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A **FLCOE** SCHOOL

## **School Handbook 2024-2025**

*Loving God  
Loving Others  
Doing Service*

npraca.org

Please note: This handbook is regularly updated to reflect best practices and Adventist Christian Academy board-approved policies. The most current version can be found on our website, [www.npraca.org](http://www.npraca.org).

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# WHO WE ARE

## Vision Statement

We strive to provide our students with a spiritual connection to God and pursue a high academic achievement that focuses on engaging them with social and emotional intelligence to enhance their community awareness and future success.

## Mission Statement

### Loving God

- To develop students' ability to apply the fruits of the Spirit as a form of discipleship.
- To develop students' practice of biblical research through study and reflection.

### Loving Others

- To instruct students on the value of cooperation as a prerequisite to collaboration in academic pursuits.
- To instill the importance of respect toward others.

### Doing Service

- To create a culture of awareness in each student to encourage empathic service to help others.
- To help students discover their values and strengths which will make an impactful contribution to the world.

## School Values

### Integrity

- We expect that students will learn and live by this value in their spiritual, academic, social, and service environments. Integrity means that a person is self-aware, accountable, responsible, and truthful and that their actions are internally consistent.

### Honor

- Honor is the foundation of our character. It influences our behaviors. Honor is a matter of carrying out, acting, and living the values of respect, loyalty, selfless service, and integrity in everything we do.

### Commitment

- Dedication is the main ingredient in commitment. This means that we expect our students to commit to their learning journey at ACA. This involves following instructions, completing schoolwork, and observing the other values of the school.

## **Philosophy**

At Adventist Christian Academy, our educators are committed to cultivating a holistic learning environment infused with compassion and spiritual guidance, embracing inclusivity and purposeful challenges. We honor the individual potential of each student and wholeheartedly dedicate ourselves to providing tailored attention. Our curriculum champions social-emotional intelligence (SEI), nurturing personal responsibility and fostering respect for the rights and privileges of others, encompassing the home, school, and wider community. Through this approach, we aspire to empower students with both academic excellence and a profound connection to their spiritual journey, equipping them for a life of meaningful service.

## **History**

Adventist Christian Academy (ACA) in New Port Richey has a rich history that dates back to its establishment in 1968. From its inception, ACA has been driven by the vision of providing quality education in a nurturing environment. Our school was founded with the mission of creating a place where students can excel academically while also fostering spiritual growth and the development of moral character, with the steadfast support of our local church community and the educational department at the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Over the years, ACA has remained dedicated to upholding the values and principles of the Seventh-day Adventist faith, offering a holistic educational experience that encompasses both academic excellence and the cultivation of holistic well-being. The dedication of our team of teachers and support staff, along with the support of our parents, has all contributed to the growth and success of ACA. As we continue on this journey, we honor our history and look forward to a future filled with continued growth, learning, and a positive impact on the lives of our students and beyond.

## **Accreditation**

Adventist Christian Academy is operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is fully accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association, the Florida Association of Academic Non-Public Schools (FAANS) and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

Adventist Christian Academy admits students regardless of race, sex, religion, or national origin and makes available to all students any programs and activities for which they qualify.

## **School Calendar**

Adventist Christian Academy publishes a calendar in the spring of each year for the upcoming school year. For the most part, we follow the calendar prescribed by the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Office of Education in Altamonte Springs, FL.

## **Spiritual Focus and Community Outreach**

As a Christian campus, Adventist Christian Academy provides many opportunities for students to learn and practice essential and valuable leadership skills as well as to grow in their development as well-balanced, grace-filled, contributing members of society. Each week we conduct chapel services for our school family which include music, inspiring messages, and opportunities for service. The school also holds Weeks of Prayer each year, as well as numerous opportunities for Christian growth and purposeful engagement.

# ADMISSIONS

## Admission Eligibility

Adventist Christian Academy welcomes students who express an earnest desire for a Christian education, determine to maintain a serious academic effort, and who are positively committed to be part of a team that works together in a collaborative and respectful manner. All student admissions are subject to School Board approval.

Adventist Christian Academy admits students of any race, sex, religion, color, national, or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

In accordance with state guidelines, Pre-Kindergarten students must be four years of age on or before September 1. Kindergarten students must be five years of age on or before September 1. First graders must be six on or before September 1. Any student entering 2<sup>nd</sup> grade who is not seven may be required to complete placement testing before enrolling.

## Admission Evaluation

The School Admissions Committee evaluates students in four areas:

1. *Commitment*: Is the student committed to put forth a sincere effort to meet the standards of Christian excellence upheld at Adventist Christian Academy? Is the student committed to setting and working towards mastery of academic and personal goals through competency-based education?
2. *Likelihood of Success*: Can Adventist Christian Academy meet the scholastic and behavioral needs of the student? (Appropriate testing may be required.)
3. *History*: Are school records and other recommendations positive? Students who have been expelled from any school will not be considered for admission to Adventist Christian Academy until they have achieved at least one full year following the year of expulsion with no suspensions or expulsions.
4. *Finances*: Will the parents meet the financial obligations?

## Admission Procedures

We invite parents and students to visit [npraca.org](http://npraca.org) to read more about the philosophy of our school. This handbook should be read in its entirety before signing the final admission papers.

To apply for admission, Parents/Guardians must:

1. Complete an online application.
2. Complete the Records Release Form.
3. Schedule Screening / Evaluation testing for the child.
4. Attend the Parent/ Student Orientation before the first day of school.

The Admissions Committee will then review the complete student admission files, and

determination letters will be sent to families. An acceptance response from the family with a non-refundable \$500 registration and technology fee for first semester must be received within 10 days of acceptance for students to be assured a seat at Adventist Christian Academy.

### **Contractual Agreement**

When a student enrolls at Adventist Christian Academy, the parents and students agree to accept the school's standards, regulations, and financial obligations found in this handbook.

The school agrees to provide a program which is designed for those students who are committed to think deeply, choose wisely, create beauty, and solve problems for God's glory. The school reserves the right to ask students to withdraw who do not share this vision or act accordingly.

Parents who enroll their students at Adventist Christian Academy have entered into a contractual agreement with the school and are expected to support the school philosophy and live up to their financial commitment. School records will not be released until all obligations have been met.

### **Financial Contract**

Families at Adventist Christian Academy must commit to a financial contract for each student for the current school year. Upon acceptance of students, the families complete financial contracts which outline payment plans and are signed by the parents/guardians. If a student is under a Step Up scholarship, it is still the obligation of the parent or guardian to ensure the timely payment of school tuition. If funds are not received as scheduled, the responsibility for tuition payment rests with the parent or guardian.

### **Method of Payment**

All tuition payments, as well as payments for any other miscellaneous fees, are to be made via Zelle ([npr.treasurer@flcoe.org](mailto:npr.treasurer@flcoe.org)) or check payments (Adventist Christian Academy). When making payments, the name of the student and the purpose of the payment must be included in the memo section.

### **Payment Obligation**

It is a binding contractual obligation on the part of parents to pay the entire tuition charge for the student as specified in the current Financial Contract regardless of attendance.

Should the responsible party fail to pay an outstanding balance within 10 days of the invoice due date, the student's enrollment status will be suspended until payment is received. Accounts more than 90 days overdue are considered delinquent and may be sent to the school's collection agency. The party responsible for the delinquent account shall be responsible for all fees and expenses of collections, including attorney's fees. No portion of fees paid will be refunded or canceled due to any subsequent absence, voluntary withdrawal, or forced dismissal of students.

### **Refunds**

Tuition accounts of students withdrawing from Adventist Christian Academy will be adjusted and tuition incurred will be returned on a weekly-prorated basis. Actual withdrawal dates will be the

effective dates used for refund calculations. Refunds and/or final accounting will be provided within 30 days of this date. Registration and Technology Fees are non-refundable after the first week of school.

## **Financial Assistance**

### **Step Up For Students Scholarships – FTC/FES/FES-UA**

We accept the Florida Tax Credit (FTC), Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES), and Family Empowerment Scholarship-Unique Abilities (FES-UA) programs. These scholarships are designed to provide families pursuing school choice, including those with unique abilities, with financial assistance for their child's education.

Parents are responsible for applying for and re-enrolling in these scholarship programs every year. To apply for these scholarships or to find more information, please visit [www.stepupforstudents.org](http://www.stepupforstudents.org).

### **Taxability of Scholarships and Aid**

Adventist Christian Academy is not responsible for any tax liability incurred due to the receipt of aid or scholarship.

### **Miscellaneous Charges**

Miscellaneous charges are not included in the Financial Contract and must be paid promptly.

### **Release of Transcripts/Diplomas**

Transcripts and diplomas will not be issued until account balances, including all miscellaneous charges, are paid in full.

### **Previous Unpaid Accounts**

Adventist Christian Academy reserves the right to deny admission to any student having an unpaid balance with this or any other school until the account is paid or satisfactory payment arrangements are made.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **Academic Approach**

At Adventist Christian Academy, our program is uniquely designed to provide success for each child. We offer a solid academic program where students are continually monitored for their progress and personalized goals are set and achieved. Our classes are taught by creative teams of teachers who work together to ensure student mastery and personal challenge.

By using the principle of blended learning, we ensure that all our students can progress toward unique learning goals that bring each one to the next level. Students are assessed on a regular basis to track their progress in achieving competency in a series of learning progressions that lead to mastery of both academic targets and relevant life skills, such as diligence, persistence, and responsibility.

Our innovative teachers work together, involving students in designing rigorous units that involve technological expertise, higher-level thinking, and meaningful application. We place a heavy emphasis on the arts, with practical, visual, and musical arts woven into Project-Based Learning Units where our students “create beauty and solve problems for God’s glory.”



## **Unique Abilities**

The Admissions Committee at Adventist Christian Academy makes acceptance decisions for students with mild and moderate unique abilities according to current class ratios, student, and family commitment to achieve goals, and demonstrated history of effort. The school places high emphasis on forming a partnership with the family in creating and executing a plan for student success. Academic testing, along with teachers' and parents' input, is used to determine students' academic level of performance. The information gathered results in a plan of action, identifying areas of need that Adventist Christian Academy staff and teachers can responsibly and ethically meet. Students and families are expected to execute their part in committing to the plan and signing all documents indicating ownership and agreement.

This plan remains dynamic as students meet and set new goals, with mastery of deficient skills being the primary focus. Students are given the time and attention they need to master the skills being taught in a comfortable setting, using their strengths to leverage progress.

## **Field Trips**

To help students become engaged citizens, teachers plan field trips each year to connect students with the greater Tampa Bay area. These trips provide opportunities for students to discover ways to give back to the community. Field trips are a required part of the curriculum and are considered regular school days and count as a school attendance requirement.

During the school year, parents are notified in advance of field trips with informational and permission forms sent to their homes. In the rare case that a parent does not want a child to attend, a note or phone call to the school should be made. When participating in field trips, students are to conduct themselves according to Adventist Christian Academy standards and policies.

## **Testing**

Adventist Christian Academy uses several formal testing measures to tailor our instruction and planning to help each child move forward from their baseline and meet with success.

### ***Measures of Academic Progress, K-12***

All students at Adventist Christian Academy are tested three times per year with Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). This computer adaptive assessment provides baseline data for planning instruction and provides students and their families with clear information on growth and performance in mathematics, reading, and writing. More information about MAP can be found here: <https://www.nwea.org>.

### ***WrAP, Grades 3-12***

The Writing Assessment Program is a benchmark assessment for students' current writing ability and is given in the Spring of each year. The WrAP test leads to specific goal setting and plans to improve student writing, including the use of WrITT, the *Writing Resources for Insight, Interpretation and Teaching Library*.

## **Textbooks/Resources**

Adventist Christian Academy Student Registration Fee provides the student with access to technology, digital, and hard copy resources needed for classwork. Damaged or lost items are charged to the student. These charges are to be paid before the report card is issued.

## **Student Records**

Parents or legal guardians have the right to review records maintained by Adventist Christian Academy for their children. Please call the office for an appointment. Student record information will not be released except 1) by written consent of parent or guardian; 2) when information is used, with parent consent, in the school directory; or 3) under circumstances as permitted by the Family Education and Privacy Act of 1974.

## **Transferring**

Students transferring to another school must:

1. Return all school property, including library books, textbooks, technology, and school-owned materials.
2. Complete financial responsibilities.
3. Arrange with the school office to transfer his/her records to the new school.

Upon completion of the preceding requirements, the student's cumulative record is forwarded to the new school upon written request from the school and with the parent's permission. Adventist Christian Academy reserves the right to withhold transcripts due to unpaid accounts.

## **Withdrawal**

Students who are enrolled in the regular program (VPK-8) shall not be withdrawn from school without prior notification to their parent(s) or legal guardian. The withdrawal of all students must be processed through the school office. To withdraw, prior written notification is needed to give time to secure progress or final grades from the teacher, turn in textbooks, and receive financial clearance from the treasurer. Records will not be released until these steps are completed and there is no outstanding balance on the student's family account. An exit interview is to be conducted by the principal or an assigned school board member. The student's cumulative record is forwarded to the new school upon written request from the school and with the parent's permission.

## **Financial Clearance**

In the event of any outstanding balance on the family account, no records for students under that family will be released until all financial obligations are settled. Records will be withheld until these steps are successfully completed and there is no remaining outstanding balance on the student's family account. This policy ensures a fair and equitable approach to financial matters while preserving the smooth administrative processes that contribute to the overall functioning of our school.

## **Graduation Requirements**

A student must satisfactorily complete the basic eighth-grade curriculum to be eligible for an eighth-grade diploma, with yearly courses in literacy, mathematics, social studies, science and

health, physical education, technology, music, the arts, and Bible.

A certificate of attendance may be issued to students on an IEP who are unable to satisfactorily complete the diploma requirements. Students who re-enroll in deficient courses and master the competencies may be issued a diploma following the completion of the eighth-grade year.

## **CURRICULUM**

### **Grades K-8 COURSE OFFERINGS**

The K-8 curriculum provides students with grace-filled lessons in *Biblical studies*, a life-long plan for *wellness and fitness*, and a strong mastery-based foundation in *reading, writing, and mathematics*. Additionally, students work on project-based, service-learning, integrated units in *writing, science, social studies, technology, industry, and the arts*. Project-based learning units integrate two or more subjects utilizing North American Division curriculum.

### **Bible**

The primary purpose of the Encounter Bible Curriculum is for our students to have solid, deep, and personal knowledge of the truths of the Bible; to respond to Christ's invitation to live in a lifelong, vibrant relationship with Him; and to be passionate about sharing their faith in serving the global community.

### **Health and Fitness**

#### *Grades K-2 Physical Education*

Students learn to perform qualities of movement, fundamental locomotor and non-locomotor, skills, and manipulation of objects with a partner. Classes lead to the development of competency in a variety of fitness exercises with an emphasis on safety for self and others.

#### *Grades 3-8 Physical Education*

Students learn the correct techniques for manipulating objects with accuracy and speed; evaluate their own performance to develop and improve skills during a variety of team activities; and are introduced to basic fitness concepts, performing fitness development exercises, and setting goals for lifetime health.

### **Literacy**

A rigorous foundation in reading and writing is provided, with students participating in whole class and small group instruction to achieve mastery and continually set and progress toward individualized goals. Formal and informal assessments are regularly conducted to determine student progress in phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. Teachers use learning progressions aligned with the common core reading and writing standards to move students along a continuum of improvement and provide direct instruction, supplementing with digital resources to reinforce concepts at the point of need. Students learn to

think critically as they read relevant text and produce authentic communication for real-world audiences, writing opinion *pieces* supported with reasons and information, conveying information clearly through *informative/explanatory writing*, and creating *narratives* to develop experiences and events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

## **Mathematics**

Adventist Christian Academy uses a blended approach to teaching mathematics to ensure student success. This includes whole and small group instruction and digital applications adapted to meet each student's needs and capabilities. Students are encouraged to be creative problem solvers and flexible thinkers and are challenged to work through problems on their own, fostering independence, persistence, confidence, and positive feelings about math.

Students in Grades K-8 focus on strategies, concepts, and applications in five critical areas: Numbers and Operations; Operations and Algebraic Thinking; Measurement; Geometry; and Data, analysis, statistics, and probability.

## **Science**

The science curriculum at Adventist Christian Academy is designed to help students identify Christian principles and values in correlation with science and to: recognize God's power as Designer, Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer in the universe; acknowledge God as the Author of all scientific principles and laws regardless of man's interpretation; develop stewardship and service attitudes toward health, life, and earth's environment; apply Biblical principles of Christian morality, integrity, and ethical behavior to all aspects of life; gain Christian perspectives on scientific issues.

## **Social Studies**

The social studies curriculum in K-8 traces historical and social events from a Christian worldview, immersing students in project-based learning units that lead them to address real-world problems related to the following overarching themes: Culture; Time, Continuity and Change; People, Places, and Environments; Individual Development and Identity; Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; Power, Authority, and Governance; Production, Distribution, and Consumption; Science, Technology, and Society; Global Connections; and Civic Ideals and Practices.

## **Technology**

Technology is used in all grades as a tool to master and demonstrate learning. Students in grades K-2 use devices primarily for math and reading rotations to enable a personalized, blended method of instruction and reinforcement. In these early grades, the students are introduced to the basics of keyboarding and mouse usage. Students in grades 3-8 are provided with a computer for use throughout their learning experience. Primary uses of technology are for collaborative project and document creation, submission, and presentation. Students also learn skills in internet usage, cloud storage, emailing, and basic research methods. The North American Division Keyboarding and Computer Education Standards are used for all grades.

## **Visual Arts/Music/Drama**

Students use varied media as they explore artistic forms of expression to bring life, meaning, and personality into real-world projects. Students experience and explore by singing, playing, moving, and listening while exploring musical concepts.

## **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

### **Mandatory Parent Volunteer Hours**

At Adventist Christian Academy, we value the involvement and assistance of our parents. We encourage all parents/guardians to take an active role to ensure the success of our school. We understand, however, that everyone has busy schedules. We, therefore, are asking for only **10 hours of volunteer service per year for each family unit**. This includes any help from an adult family member for each student. We have a volunteer sign-in sheet in our lobby and ask that each family track their hours on this document.

### **Suggested volunteer activities to support the school include:**

- Office support
- Refilling five-gallon water containers
- Fundraising activities
- Field trip assistance and supervision
- Special events assistance
- Cleaning the school
- Take-home assignments
- Serving as room parents to help with activities
- Sharing your occupational skills with classes
- Providing refreshments for school events
- Volunteer at work bee days
- An active member of our Home and School Association
- Outdoor Education Chaperone

### **Home & School Association**

The Home & School Association provides a forum for parents, teachers, and community members to support Adventist Christian Academy students and enrich our community. HAS-sponsored events include parent education programs, social events, community outreach and fund-raising activities.

## **SAFETY**

### **Campus Safety**

At Adventist Christian Academy, student safety is paramount. We believe that safety begins with a culture of respect, open and honest communication, and trust among all parties. The following measures and policies are in place to keep our campus safe:

- Exterior doors to all buildings remain locked.
- Learning communities are not accessible to the general public. All visitors must check with the administration before entering the rest of the campus.
- A committee meets regularly to review policies and procedures.
- A perimeter fence surrounds the Adventist Christian Academy grounds.
- Law enforcement provides input and support.
- All activities on campus are supervised by a teacher or an aide.
- Fire, tornado, and lockdown drills are held regularly.
- Policies and procedures are constantly updated and practiced with staff and students to help prepare for unforeseen emergencies.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### ***Fire***

All fires should be reported immediately to a faculty/staff member. Students will be trained in proper fire evacuation procedures through drills during the school year. In general, students and staff will exit and assemble in accordance with instructions posted in each building, classroom, and activity area. All personnel should remain in the area designated until the clear signal is given. Record will be taken.

### ***Inclement Weather***

In case of severe weather, Adventist Christian Academy families are requested to listen to local news agencies for announcements relative to school closings or delayed openings, or look for a Parent Alert (email, text, and/or phone call) for such announcements. Parents must always make decisions they feel are in the best interests of their child's safety.

Regardless of whether Adventist Christian Academy is officially open or closed due to inclement weather, if parents feel conditions are unsafe for students to travel to school, they are encouraged to keep them at home. Students will not be penalized if parents keep them at home for safety reasons.

Adventist Christian Academy will follow the closing decisions of the Pasco County School District.

### ***Information (Emergency) Notification***

Adventist Christian Academy utilizes the app - BLOOMZ, which serves as a means of connecting with families during emergencies or for sharing vital updates within the classrooms. This approach involves utilizing the contact details submitted during the admissions process. The BLOOMZ app will make efforts to communicate through the email address or cell phone number provided during registration.

### ***Accidents***

All accidents should be reported immediately to a faculty/staff member. Administration will be informed, the parents will be notified, and a student insurance report and an accident report will be filed. Adventist Christian Academy students are covered by an accident insurance policy which supplements a family's personal coverage as secondary coverage in the event of a student accident on campus or at school events. Parents should contact the office for the necessary claim forms in

the event of an accident at school.

### **Child Abuse Reporting Policy**

As mandated by federal and state law, Adventist Christian Academy administrators, teachers, and staff members who have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect will make an oral report immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline. This policy is strictly enforced. A copy of the law is available in the Administration office.

## **HEALTH**

### **Immunizations**

As required by Florida State law, all Adventist Christian Academy students must have on file at the beginning of each school year an updated record of immunizations (form DH 680) signed by a physician. Florida law requires students entering grades K-12 to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTAP), polio (IPV), measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), hepatitis B (Hep B), and chickenpox (varicella) or provide the date of chickenpox outbreak. By seventh grade, students are also required to have a tetanus-diphtheria (TDAP) booster. Further information on school immunization requirements may be found the Fl. Dept. of Health's website, [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).

For parents who choose not to have their children vaccinated for medical reasons, Adventist Christian Academy may accept a temporary or permanent medical exemption if listed on form DH 680 and signed by a doctor. Students must have proof of immunization or exemption certificates PRIOR to enrollment.

### **Physical Examination**

All students are required to have on file at Adventist Christian Academy a completed school entry health exam (form DH 3040) signed by their doctor.

### **Health Insurance**

Adventist Christian Academy encourages all students to have health insurance.

### **Illness at School**

The teacher has the prerogative to dismiss any student who may have an illness or contagious condition. A physician's written statement may be required upon return to school. A child with a fever should remain at home until the child has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Parents are asked not to give their child a fever reducer and then send them to school. If a student has a fever at school, the parents will be called to pick up their child from school. If the student receives antibiotics for a contagious illness, the student must remain home until the child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours or longer as specified by the physician. If the student has vomited due to illness, s/he is asked to stay home for 24 hours from the time of vomiting.

Students who become ill during the school day will be required to return home. In case of a medical emergency, the school will notify parents, and will make every effort to do so before students are taken to the nearest emergency room in accordance with the medical release form on file. In all

cases, parents are responsible for all expenses incurred that are not covered under a school-related incident.

***COVID-19 Exposure and Positive Case Protocol:***

Our school strictly adheres to CDC guidelines for handling exposure to or positive cases of COVID-19. Safety and wellness for all students is our top priority, and we are committed to following the recommended procedures to ensure a secure learning environment. For more information on CDC guidelines, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

***Activity restrictions***

If at any time there are activity restrictions or modifications in your child's care for medical reasons, please notify your child's teacher and provide the school with a copy of the physician's recommendations.

***Medication***

A Consent for Treatment and Medication form is signed at the beginning of the school year providing authorization for the school to dispense nonprescription, over-the-counter medicine such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, etc. School personnel are not permitted by law to give any medications unless written permission is received.

No student shall receive any medications without written parental explanation and instructions for use. Students are expressly forbidden from providing medication of any kind to another student. If parents send non-prescription medication to school for their child, the medication must be left with the school's teacher.

***Head Lice***

Head Lice (*Pediculosis Capitis*) occasionally occurs in our community. Lice are highly communicable. If all parents routinely check their children and report an outbreak, the risk of spreading can be minimized, and the pest can be controlled. If lice are noticed or nits are found in the hair, the child is not to come to school until treated and all nits are removed. The child must be cleared by the school office for re-admittance to school. The health department advises that bedding, articles of clothing, and play areas be treated.

Lice shampoo is to be used and the child retreated 7-10 days later. See your county health department for further instructions. Most importantly, the child cannot be readmitted to school until lice are gone and all nits removed.



## **CAMPUS OPERATIONS**

### **Lunch**

Students must bring their lunches Monday through Friday. We encourage healthy foods to be included in lunches. We encourage fruits, nuts, whole grains, and vegetables. A good breakfast is recommended as well. As a practical matter, soda, caffeinated beverages, pork products, or shellfish are discouraged. **Due to allergies - NO trading or sharing of lunches will be allowed.**

### **Birthday Treats**

We love celebrating your child's special day with them. To ensure a healthy and inclusive environment for all students, we kindly request that birthday treats brought to school adhere to our policy:

**Fruit Celebration:** We encourage you to bring fruit or 100% fruit juices as a birthday treat. Fresh fruit or fruit cups are good options that promote a nutritious celebration.

**Non-Food Alternatives:** In addition to fruit, we welcome non-food alternatives for birthday celebrations. Consider options such as pencils, stickers, or bookmarks that your child's classmates can enjoy without concerns about allergies or dietary restrictions.

We kindly ask that parents refrain from bringing cupcakes, candy, or other sugary treats to school as part of birthday celebrations. By choosing to celebrate with these healthier alternatives and educational supplies, we foster a positive atmosphere that supports our students' well-being and academic growth. Thank you for your cooperation in promoting a balanced and enjoyable birthday celebration experience for everyone at ACA.

### **After Care**

Our school currently does *not* provide a formalized after-care program. However, arrangements for temporary or specific needs can be made in consultation with the principal. As offering such arrangements involves our staff staying beyond regular hours, there are associated fees as outlined below:

#### ***Rate:***

After-Care is billed at \$2.50 for every 15 minutes (per child) beginning at 3:15 Monday – Thursday based on our school academic calendar.

After Care begins 15 minutes after dismissal at 3:15 p.m. and ends at 4:15 p.m. Monday-Thursday and until 3:15 pm on Fridays. There is a late pick-up fee of \$1 per minute after 4:15 pm (after 3:15 pm on Fridays). This service **MUST** be arranged prior to ensure there will be a staff member available.

No after-school care will be available on half-day dismissals. Please be advised if the fee remains unpaid, your child will not be permitted to attend after-school care until the bill is settled. We appreciate your understanding and prompt attention to these financial matters.

## **School Arrival and Dismissal**

School hours are 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 8:00 am to 2:00 on Friday.

The school doors open at 7:45 am. We strongly recommend that parents bring their students between 7:45 am and 7:55 am to facilitate a smooth transition and ensure that children can start their day promptly at 8:00 am. This timing allows for an effective adjustment period and ensures a timely start to the school day.

Dismissal takes place at 3:00 pm. During orientation, please provide information about the student's designated mode of transportation and the authorized individuals permitted to pick up the child. If any changes to this information occur, parents are responsible for notifying the principal or teacher promptly. This procedure ensures a secure and organized dismissal process.

## **Attendance and Tardies Policy:**

### **Tardies**

Students are expected to be in their designated seats and prepared for class by 8:00 am. To ensure a seamless transition from drop-off to classroom readiness, we kindly ask that you bring your child between 7:45 am and 7:55 am. If your child arrives after 8:00 am, please accompany them to sign them in. Consistent unexcused tardiness, amounting to more than **two instances each month**, will lead to a parent-principal meeting. Following two disciplinary interventions, the school board will assess the situation and exercise its discretion to determine whether the student should be placed on probation. If such behavior persists, the school board will further evaluate the situation, and continued violation of the policy may lead to the dismissal of the student's enrollment.

### **Absences:**

Standard practice dictates that a student may be absent from or tardy to school solely due to illness, a medical appointment, or attendance at a relative's funeral. A written excuse from a parent or guardian is mandatory for each absence, accompanied by a detailed reason. If work is not satisfactorily made up, a student absent for more than 20 percent of school days (including excused absences) in any grading period may receive an "F" grade for that period.

### **Excused Absences:**

Work missed during excused absences can be completed without a grade penalty. Students are granted one day (from the day of return) for each day of absence to make up assignments. To validate an excused absence, students should provide a note from home explaining the reason. In the event of illness or a medical appointment, a doctor's note is preferred.

### **Pre-Arranged Absences:**

For planned family trips, church outings, or other extended absences, parents must inform their child's teacher at least two (2) days ahead of the scheduled absence to obtain an excused absence. Work can be made up without a grade penalty. Students have one day (from their return) for each absence day to complete assignments. Valid excuses for school absence encompass student illness, family bereavement, and family trips.

**Truancy:**

Adherence to accurate and prompt reporting of irregular attendance and truancy is mandated by law. Florida law identifies a "habitual truant" as a student with 15 or more unexcused absences within 90 calendar days, regardless of parental consent or knowledge. Habitual truants are subject to compulsory school attendance regulations.

**Step Up:**

We kindly remind parents that the Step Up Scholarship program will review our attendance and tardiness policy to ensure its alignment. It's important to adhere to these guidelines to maintain eligibility for the scholarship.

**Early Student Pick Up**

Parents picking up students during school hours must come in to sign their child out. Except in emergencies, students leaving school early should bring a parent's written note stating the reason for early departure and present it to the teacher before the school day begins. We strongly encourage scheduling medical and dental appointments after school hours to avoid early dismissals whenever possible.

**School Visitation Procedure**

Adventist Christian Academy welcomes and encourages parents and other adults to visit our classrooms by appointment. Non-students may visit the school with prior teacher approval. All visitors must check in at the school office. Parents may attend their child's activities and observe progress throughout the year when arranged by appointment. Please allow teachers and students the first four weeks of school before visiting the classroom.

**DRESS CODE GUIDELINES**

The school's dress code serves the purpose of fostering tidiness, discipline, a shared school identity, and creating a learning environment that isn't centered around clothing choices. Students are required to adhere to standard guidelines of cleanliness and neatness in their attire. Non-compliance with the dress code will result in the loss of the Friday dress-down privilege at the discretion of the principal.

**Personal Hygiene**

Students are expected to arrive at school in a clean state, which encompasses maintaining cleanliness of their bodies, fingernails, teeth, and hair. As students progress in maturity, they are encouraged to be mindful of body odors and to use deodorant as needed. All clothing and footwear should be both clean and properly maintained.

**Uniforms:**

Polo shirts and hoodies:  
Navy Blue, Light Blue, or Sports Gray.

### Bottom Wear:

Acceptable choices include: khaki slacks, jumpers, skirts, skorts, and knee-length shorts. Hem length should not exceed that of a standard credit card held vertically from the knee.

Please note that the academy facilitates the ordering of polos and hoodies. Parents are responsible for providing accurate sizing information for the orders. In case of incorrect sizing, parents are accountable for purchasing any additional required uniforms. Families are responsible for purchasing khaki or navy bottoms.

### Footwear:

Students may wear either casual or athletic shoes. However, sandals, open-backed shoes, western or fashion boots, clogs, heels, and open-toed shoes are not permitted. Sneakers are required for PE days. Socks should be just above the ankle or below, and they must be in the colors of navy, white, black, or gray.

### “Dress Down” Days:

On days when students are allowed to have a uniform-free day, certain guidelines must be followed. Students have the freedom to choose their attire, but the following limitations apply:

- Halter tops, tank tops, sleeveless tops, pajama or flannel bottom pants, biker shorts, torn clothing, spandex, garments with inappropriate language, or apparel that promotes drinking, drugs, or smoking are not permitted.
- Clothing featuring any lettering across the back of shorts, skirts, or pants is prohibited.
- Short crop tops, which expose the midriff when arms are raised, are not allowed.
- Shorts must not be shorter than a vertical credit card length, falling above the top of the knee.
- Skirts and dresses must adhere to the same length criteria as shorts.
- Head coverings are not allowed inside the building, with the exception of those worn for religious reasons.
- Open-toed shoes and sandals are not permitted.
- Capris and jeans are acceptable on dress-down days, as long as they are not tight or categorized as "skinny jeans."
- Leggings are permissible only when worn as tights beneath a skirt, tunic-style shirt, or long sweater. The top must extend to the longest fingertip.
- Shirts with characters must feature images that would be appropriate to show on screen at school. If unsure, it's advisable to avoid wearing items that might not meet the dress code.
- All students have the option to retain the school uniform on free dress days.

### Jewelry

Jewelry is excluded from our dress code for the following reasons:

**Safety:** Jewelry can pose a safety risk, especially during activities on the playground or in physical education classes.

**Avoiding Loss:** Jewelry items, due to their size and nature, can easily become lost or misplaced.

**Uniform Cohesion:** Our uniform policy is designed to foster a sense of unity and equality among students. At ACA, we want to ensure that every student is on equal footing in terms of appearance, and this helps promote a cohesive school environment.

### **Nail/Hair Policy**

At ACA, we believe in fostering an environment that promotes cleanliness, safety, and a respectful appearance. To ensure these standards are met, we have established the following nail care policy:

**Clean and Neat Nails:** Students are expected to maintain clean and well-groomed nails. Regular handwashing and proper nail hygiene are essential to prevent the spread of germs and maintain a hygienic environment within the school premises.

**Length Restrictions:** For safety reasons, we require that nails be kept at a reasonable and safe length. Excessively long nails can pose risks to both the individual student and those around them, especially during activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and playground time.

**Acrylic Nails:** We do not allow students to wear acrylic nails. These artificial enhancements can be a potential hazard and can lead to unnecessary distractions in the learning environment.

**Nail Polish Guidelines:** Nail polish is allowed, but students must adhere to a modest approach. Bright or distracting nail colors are not permitted. Nail polish should be either clear or in light shades of pink, ensuring that it maintains a polished and understated appearance.

#### **Hair Care:**

To uphold a tidy and groomed appearance, students are required to keep their hair clean and well-maintained. Unnatural hair dye or highlights are not allowed. If students choose to dye their hair, they must use natural hair dyes that replicate naturally occurring colors.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

The following are prohibited during school hours or school functions:

Tattoos (including henna).

Piercings.

Writings on the skin with a pen, marker, etc.

Hair scrunchies worn on the wrist.

### **FRIDAY – School Spirit Days**

On Fridays, students are encouraged to show their school spirit by wearing an issued ACA T-shirt, paired with non-uniform bottoms that adhere to the dress code guidelines. Students are permitted to wear wristbands, provided they convey messages aligned with biblical values.

### **Outerwear Garments**

The required school attire does not prohibit students from wearing coats, jackets, sweaters, or other appropriate outer garments when they are outdoors. These garments should be consistent with the dress code. Only approved sweatshirts with our school logo may be worn indoors over the uniform shirt. As an alternative to colder weather, students have the option to wear a plain, short, or long-sleeved white, black, or gray shirt underneath their uniform shirt. The undershirt should not feature any writings or designs.

**If uniform guidelines are violated, the student's parent/guardian will be called to bring appropriate attire on the first offense, and the student will receive a written warning. If the student persists in non-compliance with the uniform/attire guidelines and standards, further disciplinary action, at the principal's discretion, will be taken. This may encompass various consequences, including the potential loss of dress-down privileges. The specific measures will be determined based on the severity and frequency of the violation.**

### **Respect of Property**

Each student is expected to respect the property of the school, school staff, and other students. A student will be required to pay damages to school grounds, personal property of staff, and personal property of another student.

The school does not assume responsibility for personal belongings such as books, clothing, money, or other personal property left by anyone on the school grounds or in the school buildings. Students are instructed to take responsibility for their property and not to leave personal possessions unattended. Clothing left unclaimed will be donated to charity.

## **Student Behavior**

### **Behavior Standards**

At Adventist Christian Academy, our primary goal for the prevention of all discipline problems is the development of good relationships with our students and the creation of classrooms that are need-fulfilling for students. Our Vision and Mission Statement provide the guiding rule for our entire school community. If we all think deeply, choose wisely, create beauty, and solve problems for God's glory, we will live happier, more fulfilled lives adding joy and meaning to our world.

Thinking deeply and choosing wisely is a philosophy that we seek to instill in our students for life. We utilize emotional intelligence tools and skills and emphasize the use of logical consequences and repair of harm caused. At Adventist Christian Academy, students are led to understand that all choices are linked with consequences--both positive and negative. Our goal is not to coerce or manipulate behavior, through rewards and punishment, but to guide students to become effective self-managers. A student who is distracting others may ultimately be asked to leave the classroom, but only until he/she is able to return and self-manage well.

Serious misconduct or misdemeanors impact our entire campus and will affect a student's standing regarding his or her enrollment status at Adventist Christian Academy.

There are some practices that will not be permitted in order to keep our campus a safe and nurturing place for all students. Adventist Christian Academy does not knowingly receive or retain students who persistently indulge in these practices. Offenses on any of the following fundamental points disrupt the harmony of the campus and will make the student subject to dismissal from school:

- Continual or willful disrespect, disobedience, or non-cooperation with administration, staff, or teachers.
- Disseminating ideas or displaying attitudes that undermine the philosophy, ideals, or objectives of Adventist Christian Academy.
- Using profane language, indulging in lewd conduct or suggestions, or possessing or displaying obscene literature or pictures.
- Using language tactics or relational behaviors that by their nature are excessively intimidating, accusatory, cruel, or emotionally abusive and disruptive to either the Christian atmosphere

desired for this campus or the normal academic functions and co-curricular activities.

- Being dishonest, including theft, willful deception regarding violation of school regulations, cheating on examinations or class work or any phase of school or business.
- Using illegal substances, narcotics, tobacco, or alcoholic beverages in any form or having them in one's possession.
- Participating in gambling.
- Willful destruction of any school property or any vandalism.
- Possession of weapons of any type.
- Involvement in physical fighting or threats of violent behavior.
- Conspiring or participating in any act that injures, degrades, or disgraces Adventist Christian Academy, a fellow student or faculty member.
- Failure to participate fully in the academic program of the school or habitual failure to do assignments and/or projects.
- Engaging in inappropriate behavior toward the opposite or same sex as defined in the following sexual harassment section.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Students are expected to submit their own work. Students should not violate Adventist Christian Academy's Code of Conduct and shall avoid situations that would compromise academic dishonesty. Those who engage in academic dishonesty diminish the quality and value of their education and bring discredit to the school community. Students involved in cheating, plagiarizing, fabrication, multiple submissions, abuse of academic materials, deception, misrepresentations, electronic dishonesty, and other types of academic dishonesty, including production of materials for other students, are subject to a failing grade for that assignment and further disciplinary action as appropriate for the incident.

## **Consequences**

### ***Student Suspension***

Adventist Christian Academy administration, in consultation with the faculty, may elect to suspend a student from the school who commits a serious, overt act that does not uphold our Core Values and puts the safety, well-being or positive spirit of the campus at risk. The suspension will be effective until the parents appear at the school to discuss the conditions for readmission. The suspension period will not ordinarily exceed three school days and the administration will notify the school board chair of the suspension.

Students who demonstrate any of the behaviors above are negatively impacting the entire campus and cannot remain at Adventist Christian Academy. The school board is the final authority in the dismissal or expulsion of a student upon the recommendation of the administration.

## **Harassment**

Adventist Christian Academy is committed to providing a school environment free from student harassment whether it be bullying, sexual, or racial. Incidents of harassment should be reported to administration and appropriate action will be taken.

### ***Bullying***

Three elements that may be present to qualify behavior as bullying and harassment are:

- The intention of the bully is to hurt or humiliate the victim.
- There is a difference in power between the bully and the victim, whether that power difference is height, weight, athletic ability, socioeconomic status, etc.
- The act of hurt and humiliation, on the part of the bully, is repeated.

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Adventist Christian Academy values the right of all students to work and study in an environment free of sexual harassment. Such behavior demeans human dignity, erodes morals, and runs counter to the Christian mission and principles on which this school operates.

In addition to being in violation of Adventist Christian Academy policy, sexual harassment constitutes illegal education discrimination under Federal and state statutes, and the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Title IX of the Education Reform Act Amendment of 1972.

Adventist Christian Academy will not tolerate acts of sexual harassment, nor will it tolerate retaliatory behavior in response to a student's complaint of harassment. In like manner, false claims of sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Such actions will result in a timely review, and, if warranted, disciplinary action.

***Definition of Sexual Harassment:*** Any verbal or written behavior, physical touch or gesture, teasing, jesting, criticizing, belittling, regardless of intention, which is expressed against the wishes of the recipient.

This offense may involve:

- touching, grabbing
- sexual remarks, terms, suggestions, or requests
- pornographic pictures, stories, obscene gestures
- dirty or suggestive jokes
- offensive display of sexual objects
- staring, stalking
- embarrassing "practical" jokes or pranks that are sexual in intent or design
- unwanted flirting
- comments about the body

### ***Racial Harassment***

Adventist Christian Academy also values the right of all students to work and study in an environment free of racial harassment. Such behavior demeans human dignity, erodes morals, and runs counter to the Christian mission and principles on which this school operates.

Adventist Christian Academy will not tolerate acts of racial harassment, nor will it tolerate retaliatory behavior in response to a student's complaint of harassment. In like manner, false claims of racial harassment will not be tolerated. Such actions will result in a timely review, and, if warranted, disciplinary action.

***Definition of Racial Harassment:*** Verbal, nonverbal, graphic, written, or physical conduct that



belittles or shows hostility or aversion toward any student based upon race, which may interfere with a student's academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, uncomfortable, or offensive school environment.

Racial harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following conduct which is based upon race:

- Epithets (name-calling) and slurs.
- Negative stereotyping.
- Threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts.
- Written or graphic material that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.
- Jokes or comments that are racially insensitive.

### **Public Displays of Affection**

We discourage public displays of affection on the campus of Adventist Christian Academy. If students show more public affection than is deemed appropriate, the administration will determine appropriate actions and next steps.

### **Inspection/Search Policy**

For the safety of everyone on our campus, Adventist Christian Academy reserves the right to conduct inspections and searches of students' persons or personal property.

Searches may include, but are not limited to, students' clothing, purses, backpacks, parcels or bags, lunch boxes, personal vehicles, phones, laptops, tablets, other personal electronic devices, social media, and other personal property. A search of students and their clothing will be conducted by a person of the same gender as the student being searched. For security purposes, a second school official will be present during any search or inspection. By attending Adventist Christian Academy, students (and their parents/guardians) consent to inspections and searches. Students who refuse to cooperate with a search or inspection may be suspended or expelled to keep our campus safe. The Inspection/Search Policy applies to any Adventist Christian Academy sponsored event, whether on- or off- campus, during or outside of regular school hours.

### **Substance Abuse and Testing Policy**

Adventist Christian Academy prohibits the use, possession, transfer, sale, purchase, or offer of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco products (including electronic cigarettes) on Adventist Christian Academy property or while participating in Adventist Christian Academy-sponsored activities. For the purpose of this policy, Adventist Christian Academy property includes all properties and buildings, including parking areas, grounds, Adventist Christian Academy vehicles, and all on- and off-campus locations where students are participating in Adventist Christian Academy-sponsored activities. Students who fail to comply with these requirements are subject to suspension or expulsion from school.

Illegal drugs include all controlled substances prohibited by state or federal law, synthetic compounds designed to mimic the effect of controlled substances, prescription drugs used inconsistently with the prescription, and any substance used in a manner inconsistent with its labeling to "get high" or create a similar physiological or emotional response.

### ***Use of Non-Prescription Medication and Prescription Drugs***

The normal use of non-prescription medications and the legal use of prescription drugs, as ordered

by a licensed physician, is not prohibited by Adventist Christian Academy. However, students who bring such items onto Adventist Christian Academy property are required to leave them in the office where they must take the medications.

Adventist Christian Academy may require students and their parents or guardians to provide proof of a current drug prescription.

### ***Parental/Guardian and Guest Responsibility***

For the welfare of our students and the staff, as well as to promote a drug-free environment, the entire Adventist Christian Academy community, including parents and guests, should not be in possession or under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs during any activity on the Adventist Christian Academy campus or at any Adventist Christian Academy-sponsored event held at another location.

### **Suggestions and Constructive Feedback**

We view parents and students as partners in education. Adventist Christian Academy staff is open to ideas that will help us improve Adventist Christian Academy. All suggestions and feedback should be of a positive, constructive nature to our school's values.

Parents are always welcome to call the school to schedule an appointment to speak with a teacher or principal. Staff members are open to the opinions of students who would like to contribute in a positive way. Students may approach appropriate staff members directly and offer suggestions. If the suggestion cannot be dealt with at that level, the staff member will relay the suggestion to school administration. Students and parents are welcome to submit a suggestion in writing to the school administration, and their suggestions will be given proper consideration.

### **Grievance Procedure (Matthew 18:15-17)**

In the case of a grievance regarding school business, please adhere to the following procedure.

1. In the case of a concern, question or complaint about a specific classroom or school situation, speak directly to the teacher or staff member involved.
2. If dissatisfied with the outcome of the first step, speak with the school administration. A parent-teacher-administrator conference may be arranged by the school administration to discuss the issue more fully to help arrive at a feasible and fair resolution to the problem.
3. If dissatisfied with the outcome of step 2, a parent or guardian may request a direct appeal to the School Board.

### **Student Conflict Resolution**

Adventist Christian Academy operates under the principle of non-violence for the resolution of all conflicts. All disputes and conflicts between students should be resolved by verbal negotiations in an atmosphere of trust and goodwill. Students are encouraged to utilize a teacher for assistance in resolving conflicts. At ACA, students are educated in the "I Message" Model, equipping them with effective communication tools to navigate situations where they need to express themselves.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Technology Acceptable Use Policy**

Students who are provided with access to computer resources and to the communication network of Adventist Christian Academy assume responsibility for using the technology appropriately and in compliance with the following policies and procedures. This policy applies to all information resources and electronic devices used on the campus, whether individually controlled or shared, stand-alone, or networked, and whether owned by the school or the student and/or parent. Adventist Christian Academy expects students to be careful, honest, responsible, and civil in the use of computers, networks and all other electronic devices.

### **Personal Electronic Devices**

Adventist Christian Academy provides students with all essential electronic devices needed for the successful completion of academic tasks on campus, eliminating the need for additional personal devices. To ensure optimal safety and uniformity, we strictly prohibit the use of personal cell phones on campus. This measure is in place to safeguard against situations where students might inadvertently share content or engage in activities that could conflict with the preferences of other parents. Students are not allowed to use their cell phones during school hours. Students are required to be off campus when using their cell phones. Bringing cell phones onto the premises is at their own risk, as there is no secure storage available for them.

Additionally, if students do bring their cell phones to school, they must hand them over to the principal upon arrival. The phones will be returned at the end of the day. Students are not allowed to keep their cell phones in their backpacks or on their person during school hours. This approach guarantees a secure environment and consistency throughout the campus.

### **Use of Computer Resources**

The use of Adventist Christian Academy computers and computer resources and the use of the internet link through the Adventist Christian Academy technology, including email, is the use of Adventist Christian Academy property. Adventist Christian Academy computers and computer resources can only be used in compliance with Adventist Christian Academy policy and procedures. The use of Adventist Christian Academy computer resources, including email, should be primarily for purposes related to Adventist Christian Academy's mission of education, research, and public service. Students should use the Adventist Christian Academy computer resources for purposes related to their studies, their instruction, and other Adventist Christian Academy-sanctioned activities. Students will abide by the general rules of network etiquette as instructed by this policy or by any teacher or administrator. All Adventist Christian Academy computers, data, technology, and other computer resources are the property of Adventist Christian Academy. Adventist Christian Academy reserves the right to log into, intercept, retrieve from data archives, and/or read the entire content of any electronic message, document, telephonic, telefax or voice mail communication transmitted to/from or stored in any Adventist Christian Academy computer to the maximum extent permitted by law, including communications and computer data that have been deleted by users

## **Electronic Communication**

Electronic correspondence on the Adventist Christian Academy network or during school hours on a personal network is to be used for educational and administrative purposes only. The content of electronic messages, documents, and/or images must conform to Adventist Christian Academy's ethical and educational standards. Language used in messages must be appropriate. The use of profanity, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and any other inflammatory language in any communication is prohibited. Messages must not misrepresent the identity of the sender and should not be sent as chain letters or broadcast indiscriminately to large numbers of individuals. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students during school hours are not private and may be monitored at any time by designated Adventist Christian Academy staff to ensure appropriate use.

If a student receives any inappropriate or offensive electronic communication(s), the student shall refrain from forwarding the communication(s) to others and notify his or her teacher and/or administrator immediately regarding the communication.

In addition, any electronic communication sent by or to an Adventist Christian Academy student, teacher and/or administrator which is contrary to Adventist Christian Academy's ethical and educational standards is strictly prohibited, regardless of whether the communication is sent on an Adventist Christian Academy-owned or privately-owned device. If an inappropriate communication is sent or received by an Adventist Christian Academy student, teacher and /or administrator which is contrary to the Adventist Christian Academy's ethical and educational standards, including, but not limited to, any communication(s) which includes the use of profanity, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, derogatory epithets, innuendo, sexual, threatening or abusive language, or and any other inflammatory language, Adventist Christian Academy shall have the right to inspect any electronic device and the entire contents of the device, no matter if the device is on or off school property.

## **Security and Confidentiality**

Adventist Christian Academy shall implement, monitor, and evaluate electronic media resources for instructional and administrative purposes, including ensuring the appropriate and proper use of those resources. However, Adventist Christian Academy does not guarantee the security, accuracy, quality, or confidentiality of data accessed, prepared, stored, transmitted, or otherwise developed through Adventist Christian Academy's computers. Adventist Christian Academy will not be responsible for any damages suffered as a result of an individual's use of the Adventist Christian Academy's computer system, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by Adventist Christian Academy's negligence or any errors or omissions.

Information prepared, stored, transmitted, or otherwise developed through the use of Adventist Christian Academy computers, including email transmissions, shall not be considered private. Adventist Christian Academy may approve access to individual files or activity logs at any time. In addition, students' computer files may not be kept confidential from parents or legal guardians.

## **User Responsibilities**

1. Each individual assumes personal responsibility for the use of his or her computer user account and is responsible for maintaining the security of his or her user account. A user is prohibited from disclosing his or her computer use password to anyone else and from otherwise making Adventist Christian Academy's computer or network resources available to unauthorized individuals, including family and friends. An individual's possession or collection of passwords, personal identification numbers (PINs), private digital certificates, or other secure identification information belonging to another user is prohibited. Unauthorized use of the user account of others is prohibited.
2. Students shall not deliberately use the computer to annoy or harass others with unacceptable language, images, or threats. Students shall not deliberately access any unacceptable, obscene, or objectionable information, Internet sites, language, or images. If such information is accessed accidentally, students must notify an Adventist Christian Academy staff member immediately. However, Adventist Christian Academy, cannot completely protect students from accessing inappropriate materials and specifically denies any responsibility for a student accessing any inappropriate, offensive, illegal, or obscene sites.
3. Use of the internet should be for academic purposes as directed by a teacher and/or administrator. Students shall not reveal personal information over the internet about themselves or anyone else without prior authorization from an Adventist Christian Academy staff member. Students shall not arrange a meeting with anyone met online. Students shall not enter any internet chat rooms, unless authorized by an Adventist Christian Academy staff member for supervised educational purposes. Any inappropriate use of the internet should be reported to an administrator.
4. Transmission of any material in violation of federal or state regulation is prohibited. Students shall not violate copyright laws or plagiarize the work of another. Adventist Christian Academy shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic communication resources, violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users.
5. Use of any Adventist Christian Academy computer or network for commercial or political purposes, without explicit authorization, is a violation of these terms and conditions of use.
6. Users are prohibited from installing, storing, or using unlicensed or illegal copies of software on Adventist Christian Academy computers. Transmission of such software over Adventist Christian Academy's network is prohibited. Adventist Christian Academy teacher and/or administrators are authorized to install or uninstall software on the Adventist Christian Academy's computers.
7. Users may use only the computing resources for which they are authorized and only for the purposes specified when their user accounts were issued or when permission to use the computing resources was granted.
8. The introduction of data or programs which in some way endangers computing resources or the information of other users (e.g., a computer worm, virus, or other destructive program), or which infringes upon the rights of other Adventist Christian Academy computer users (e.g.,

- inappropriate, obscene, pornographic, bigoted, or abusive materials) is prohibited.
9. Recognizing that computers and networks are limited resources, users must use them efficiently.
  10. Students may not attempt to circumvent security systems or to exploit or probe for security holes in any Adventist Christian Academy network or system, nor may individuals attempt any such activity against other systems accessed through Adventist Christian Academy's computers. Execution or compilation of programs designed to breach system security is prohibited unless authorized in advance.
  11. Students shall not encrypt any electronic communications.
  12. The printing facilities of the Adventist Christian Academy network should be used sparingly. Unnecessary printing is a drain of the capacity of the networks, adds expense, and shortens the life of the equipment. By developing on-screen, proofreading skills and practicing efficient use, users must conserve printing resources and help the system run more efficiently.
  13. Vandalism will result in the cancellation of system privileges and other disciplinary measures in compliance with Adventist Christian Academy policy. Vandalism includes any malicious attempt to access, copy, use, harm or destroy data of another user, of the system, or of any of the agencies or other networks that are connected to the Internet, and as the intentional damaging or destruction of Adventist Christian Academy-owned hardware or software on Adventist Christian Academy's system.
  14. All hardware, software, peripheral equipment, store text, data files, cabling, programs, document sites, or information obtained on an Adventist Christian Academy computer are the property of Adventist Christian Academy.
  15. Access to Adventist Christian Academy's electronic computer system is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of these guidelines.
  16. These procedures, guidelines, and/or policies are subject to modification at any time.

### **Consequences of Violation of User Responsibilities**

Any use of Adventist Christian Academy's computer resources which violates Adventist Christian Academy's policies and procedures involving the use of computers and networks will result in Adventist Christian Academy removing data and programs that are found to be inappropriate, terminating the computer privileges of the violating user, and other consequences under Adventist Christian Academy's policies. Adventist Christian Academy personnel will determine when a policy or procedure has been violated and their decision is final.

In addition to violation of Adventist Christian Academy's policy, certain computer misconduct may be prohibited under state and/or federal law and may, therefore, be subject to criminal penalties. Such misconduct includes knowingly gaining unauthorized access to a computer system, gaining access to data stored or maintained by a computer without the effective consent, causing a computer to malfunction, or interrupting the operation of a computer without the effective consent of the owner. Violators of such misconduct will be reported to appropriate criminal authorities.

## **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

(adapted from the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida)

1. Our school values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.
2. Our primary concern is the student and the development of the student's potential. Employees will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
3. Concern for the student requires that our instructional personnel:
  - a. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.
  - b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
  - c. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
  - d. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
  - e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
  - f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
  - g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make a reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
  - h. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
  - i. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
4. Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents, and the community, employees of our school must display the highest degree of ethical conduct. This commitment requires that our employees:
  - a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.

- b. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
- c. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
- d. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and, further, shall make a reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such as harassment or discrimination.
- e. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

## **Training Requirement**

All instructional personnel and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.

## **Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators**

### **Training Requirement**

All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.

All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and school administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel, educational support employees, and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors. Reports of misconduct of employees should be made to the acting principal (Tobi Pawson) at 727-842-8919.

Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to Sabrina Miler (Superintendent) at 407-644-5000.

Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida-certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services. Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators that affect the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted in the school multi-purpose room and on our Web site at [www.gulfcoastsda.org](http://www.gulfcoastsda.org).

## **Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect**

All employees and agents have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Call 1-800-96-ABUSE or report online at:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.



Signs of Physical Abuse: The child may have unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries; broken bones; or burns. A child experiencing physical abuse may seem withdrawn or depressed, seem afraid to go home or may run away, shy away from physical contact, be aggressive, or wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries.

Signs of Sexual Abuse: The child may have torn, stained or bloody underwear, trouble walking or sitting, pain or itching in genital area, or a sexually transmitted disease. A child experiencing sexual abuse may have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively, fear a particular person, seem withdrawn or depressed, gain or lose weight suddenly, shy away from physical contact, or run away from home.

Signs of Neglect: The child may have unattended medical needs, little or no supervision at home, poor hygiene, or appear underweight. A child experiencing neglect may be frequently tired or hungry, steal food, or appear overly needy for adult attention.

Patterns of Abuse: Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

## **Liability Protections**

Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by law, or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department or any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action. (F.S. 39.203)

An employer who discloses information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer of the former or current employee upon request of the prospective employer or of the former or current employee is immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the information disclosed by the former or current employer was knowingly false or violated any civil right of the former or current employee protected under F.S. Chapter 760. (F.S. 768.095)

## Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

### Application for Admission

Prior to acceptance for the VPK Program, a certificate of eligibility needs to be issued from the Early Learning Coalition (ELC). Once the confirmation number has been received, the application process can begin at Adventist Christian Academy.

### Curriculum

Scholastic  
Big Day  
Pebbles (Bible)

### School Hours

Our three hours of instruction time provided through the Florida VPK Program is from 8:00 a.m. – 11:10 a.m. The academy doors open at 7:45 a.m. Please do not drop your student off before this, as supervision is not provided at that time. Please bring a healthy snack for your child.

### Wrap Around Program

Our academy offers a Wraparound Care Program on VPK calendar days from 11:10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11:10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on Fridays. For enrollment in this extension, please see Lura Hickman.

**Fee Structure:** The weekly fee for Wraparound Care for VPK is \$65 per child. No daily rates.

**Payment Deadline:** The Wraparound Care fee of \$65 is paid by the **Friday prior to the upcoming school week**. If payment is not received by this deadline, your child may not attend Wraparound Care on the following Monday until the fee is paid. Payments can be made through Zelle at [npr.treasurer@flcoe.org](mailto:npr.treasurer@flcoe.org) or by visiting our school office during regular business hours.

**Attendance and Charges:** The Wraparound Care fee is applicable even if your child does not attend school on a particular day that they are registered for Wraparound Care.

**Holiday Breaks:** There will be no Wraparound Care fee charged during the Thanksgiving, Christmas, or spring break periods. This means that you will not incur any additional charges for these specific breaks.

**Contract Agreement:** Prior to enrolling your child in Wraparound Care, a contract will be provided for you to review and sign. This contract outlines the terms and conditions of the service, including the payment policy, and attendance guidelines. By signing the contract, you acknowledge your understanding and agreement with the policy.

### Dismissal

Dismissal time is 11:10 a.m. for VPK and 3:00 p.m. for our Wrap Around Program. Students must be picked up immediately at the close of their program. There will be a late charge after the 15-minute grace period at \$2.00 per minute. This fee will be paid to the school at the time of

pickup. In all cases, including an emergency, only parents, or previously arranged persons with photo ID, will be permitted to pick up students.

# Directories

## FACULTY/STAFF

<b>Lura Hickman</b> VPK Teacher/Director <a href="mailto:lura.hickman@flcoe.org">lura.hickman@flcoe.org</a>	<b>Yolanda Caridi</b> Kindergarten <a href="mailto:yolanda.caridi@flcoe.org">yolanda.caridi@flcoe.org</a>	<b>Linda Davis</b> Grades 1-3 Linda.davis@flcoe.org
<b>Fredoy Morgan</b> Grades 4-5 <a href="mailto:fredoy.morgan@flcoe.org">fredoy.morgan@flcoe.org</a>	<b>Tobi Pawson (Principal)</b> Grades 6-8 <a href="mailto:tobi.pawson@flcoe.org">tobi.pawson@flcoe.org</a>	<b>Carol Pigeon</b> Educational Aide High School Facilitator <a href="mailto:carol.pigeon@flcoe.org">carol.pigeon@flcoe.org</a>
<b>Sharon Vital</b> Business Manager <a href="mailto:npr.treasurer@flcoe.org">npr.treasurer@flcoe.org</a>	<b>Marlene De Brito Dominquez</b> Administrative Assistant <a href="mailto:marlene.dominguezdeb@flcoe.org">marlene.dominguezdeb@flcoe.org</a>	Webmaster TBA

## SCHOOL BOARD

<b>Mark Schiefer</b> School Board Chairman	<b>Sharon Vital</b> School Board Member Business Manager	<b>Lynn Hecht</b> School Board Member
<b>Carol Pigeon</b> School Board Member	<b>Pastor Jonathan Peinado</b> School Board Member	<b>Sandra Doran, EdD</b> School Board Member
<b>Jessica Chang</b> School Board Member		

