Attendance at other regularly scheduled services at the church.
- Service within the church using one's spiritual gifts in order to strengthen the church.
- Honoring God through giving the tithe and one's offerings in support of the church's ministries.

## CURRICULUM GUIDES

Classroom instruction is to be guided by school-approved curriculum guides. These important documents are the blueprint for our instructional program. Teachers will be involved in ongoing curriculum development and will be accountable for accomplishing the teaching objectives of the guides. It is expected that curriculum guides direct all instruction at the school. This process will be completed under the direction of the Headmaster and/or curriculum coordinator.

## EXPECTED PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

FA is a ministry of First Baptist Church and, therefore, all employees must maintain a Biblical standard of living both in and out of school. Employees must refrain from, but not limited to, the use of alcohol, all forms of tobacco, illegal drugs, and other illegal behaviors. First Academy adheres to Biblical standards related to moral purity that does not condone co-habitation with members of the opposite sex, pre-marital, extra-marital, homosexual, or bi-sexual relationships or the viewing of pornography. **Participation in any of these and other similar behaviors will result in immediate termination.** Other job-essential behaviors such as punctuality, organization, professional orally or written communication maintaining confidentiality, good judgment, etc., are expected of all faculty and staff members. The goal is for all employees of First Academy to be Christ-like role models in all areas of life.

## EMPLOYEE – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

At all times, the faculty and staff are expected to maintain a professional attitude of consideration, concern, and courtesy for those with whom they work. Personal problems should remain personal and not infringe on the educational program of the school. For a member of this faculty or staff to condemn another teacher's program, to email or discuss any problems we might have or to reflect any ill will toward another faculty or staff member is most unprofessional. An important part of our faith is to build one another up and maintain unity.

In the event of an interpersonal issue, all staff are expected to follow the *Matthew 18 Principle* requiring one to take the issue privately to another. If this meeting does not resolve the issue, then the administration can be asked to join a subsequent meeting. The *Matthew 18 Principle* is the expected mode of operation between staff members.

Furthermore, if school parents express concerns to you about your colleagues, you have a responsibility to redirect that parent to your colleague as soon as possible. We MUST maintain unity in our staff by exercising this critical principle. **Follow-up with the parent in a timely fashion to ensure they have gone to your colleague to resolve their concerns.** If they are unwilling to do so, they need to keep the matter to themselves.

## EMPLOYEE - STUDENT RELATIONS

Employees shall not have inappropriate relations with students (same sex or opposite sex) including being alone/exclusive/hanging out, dating, marriage, or engaging in sexual relations including, but not limited to kissing, embracing, inappropriate touching, intercourse, voyeurism, indecent exposure, as well as other acts that represent or convey a message of an inappropriate relationship between the teacher and student(s) with any student of First Academy, or any student of any other equivalent school, either public or private. Such behavior will be cause for immediate dismissal of the employee, notification of parents and, as appropriate, notification to civil authorities. The Headmaster will immediately notify the chairman of the First Academy Committee and First Academy's legal counsel upon receiving a report of such behavior.

All employees should recognize appropriate guidelines when interacting with students (on campus or off campus) to avoid any appearance of evil or the possibility of an emotional relationship developing including, but not limited to:

- **not communicating on a personal level on one's cell phone with a student (voice or texting)**
- **not being alone with a student in a room with the door closed, lights out or dimmed**
- **not being alone in a vehicle**
- **not speaking in a manner that is flirtatious**

- **not transporting members of the opposite sex in vehicles. In an extreme situation (car trouble, bad weather, injury), call the student's parents and keep him/her on the phone during the duration of the drive.**
- **Hugs must be done in public and always on the side**

**The general rule of best practice is to keep all student relations public and avoid physical contact.** Any physical action that can be misconstrued damages one's ministry effectiveness, the good reputation of the school, and may disqualify one from further ministry with young people.

Communication with students via cell phone, texting, and social media must be done so with the utmost of care and wisdom and kept on the professional level (school-related conversations). **A general rule of best practice with social media is not to make such communications a habit or pattern of communication.** Coaching, discipleship arrangements, and student group involvement, e.g., Student Council, may involve such communication; otherwise, it is best to limit communications with students on a personal level using these mediums. The Employee Social Media Policy will govern teacher use of social media. (see Employee Social Media Policy).

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at First Academy will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. First Academy does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

First Academy will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

Any employee with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the The Headmaster. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **BUSINESS ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

The successful business operation and reputation of First Academy is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of First Academy is dependent upon our parents' trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to First Academy, its parents, and students to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

First Academy will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its directors, officers, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with your school-director.

Compliance with this policy of business ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every First Academy employee.

## **IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE**

First Academy is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with SCA within the past three years, or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

Employees with questions or seeking information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact the Business Manager. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Employees have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. This policy established only the framework within which First Academy wishes the business to operate. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general direction so that employees can seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation. Contact the Headmaster for more information or questions about conflicts of interest.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is able to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of First Academy's business dealings. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is like that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if employees have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative that they disclose to an officer of First Academy as soon as possible the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which First Academy does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving First Academy.

## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

An employee may hold a job with another organization as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with First Academy. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to the school's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements. Any outside employment must not compromise the staff member's and/or First Academy's Biblical standard of living.

If school leadership determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of First Academy as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with First Academy. Outside employment will present a conflict of interest if it has an adverse impact on First Academy.

## **NON-DISCLOSURE**

The protection of confidential business information and trade secrets is vital to the interests and the success of First Academy. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- computer processes
- computer programs and codes
- financial information
- pending projects and proposals
- technological data
- student, family and/or employee information

Employees who improperly use or disclose trade secrets or confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION**

First Academy is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis.

Hiring procedures have been reviewed and provide persons with disabilities meaningful employment opportunities. Pre-employment inquiries are made only regarding an applicant's ability to perform the duties of the position.

No accommodation is available to disabled employees, where their disability affects the performance of job functions. All employment decisions are based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation) as well as in job assignments, classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression and seniority lists. Leave of all types will be available to all employees on an equal basis.

First Academy is also committed to not discriminating against any qualified employees or applicants because they are related to or associated with a person with a disability. First Academy will follow any state or local law that provides individuals with disabilities greater protection than the ADA.

## **EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES**

*REGULAR FULL-TIME:* employees are those who are not in a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work the school's full-time schedule (30+ hours/week).

*PART-TIME:* employees are those who are not assigned to a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week.

## **ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES**

First Academy maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary information, contracts, and other employment records.

Personnel files are the property of First Academy, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only supervisors and management personnel of First Academy who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file can do so.

Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Headmaster with reasonable notice, employees may review their own personnel files in First Academy's offices and in the presence of an individual appointed by First Academy.

## **EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE CHECKS**

To ensure that individuals who join First Academy are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of First Academy to check the employment references of all applicants.

First Academy's administration team will respond to all reference check inquiries from other employers. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held.

## **PERSONNEL DATA CHANGES**

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify First Academy of any changes in personnel data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of any emergency, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current always. If any personal data has changed, notify the School Office.

## **STAFF DRESS CODE**

It is the responsibility of each staff member to dress in a professional manner, which brings honor to the Lord, respect to the school, and respect to our profession. As educators, it is important that we serve as an example to the students in our actions, as well as in our dress. Cleanliness, modesty, and conservative style should be guides to professional dress. If you have a question about an article of clothing, please ask the Headmaster first. **Staff attire should never contradict the standards of the student dress code.**

### **Pre-School Staff:**

- Ladies are to wear:
  - Blue Jeans
  - School T-shirts, in good condition
  - Faith Based/Christian themed T-shirts, in good condition
  - Shorts may be worn, but no shorter than 2" above the knee
  - Dresses/skirts no shorter than 2" above the knee
  - Dress pants
  - Dressy capris
  - Dress jeans
  - Long sleeves,  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeves, short sleeves, or sleeveless blouses
  - Full-cut split skirts that come to the knee
  - Leggings may be worn under modest length dresses

### **Elementary/Middle School Staff:**

- Ladies are to wear:
  - Dresses/skirts ~ no shorter than 2" above the knee
  - Dress pants
  - Dressy capris
  - Dress jeans
  - Long sleeves,  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeves, short sleeves, or sleeveless blouses
  - Full-cut split skirts that come to the knee
  - Leggings may be worn under modest length dresses
  - Blue Jeans & School Tshirts are permitted on casual Fridays

- Ladies may **NOT** wear:
  - Shorts ~ may be worn for certain school activities as approved by administration.
  - Stretch or stirrup pants
  - Tank top shirts
  - Sundresses
- Men are to wear:
  - Business casual slacks (khaki-type pants, etc.)
  - Collared shirts (button-down or polo-style)
    - Shirts must always be buttoned and tucked in
  - Dress or nice casual shoes must be closed on all sides
  - Socks
  - Belts
  - Sweaters
    - Crewneck sweaters must have a collared shirt underneath with the exception of turtlenecks.
    - A zip-up-style sweater that has a higher collar may not need to have a collared shirt underneath.
  - Blue Jeans & School Tshirts are permitted on casual Fridays
- Men may **NOT** wear:
  - Shorts ~ may be worn for certain school activities as approved by administration
  - Cargo-style pants ~ pants with more than 4 traditional pockets
  - Flip flops or sandals (exception: a spirit day)

**PE Teachers:** Nice wind suits/pants, modest fitting, and modest length shorts in good condition; polo-style shirts and school t-shirts in good condition; good condition athletic shoes. If in the classroom (e.g., Health), wind pants and athletic pants must be worn.

**Hair:** Hair should be neat and clean. Men's hair should be well-trimmed off the ears and above the eyes and above the collar. Beards, mustaches, and sideburns must be trimmed and neat always. Sideburns may not exceed the middle of the ear. Hairstyles may not be extreme or faddish so that it draws attention to oneself (determined by administration). No stocking caps, baseball caps, or do-rags may be worn. Ladies may wear headbands and hair bows.

**Other:** Visible piercings are limited to the ears. Other piercings are not allowed during the school day or at any First Academy functions. No additional, visible tattoos may be added during your employment at First Academy.

**Staff Jeans Days:** Staff members may wear neatly hemmed (no frays, rips, or holes) jeans with a professional top. Men must tuck in their shirts. Staff members may wear athletic shoes— no sandals or open-toed shoes for men; no beach style, flip flops for men or women.

**Theme T-shirt Days**—If staff purchase theme shirts to be worn on these days (cancer awareness, school spirit days, and etc.) Staff members may wear athletic shoes— no sandals or open-toed shoes for men; no beach style, flip flops for men or women.

**Dress Down Days/Casual Fridays**—staff members may participate following the same guidelines as the students except no shorts, no hats—Staff members may wear athletic shoes— no sandals or open-toed shoes for men; no beach style, flip flops for men or women.



## COMPUTERS

First Academy provides computer access for most full-time and part-time employees. Administration and faculty members have laptop or desktop computers for their use. These computers and all software are property of First Academy and should be treated with care. Staff members are always accountable for the proper use of computers.

Federal copyright laws are very strict concerning the use of computers and computer software. Companies have faced very high fines for having software installed on an employee's computer that is not properly licensed by the organization. First Academy purchases and licenses the use of various computer software programs for business purposes and does not own the copyright to these programs or its related documentation. Employees may only use software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreement.

### **AT NO TIME SHOULD ANY EMPLOYEE INSTALL, DUPLICATE, AND/OR DOWNLOAD ANY SOFTWARE PROGRAMS AND ITS RELATED DOCUMENTATION ON AN SCA COMPUTER WITHOUT PROPER AUTHORIZATION.**

This authorization must be given by the administration. Employees who connect to inappropriate internet sites, bypass First Academy's security system, or use a First Academy computer in any other inappropriate way will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment.

Staff member's use of computers always reflects upon the mission and image of First Academy. First Academy periodically monitors employees' use of school technology. First Academy may also periodically review various internet sites, including social networking sites, blogs, and other types of sites. An employee's and/or family member's actions on such sites that reflect negatively on the mission and/or image of First Academy may affect one's continued employment with the school.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

When social media originated, it initially served as a tool to create personal opportunities to connect with friends and family. As the social media networks have both grown and expanded, social networking has developed and become an essential marketing platform for schools and employees to utilize. Many schools, including private, faith-based schools, have successfully used social media to engage their students, parents, teachers, and administrators as well as donors and "friends" of the school.

Sites are used as an effective business tool to inform others about the school's programs, sports, clubs, school news, and to educate potential students and parents on these topics. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, etc. can be effective marketing vehicles to highlight the school.

However, as a responsible employee, parent, or student, it is important to be informed of First Academy's Social Media Policy and educated on the general social networking precautions. The following guidelines apply to the members of the First Academy Social Media Team as well as any employee who engages in personal use of social media.

### SOCIAL NETWORKING DEFINITION

While there are many and various social networking sites available on the internet, it is important to remember this *social networking policy applies to any and all sites, whether personal or of a business nature, in which an individual communicates, over the internet, the issues regarding any business or news associated with First Academy.* This policy includes personal internet or cell phone communications as well as community sites which involve one or more individuals. While the internet, used appropriately, can be a useful tool for information, it is important to recognize the site can also be used either intentionally or unintentionally resulting in harm to an individual or to the school.

## SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICIES

1. Use of social networking sites by employees of First Academy during working hours is to pertain solely to school-related commentary and information on official First Academy sites only. Social networking activities are to never interfere with an employee's primary job responsibilities and any use of social media for personal use is prohibited during working hours.
2. You must maintain student confidentiality and privacy.
3. Do not share confidential information or release photos of those students that parents have signed a waiver of excluding their child(ren) from sharing photographs.
4. Remember the voice of First Academy must reflect positively on First Academy and be in line with Biblical standards of speech and conduct. Always remember our mission and views when posting or making comments.
5. Your communications regarding any school activity should be one of mutual respect and should avoid topics of governmental affairs or political activity or nature. All laws pertaining to libel and defamation of character are applied and should be remembered. In other words, "If you do not have anything good to say, then don't say anything at all" applies to any communication.
6. You shall be respectful and professional to fellow employees, school partners, competitors and other schools always while posting or using other online communication activities.
7. Remember, your personal page reflects First Academy. Keep your personal page appropriate. A key rule to remember is, when in doubt, do not post. In other words, if you would not want your grandmother to see it, do not post.
8. You shall not, at any time, establish an unofficial site using the name of First Academy, the school's address, or any other business entity associated with First Academy on any medium or network. While we encourage your respectful participation on our official sites, do not develop groups or networks using First Academy networks.
9. Remember to abide by all copyrighting and laws regarding plagiarism. Do not post someone else's work without their written permission.
10. Be a "scout" for compliments and criticism. You are the most important eyes for First Academy monitoring the social media landscape.
11. **Let the subject matter experts respond to negative posts.** You may come across negative posts about First Academy. Avoid the temptation to react. Pass the post(s) to the Social Media Director trained to address such comments.

### *Code of Ethics:*

As we engage our community in social networking, the following code of ethics applies, both in our sponsored sites and comments on other sites:

- Our comments will be accurate and factual.
- We will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly.
- We will delete spam and/or comments that are off-topic.
- We will reply to emails and comments when appropriate.
- We will link directly to online references and original source materials when possible.
- And above all, we will honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **LEAVING CAMPUS**

When leaving campus during school hours, faculty members must obtain **approval from the Headmaster AND sign out with the administrative assistant, and sign in upon returning to campus.** Employees should not leave campus with students during the school day without approval from the Headmaster unless it is for an approved school activity.

## **CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

Administrators will be visiting classrooms during the school year. Visits may occur without notice. The purpose of these visits is to evaluate teaching methods, observe class discipline and student conduct, and to aid the teacher with helpful suggestions. The primary goal of observations is to help teachers be more effective in their craft. They also serve as a basis for formal evaluations at the end of the year.

## **TEACHER EVALUATIONS**

Teachers are formally evaluated by the Headmaster. After observations, a conference is held with the teacher to discuss areas of strength and/or areas of improvement. A plan of action is agreed upon with a follow-up conference to assess changes. Teachers are always encouraged to respond and give their input on the evaluation and the process. Headmaster/teacher conferences on classroom management and/or instructional issues are held as needed. Please note that veteran teachers are not necessarily evaluated annually though they are observed. Insufficient progress on suggestions made during the year may result in a contract not being issued the following year.

## **NOTICE OF CONCERN**

Most job-related issues are handled orally between headmaster and employee or through email correspondence. Occasionally, an issue becomes a concern for the supervisor or a pattern of behavior that requires more formal documentation. In these instances, a notice of concern will be completed by the headmaster. A copy of the concern will be issued to the employee and another placed in the employee's personnel file.

## **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE**

Abuse is defined as follows:

“Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm of a child under the age of eighteen (18) or age specified by the child protection law of the state by the person who is responsible for the child's welfare.”

Some state laws also include a child's witnessing of domestic violence as a form of abuse or neglect.

It is important to know that educators are considered by law **mandatory reporters**. If you suspect that a child is being abused, you should report it. Failure to report cases of abuse will have legal ramifications for the employee. Begin by reporting it to the Headmaster immediately.

Please document all suspicions. The administration will meet with you and decide what the next course of action should be. The administration will contact the Department of Children & Family Services if necessary.

The following may signal the presence of **abuse or neglect**:

### **The Child:**

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home
- Is reluctant to be around a particular person
- Discloses maltreatment

**The Parent:**

- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child’s problems in school or at home
- Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of the parent’s emotional needs
- Shows little concern for the child

**The Parent and Child:**

- Rarely touch or look at each other
- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State that they do not like each other

**Signs of Physical Abuse:**

*Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the child:*

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Abuses animals or pets

*Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:*

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child’s injury, or provides an explanation that is not consistent with the injury
- Describes the child as “evil” or in some other very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child
- Has a history of abusing animals or pets

**Signs of Neglect**

*Consider the possibility of neglect when the child:*

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

*Consider the possibility of neglect when the parent or other adult caregiver:*

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

**Signs of Sexual Abuse**

*Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child:*

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite

- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment

*Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:*

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Is secretive and isolated
- Is jealous or controlling with family members

### **Signs of Emotional Maltreatment**

*Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the child:*

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Is either inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or inappropriately infantile (e.g., frequently rocking or head-banging)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent

*Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the parent or other adult caregiver:*

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems
- Overtly rejects the child

Source: *What Is Child Abuse and Neglect?*

*Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms.* www.childwelfare.gov (2013)

## **POLITICAL VIEWS OF STAFF MEMBERS AND VOTING**

When election season approaches, it is important to keep in mind some guidelines that all of us need to follow when it comes to discussing politics and elections with each other and our students. Our Founding Fathers established a constitutional republic that provides us with the freedom to vote and select the leaders who will guide the country. Therefore, as Christian citizens, we have a moral obligation to participate in this process. However, there are a couple of things to remember when discussions about elections come up at school. These are:

1. Elections are not about voting for individuals or a certain political party. All elections are in essence approving "ideas" that one wants to direct his/her country, state, community and life.
2. The main business of education is the communication of "ideas" and all "ideas" have consequences.
3. As a ministry of First Baptist Church, we must be careful not to "endorse" any candidates that are running for an office at any level of government. Staff members are not even allowed to even forward a politically based email using our school email account as this could be interpreted as a political endorsement that is prohibited by law for a religious, non-profit organization to do.

In James 3, God warns us about the powerful influence that the tongue has over other people. In verse 1, He states that we should not be quick to become a teacher because reserved for those who teach is a greater judgment. In other words, teachers are held to a higher standard because we are in a position of great influence over young hearts and minds.

You have heard on several occasions that the main business of education is the communication of "ideas" and all "ideas" have consequences. This means that we must be very careful that the "ideas" we communicate to our

students both in and out of the classroom are Biblically-based. Since political elections are really about voting for certain “ideas”, we must keep our discussion in this area of life focused on Biblical values.

Principle #9 in Kingdom Education states that the education of children and youth must *lead to wisdom and understanding by connecting all knowledge (topics/pieces of life/etc.) to a Biblical worldview framework*. This principle gives us some guidelines that we should use as we discuss such areas of life as politics and voting with our students. We must lead our students to get Godly wisdom and understanding as they grow into young adults and exercise their responsibilities as citizens.

Below are five Biblical principles that we should be instilling in our students’ minds related to exercising the wonderful freedom we have to vote. These principles are important because God’s Word warns us that when the foundations are destroyed, a nation will come to ruin and that God blesses a people when the righteous rule.

### **Principle #1: The Sanctity of Human Life**

Man is God’s crowning point of all creation. Every person is an image bearer of God and, therefore, all human life is sacred to God. The Scriptures make it very clear that life begins at conception (Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1). Therefore, one very important “idea” that should drive one’s decisions when voting is to protect all human life.

### **Principle #2: The Family**

The first social institution that God set in place in His creation was the family. This is found in Genesis 2 when God says that a man and woman should leave their parents and join together becoming one flesh. Then they are to multiply and bring forth Godly seed (Malachi 2).

The Biblical definition of a family includes a husband and a wife and children that God might give to them. This is not something that God sat down and came up with it. The family unit is merely a reflection of the triune nature of God that has existed in the Godhead for all of eternity. Christians must vote for the “idea” that will keep marriage and the family as God has ordained it to be.

### **Principle #3: Religious Freedom**

One of the main reasons that God has blessed the United States so much over the years is the fact that the church has had freedom to operate under God’s direction and not the state’s. In *Focus on the Family’s Truth Project*, Christians are warned about allowing the state to begin controlling the church.

In a neighboring country, laws have been passed that can cause pastors and churches to be fined if they speak out on such Biblical moral issues as sexual immorality including adultery and homosexuality. There is heated debate taking place in our country about the state being allowed to dictate to the church in areas of spiritual issues. It is important to teach our students that when they become adults that they must do all they can to vote for “ideas” that will protect our freedom of religion so that the church can be salt and light in the world (Matthew 5).

### **Principle #4: God is our Provider**

As Christians, it is critical that we teach students the “idea” that God and God alone should be our Provider. One cannot read the Psalm without understanding this critical truth.

This truth is under ever increasing attack. We have watched a video of the *Reading Rainbow* that teaches the false “idea” that nature provides our bodies and our souls with everything they need. We are also hearing the “idea” that it is the state (either local, state or federal levels) that is to provide for all our needs.

In Acts 2, one finds that the church is meant to be God’s agent to reach out to the needy and hurting. When the church does not do what it is supposed to, then others, including the state, step in. It is important to vote for “ideas” that will help us look to and trust God to meet our needs.

It is interesting to note in Romans 13 that the state, as God as designed it, is to punish evil and condone good. In other words, God designed government to protect not to provide. God was to be the one that we look to for our needs to be met and He promises to meet those needs according to His glorious riches (Philippians 4:19).

### **Principle #5: Israel as God's Chosen People**

God is very plain that He has chosen Israel as His chosen people. He tells us that those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who don't will suffer His judgment. This is another principle that should guide our decisions about what "ideas" we vote for. A sovereign God has willed that Israel is a land that He has given to the Jews and it is Jerusalem where one day Jesus Christ is going to return.

Ultimately, when we vote, we cast our votes for or against proposed laws/amendments. In each decision, we make a statement that we want certain "ideas" to direct our lives, our community, the state and the country in which we live. So, if asked "whom" we voted for, we don't mention any candidate's or party's name. Instead, our response should always be that we voted for people and laws **that best protected the sanctity of human life, that maintained God's design for marriage and the family, that would not infringe on religious freedom, that showed God that He was my Provider, and that would help protect the land of Israel.**

Please follow these guidelines as discussions come up with students. **We don't ever have to share with them who we are voting for.** We need to guide them to think and act from a Biblical worldview framework.

### **PUNCTUALITY**

- Be on time to all meetings and each work day.
- If you are running late, please notify the Headmaster via text/email as soon as possible.
- Prepare grade reports on time. Please update your grades weekly to keep parents informed.

The degree in which we meet our professional obligations in a timely, punctual, and well-prepared fashion sets the tone for our students. If you are unavoidably detained or have cause to be late for class, please make every effort to call the office so that students are not left unattended.

### **SCHOOL FUNCTIONS**

Extra-curricular activities are a vital part of school responsibilities for all personnel throughout the year, faculty members may be required to attend and/or chaperone certain extracurricular activities (auction, graduation, honor's programs, APT events, etc). Your personal requests will be taken into consideration as much as possible and chaperone responsibilities will be distributed evenly as much as possible. Remember, outside of the classroom are often the most significant opportunities for a teacher to bond with the students, spiritually and socially. **Hence, it is expected that teachers attend at least two student/school events a quarter. Be aware that you may be asked to volunteer at an event to help with staff presence and to build relations with school families.**

Any scheduled events (field trips, class events, assemblies, etc.) you are planning must be **pre-approved by the Headmaster.** Approval by the Headmaster must be obtained **before** printed information is sent home. Any changes or cancellation of an event needs to be communicated to your Headmaster.

*All events will be posted in the First Academy Teachers Google calendar.*

**Chaperoning non-sanctioned events:** From time to time, parents will invite staff members to chaperone non-sanctioned school events (private parties). Please be cognizant of the fact that your status as a staff member will always be in play. You need to exercise wisdom as to your involvement in these activities. Any questionable activities/behavior at these events need to be reported to the Headmaster. **A good rule to abide by is not to attend parent organized events that you are not comfortable with.**

## **SCHOOL SECURITY**

Security is a top priority at First Academy and it is the responsibility of all staff members every moment of every day. Keep in mind the following when you are on campus as you carry out your responsibilities.

- Your classroom is to be locked at all times.
- All exterior doors are locked during school hours. If you see an exterior door propped open, please investigate to make sure security is not breached. Teach students not to let strangers in the building and address those who do so.
- All visitors are to check in to the First Academy school office.
- Be aware of your surroundings as you walk through the building and during arrival or dismissal duty.
- Report any unusual behavior by strangers or potential breaches of security to the Headmaster.
- Be sure all exit doors are locked as you leave for the evening.

## **SEXUAL HARRASSMENT**

First Academy forbids discrimination against any employee, applicant for employment, or student, on the basis of sex. First Academy will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees. Please report any such activity to the Headmaster. Such behavior will be cause for immediate corrective action or dismissal. The policy similarly applies to non-employee volunteers or any other persons who work subject to the control of school authorities.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is a must if one aspires to be a professional. All information concerning First Academy staff and a student's record is considered confidential and should be treated as such. Never discuss a student or faculty member's performance, attitude or problems unless there is a professional purpose for such discussion. **It must be done in a private place (not hallway, lunchroom, school event).** Under no circumstances should any student be discussed, by phone, email, etc., with people other than the student's parents.

## **SUPERVISION OF ALL FIRST ACADEMY STUDENTS**

It is the responsibility of all First Academy faculty and staff members to supervise all students during school hours. This includes break times, lunch, and before and after school. Safety is our #1 concern. Make sure that the behavior of our students promotes a safe school environment, never leave your class unattended. Students are not allowed to be in a First Academy building/classroom without a staff member or assigned supervisor. Keep students accountable, even if you do not know them. We expect all First Academy students to follow the school's policies and guidelines. When sponsoring/chaperoning a school activity after hours, the employee must be present to supervise all students until they are picked up and leave the property.

## **PROBLEM RESOLUTION**

First Academy is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open system in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question can be expressed and receives a timely response from First Academy supervisors and administration.

First Academy strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Administrators, faculty, and staff are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. If a faculty or staff member disagrees with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, they can express their concern through the problem resolution procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with First Academy in a reasonable, Christ-like manner, or for using the problem resolution procedure.

If a situation occurs when faculty or staff believes that a condition of employment or a decision affecting them is unjust or inequitable, they are encouraged to make use of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any step.



1. Employee presents a problem to immediate administration within five (5) calendar days, after the incident occurs.
2. Administration responds to the problem during discussion or within five (5) calendar days, after consulting with appropriate administration, when necessary. Administration documents discussion.
3. Employee presents the problem to the Headmaster within five (5) calendar days, if the problem is unresolved.
4. The Headmaster counsels and advises employees, assists in putting problems in writing, visits with the employee's supervisor, if necessary, and employee presents a written concern that will be submitted to the School Committee through the Headmaster's office.
5. The School Committee will review the concern and make the final decision related to the matter.

Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion of mutual problems can administrators, faculty, and staff develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important to the operation of an efficient and harmonious work environment, and helps to ensure everyone's job security.

## **REASONS FOR TERMINATION**

A First Academy employee will be subject to dismissal for good and just cause, which includes but is not limited to the following:

- Poor classroom management
- Neglect of duty and incompetence
- Abusing and/or not following chain of command
- Insubordination or disrespect to those in authority
- Unprofessional conduct toward peers, students, or parents
- Behavior which is not conducive to promoting Christian character, including an attitude of indifference
- Behavior that is contrary to a Biblical standard of conduct
- Violation of laws or ordinances
- Excessive tardiness
- Excessive absenteeism
- Loafing or spending unnecessary time away from job duties

# EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Eligible employees at First Academy are provided a wide range of benefits. The Business Manager can explain in greater detail the programs for which you are eligible.

All the following benefits are provided for all full-time employees:

**Tuition discount:** Because it is required that all school-age children of full-time employees attend First Academy (exception is for appropriate grades not being offered, or financial means), full-time employees receive a 50% tuition discount for their children attending First Academy. Staff children also receive free early drop off and aftercare until 4:15 PM.

**Sick & Personal Days:** see below

**Bereavement leave:** All employees are provided up to three (3) days of leave for the death of an immediate family member. Immediate family is defined as spouse, child, brother, sister, and parent. Employees may use sick days in the event of death of an extended family member or fellow church member.

**School holidays:** Employees get all school holidays off unless their job requires them to be available during such breaks

**Vacation:** 12-month, full-time employees also have vacation benefits based on position.

**Direct deposit:** Direct deposit of payroll is required by all employees.

## SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE POLICY FOR TEACHERS

- First Academy grants sick leave to full-time employees (those working a minimum of 30 hours per week) at the rate of **nine (9) days per contract year**. Two (2) of the sick days may be used as personal days.
    - Reasons for personal leave are left to the employee, with **no more than two (2) personal days being granted per school year**. College visits for your own children are considered personal leave days.
    - **Personal leave may NOT be requested for the day preceding or following school holidays, teacher planning days, or during the month of May.**
    - Sick leave refers to days of personal sickness, doctor's visits, sickness of a family member for which employee is the primary caregiver, or hospitalization of immediate family members.
    - Jury Duty does not count as personal or sick leave.
  - First Academy grants sick leave to part-time employees (those working less than 30 hours per week) at a rate of 7 days per contract year. Two (2) of the sick days may be used as personal days.
    - Reasons for personal leave are left to the employee, with **no more than two (2) personal days being granted per school year**. College visits for your own children are considered personal leave days.
    - **Personal leave may NOT be requested for the day preceding or following school holidays, teacher planning days, or during the month of May.**
    - Sick leave refers to days of personal sickness, doctor's visits, sickness of a family member for which the employee is primary caregiver, or hospitalization of an immediate family member.
    - Jury Duty does not count as personal or sick leave.
- C. If a person is hired in the middle of a school year, the sick days will be prorated based on how many months the staff member will be working.
- D. If a staff member uses all of his/her days, the employee's daily rate (listed on contract) will be deducted from their check in the month the day was taken.

Staff Members are required to notify the Headmaster as soon as they are aware that they need a personal day by filling out a Time Off Request Form available in the school office. The form **MUST** be turned in 10 days before the requested date. The Headmaster must approve personal days. In case of an illness or emergency, the staff members **MUST** complete the form upon the first day back to work.

### **SUBSTITUTE POLICY**

Please contact **Katie Winge at (225)936-6543** as soon as you know you will need a sub. Report to Katie Winge if you are going to be absent due to sudden illness or an emergency. A substitute will be contacted for you.

### **SUBSTITUTE FOLDER**

Adequate plans must be made available to substitutes when a teacher is absent. A substitute folder with the following information is needed at the beginning of the school year:

1. Daily schedule with special times listed (lunch, library, music, etc.)
2. Class roster
3. Seating Chart
4. A list of helpful students
5. Classroom rules
6. Attendance procedures
7. Duty schedule
8. Any special health problems of students
9. Emergency procedures
10. Alternative lesson plans for a substitute to fall back on if necessary

**Please let the partner teacher know the location of your substitute folder. Lesson plans must be left on your desk, so the substitute can easily find them.**

### **DEDUCTIONS FOR SICK/PERSONAL TIME**

Deductions will be made from sick/personal balances for any time missed regardless of whether a sub is called or not. Professional time taken off is tracked but not charged to employees.

# CLASSROOM & ACADEMICS

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The purpose of discipline is to correct behavior which is not conducive to spiritual, emotional, physical and academic growth of FA students. Our desire is for parents, teachers and the administration to partner together to guide our students toward excellence in all things. FA's desire is for teachers and parents to maintain open doors of communication to build solid relationships. **Teachers are expected to communicate with parents promptly and consistently about any academic or behavior concerns of their students.** Students are expected to adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Student Handbook. Every opportunity should be taken to recognize and reward good behavior. Teachers should observe the following:

1. No corporal punishment
2. Do not touch student in an unkind way
3. Do not use unkind or sarcastic words
4. Do not remove a child from the classroom and place him/her in the hall to work. Seek help from office personnel.
5. Do not leave a child unattended in the classroom
6. Do not react to a student in anger

Any discipline problem, parent conference, or parent request should be brought to the attention of the Headmaster. All parent conferences should be documented. Parent conferences can be documented in Praxi or Google Workspace Apps. All documentation should be kept in the teacher's records until the end of the school year.

**General Rule of Best Practice: Praise publicly, reprimand in private.** Reprimands should be followed with a positive response.

## MANAGEMENT PLAN

Each teacher should develop a classroom management plan that is fair and consistent in dealing with students who misbehave, thereby creating an atmosphere conducive to learning and discipleship and allowing more time on-task for learning. **This plan, including consequences, should be posted in the classroom and/or included in the course syllabus.**

### Be Consistent

Keep in mind the key to solving discipline problems is consistency. Consistency fosters a trustworthy environment conducive to learning. You, the educator, must never let up with your expectations and standards.

### Be Balanced

At the same time, you provide negative consequences, you must balance your disciplinary action with positive support of students' commendable and appropriate behavior. Students, though they may appear aloof and disinterested, do like and need positive reinforcement.

### Establish Classroom Rules

You need to establish behavior rules for your classroom. First, it is vital that you determine the specific behavior you will require of your students. These behaviors will serve as the rules for your classroom. Take time to think carefully about the behaviors you really need, and then choose a maximum of five (5) to be used as rules for your classroom. When determining rules, be sure that they are observable. Rules such as "Raise your hand to speak" are observable.

When determining your rules, remember that good classroom management begins with clearly defined standards. Your students must know your expectations for them to behave appropriately.

### ***Determine Disciplinary Consequences***

Once your rules are established, you must determine the courses of action and/or disciplinary consequences you will use for students who choose to misbehave. It is important that you take the time to carefully select consequences that are appropriate for your teaching situation.

### ***Choose consequences you are comfortable with and that fit the offense.***

Remember that the power of influence is in you, not in your consequence; yet the consequence becomes a valuable tool for the teacher after a productive conversation and contact with parents. Embrace a relational model for classroom management. The more you invest in the student and the parents, the more likely you are to get a heart change.

### ***Document, document, document!***

It is important to keep records of conversations you are having with students who are unable and/or unwilling to submit to your classroom expectations/your authority. Use the behavior link in Praxi or Google Workspace Apps to document and track behaviors. These patterns of behavior will guide future conversations with the student, his/her parents, and the Headmaster.

### ***Remember sending a student to the Headmaster should be near the end of the hierarchy.***

The disciplinary hierarchy should also include a severe clause. This clause should state that in the case of severe misbehavior such as fighting, vandalism, defying a teacher or stopping class from functioning, the discipline hierarchy no longer applies. Instead, immediately send the student to the Headmaster's office. To effectively implement the discipline hierarchy that you have developed, follow these guidelines:

- Students need to be told by the teacher they are breaking a rule.
- The consequence should occur as soon as possible after the student misbehaves. Be sure to notify a parent as soon as convenient.
- Stay calm when disciplining a student.
- Make sure the students are given proper instruction on student expectations, i.e., they must know beforehand the consequences that will occur as a result of their misbehavior.
- Parent contact should always be made depending on the infraction.
- Keep accurate records of student infractions and consequences.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

Under no circumstances shall any employee or volunteer for First Academy administer corporal punishment on any member of the student body, regardless of alleged infractions.

### ***Determine Positive Reinforcement***

The next step in developing a discipline plan is to determine how you will positively reinforce students who do behave. Remember, the key to effective discipline is positive support of students' appropriate behavior. Negative consequences stop inappropriate behavior, but only positive consequences will change behavior. Use these guidelines to help you decide how to respond to students who behave appropriately:

- Establish responses/actions with which you are comfortable.
- Positive reinforcement should be something the students like.
- Students should be informed of the positive reinforcement they will receive.
- Positive responses should be provided as often as possible.
- Plan ahead of time which specific appropriate behavior merits reinforcement.

The most effective reinforcement is verbal praise. **Remember to balance your negative consequences with frequent positive encouragement.**

## **CLASSROOM RESPONSIBILITIES**

The teacher assumes all responsibility for the classroom upon exiting at the end of the school day or if you are the last to use the room for the day. Adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not keep money or other valuable personal items in your classroom.
- Lock all classroom doors.
- Pick up all the trash on the floor.
- Keep the hall area outside your classroom free of litter.
- Arrange chairs/desks in proper order.
- Erase white boards. Maintain the best appearance possible. Turn off all lights.
- See that all exit doors are securely locked.
- Report any and all damages, maintenance issues, or custodial issues to the school office.

# **FORMS**

**(Copies for Reference Only!)**

**~ Signed Copies will be kept on file at First Academy ~**

# **EMPLOYEE ELECTRONICS ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

## **REASONS FOR THIS POLICY**

First Academy is providing computer network and Internet access for its students and employees. This service allows employees and students to share information, learn new concepts, and research diverse subjects.

First Academy has adopted this Acceptable Use Policy ("Policy") to set guidelines for accessing the computer network or the Internet service provided by First Academy.

Every year, employees who want computer network and Internet access for that upcoming school year need to sign and submit a copy of the Policy to First Academy. By signing this agreement, the employee agrees to follow the rules set forth in this Policy and to report any misuse of the computer network or the Internet to a supervisor. Parties agreeing to this policy also understand that First Academy may revise the Acceptable Use Policy, as it deems necessary. First Academy will provide notice of any changes either by posting such a revised version of the Policy on its website or by providing written notice.

## **COMPUTER AND INTERNET USES**

Use of the electronic information resources in the school shall be to improve and support the educational process by providing access to global information and improving communication between students, employees of First Academy, parents, and community members. The use of the Internet and computer equipment within First Academy is a privilege. Violation of this policy can result in the loss of computer access privileges.

## **ACCEPTABLE USES**

All Internet or computer equipment use shall be consistent with the purposes and goals of First Academy. It is imperative that users of the Internet or computer equipment conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, moral, and polite manner. All users must abide by all local, state, and federal laws. The Internet user accepts the responsibility of adhering to high standards of conduct and the terms and conditions set forth in all parts of this policy.

## **IMPERMISSIBLE INTERNET AND COMPUTER EQUIPMENT USES**

The following uses of the Internet & computer equipment are prohibited:

- Any violation of posted computer rules, applicable school policy, or public law by such use;
- Any activity that is immoral or contrary to the high moral standards which must be maintained in an educational setting;
- Any attempt to bypass school security, including Internet filters, is forbidden;
- Accessing or transmitting of immoral, obscene, pornographic, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, defaming, harassing, bullying, threatening, disrespectful, or otherwise inappropriate images or information, or receiving such information from others by means of e-mail, instant messages, and material posted on Web pages or Web logs ("blogs");
- Any commercial use, product advertisement, display of personal information, or promotion of political candidates;
- Any violation of copyright, trade secret, or trademark laws;
- Any attempt to damage, disrupt or interfere with the use of any computer or electronic information resource;
- Any attempt to access information beyond the users authorized access to any electronic information resource;
- Any destruction, defacement, theft, or altering of school equipment;
- Any storing of illegal, inappropriate, or obscene material on school-owned electronic equipment.

## **MONITORING**

First Academy reserves the right to monitor and review any material on any electronic device at any time in order for the school to determine any inappropriate use of computer resources.



## **DISCLAIMER OF ALL WARRANTIES**

First Academy makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the services provided in connection with use of the Internet or computer equipment. Neither First Academy nor any supporting Internet services will be responsible for any damages that an Internet user suffers. First Academy expressly disclaims any liability in connection with the loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, failure to deliver, mistaken deliveries, viruses, backup device failure, service interruptions, or other unforeseen reasons caused by First Academy or the Internet server or by the user's error or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. First Academy expressly denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through any Internet service. All users must consider the source of any information they obtain and evaluate the validity of that information.

## **SECURITY**

First Academy will implement security procedures on Internet access to protect against unacceptable use. Computer users are responsible for the security of their files and passwords. Sharing of any usernames or passwords to anyone is not permissible and may result in the loss of account privileges. Computer users will be held accountable for any activity under their account. Any security problems should be reported immediately to the school/site administrator.

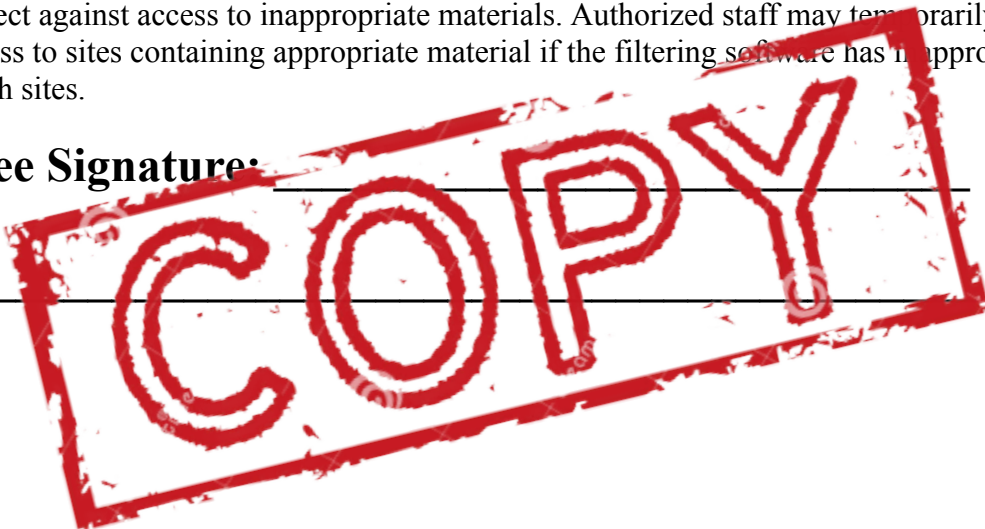
## **ENCOUNTER OF CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS**

Internet users may encounter material that is controversial which the user or administrator may consider inappropriate or offensive. The school has taken precautions to restrict access to inappropriate materials through a filtering and monitoring system. However, it is impossible on a global Internet, to control access to all data that a user may discover. It is the user's responsibility not to initiate access to such material. Any site or material that is deemed controversial should be reported immediately to the appropriate administrator. First Academy expressly disclaims any obligation to discover all violations of inappropriate Internet access.

The filtering software may not at any time be disabled when students are using the Internet if such disabling will cease to protect against access to inappropriate materials. Authorized staff may temporarily or permanently unblock access to sites containing appropriate material if the filtering software has inappropriately blocked access to such sites.

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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



## Employee Social Media Policy

In our attempt to protect you, our employees, and our students, we have established the following policy for employee use of social media.

Employees should not communicate with students on students' social media pages or accounts. Employees should not actively peruse students' social media pages or accounts unless given permission to do so by the Headmaster. In case an employee inadvertently becomes aware of a discipline issue or safety issue of a student through social media, they should contact the Headmaster, before responding to the student.

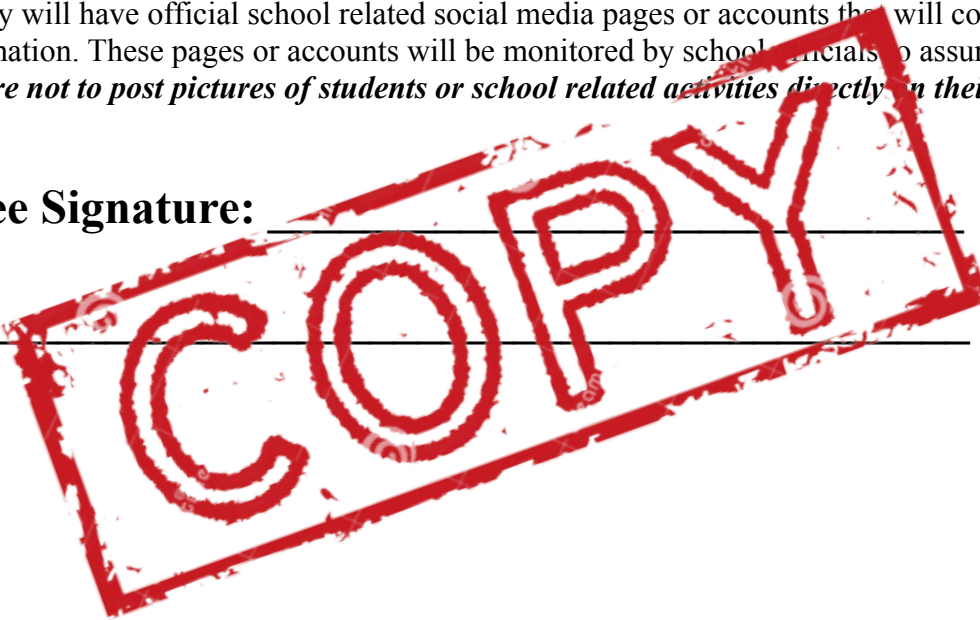
Employees should not have any expectations of privacy on their personal social media pages or accounts. As social media exists primarily in the public realm, employee's social media pages or accounts should reflect the standards and expectations of their role as employees at First Academy.

First Academy will have official school related social media pages or accounts that will communicate school related information. These pages or accounts will be monitored by school officials to assure proper use.

***Employees are not to post pictures of students or school related activities directly on their personal social media pages.***

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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



## First Academy: Matthew 18 Principle

*The Matthew 18 Principle in practice when concerns or conflicts arise within our school.*

The “me generation” philosophy of “I’ll do it my way” sometimes spills over into the Christian community. For example, when differences develop between individuals, some Christians take matters into their “own hands” and bypass the Biblical procedure of solving problems.

A Christian school is made up of people--parents, administrators, teachers, and students. Like any other collection of earthly mortals, the people associated with a Christian school have the potential for misunderstanding, disagreement, and even wrongdoing. Nevertheless, it is God’s will that we live and work together in harmony. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35).

Due to our human nature, we may at times irritate others, resulting in misunderstandings or strong disagreements. In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus gives His formula for solving person-to-person problems. I call it “the Matthew 18 principle” for solving school problems. The following are the words of Jesus:

*Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a tax collector.*

There are several clear principles that Jesus taught in solving people-to-people problems:

**One:** Keep the matter confidential. The very pattern of sharing the problem only with those directly involved establishes the principle of confidentiality. The Bible has much to say about those who gossip or malign others with their words. “A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor; but through knowledge shall the just be delivered” (Proverbs 11:9).

**Two:** Keep the circle small. “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone...” The first step and most often the only step needed in solving a person-to-person problem is for one of the two people involved to initiate face-to-face dialogue. Most problems are solved at the two-people level.

**Three:** Be straightforward. “Tell him his fault.” Jesus tells us to be forthright and to love honestly. Sometimes it is difficult to be straightforward and tell someone the very heart of the matter. But restoration and improvement can only come when the issues are lovingly, yet clearly, presented. The Scripture says “Faithful are the wounds of a friend...” (Proverbs 27:6)

**Four:** Be forgiving. “If he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother.” This implies that once the matter is resolved, we should wholeheartedly forgive and restore the person whose fault has offended us. Galatians 6:1, reads “If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

As I mentioned earlier, most school problems are resolved at the two-people level. Forgiveness and restoration is the normal happy conclusion. But what is the Matthew 18 principle if the individual will not “hear” you, or openly disagrees with your version of the problem? Let’s say you are a parent of a student in a Christian school. You are unhappy with a teacher because you believe your child is being treated unfairly in the classroom. The two of you have met and talked together and you are not satisfied with the outcome of your discussion. What is the next step in the Matthew 18 principle?

**Five:** The parent and teacher should agree to share the matter with the Headmaster. At this stage the counsel of Jesus would be “Take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” Both parent and teacher should meet with the Headmaster. Each person should come to the meeting in a spirit of prayer and humility, willing to submit to the Lord’s will in the matter and also willing to submit to reproof and correction if needed. Those of us who bear the name of Christ should joyfully conform to the will of Christ. An open and honest discussion among people who are sensitive to godly principles will most often reach an amiable solution. If a solution has still not been agreed upon, the parent, teacher, and Headmaster will then meet with the School Committee to solve the matter.

I estimate that 90% of school problems are solved at the two-people level. Another 9% of school problems are solved at the three-and four-people level which includes the school administrator. This leaves 1% to be resolved at the level of the School Committee..

**Six:** The Headmaster explains the problem to the chairman of the School Committee. The chairman will decide how the matter should be presented to the board. Depending on the complexity of the problem, it may be appropriate for the chairman to request that all persons involved be present at the meeting.

The goal of such a high-level meeting is:

1. a clear understanding of the problem
2. solving the problem
3. reproof and correction if necessary
4. forgiveness and wholehearted restoration of those who have made amends.

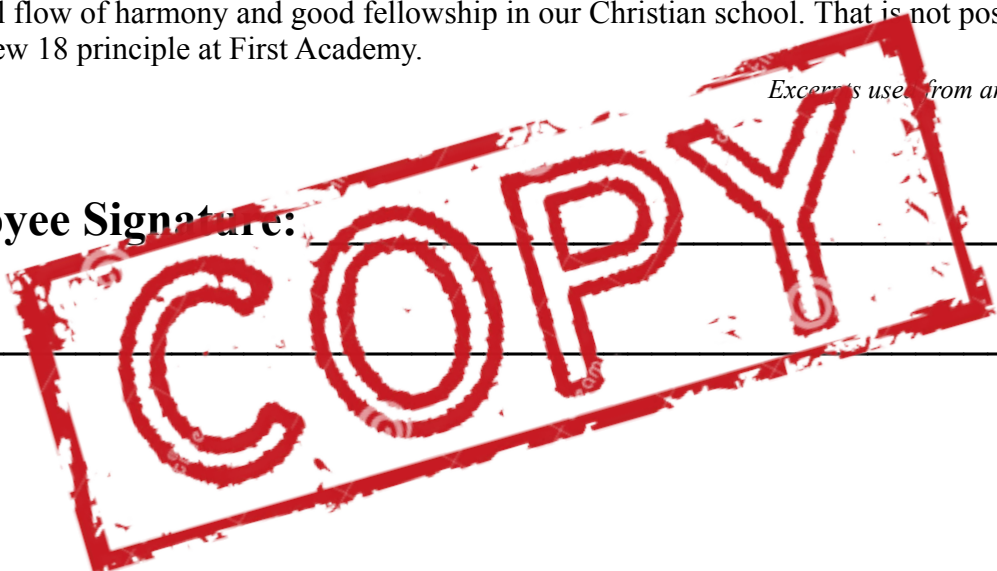
In summary, the Matthew 18 principle requires that parents talk to teachers about student problems before they talk to the administration. If unresolved at the two-people level, the matter is prayerfully and in an orderly fashion moved upward in the school organizational structure. This is the Lord’s way of solving people-to-people problems.

A Christian school is a ministry in Christ’s name. Everything that is done in the context of the school must be done Christ’s way. The world’s method of solving school problems is inappropriate. Satan would like to destroy the normal flow of harmony and good fellowship in our Christian school. That is not possible if all of us follow the Matthew 18 principle at First Academy.

*Excerpts used from an article by Dr. Paul A. Kienel.*

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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



# EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT

Each August, at the beginning of a new school year, all employees should review the personnel handbook and sign a yearly statement. The yearly statement will be kept on file permanently within each employee's personnel file. Should changes in policies be made during the year, employees will be informed and provided a new acknowledgement statement.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as an employee or future employee of First Academy, ministry of First Baptist Church Douglas, *understand and accept* the current Personnel Handbook and will do my best to serve God and the church through my position.

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Headmaster:** \_\_\_\_\_

