



FAITH
COMMUNITY ACADEMY

*“Train up a child in the way he should go,
even when he is old he will not depart from it.” – Proverbs 22:6*

Elementary Staff Handbook 2025-2026

Faith Community Academy

Berea Baptist Church
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School Day Hours

8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Monday – Friday

Office Hours

8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Monday – Friday

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: PHILOSOPHY & FOUNDATION

Welcome Letter	page 2
Mission Statement	page 2
Statement of Faith	page 2
Read and Respect Handbooks	page 3

PART 2: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Teacher Licensure/Certification	page 4
Virginia Standards of Learning	page 4
Teacher Expectations and Responsibilities	page 4
School Honor Code	page 4
Faculty Professionalism	page 4
Applying the Matthew 18 Principle	page 5
Confidentiality	page 5
Parent Contact	page 6
Classroom and Furnishings	page 6
Supplies	page 6
Multi-Use Facility Expectations	page 6
Calendar	page 6
Lunchroom Guidelines	page 7
Playground Guidelines	page 7
Supervisory Responsibilities of Staff	page 7
Child Abuse	page 7
Reporting Incidents on School Property of School Trips	page 8
Emergency Drills	page 8

PART 3: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Curriculum	page 9
Instructional Resources	page 9
Technology Proficiency	page 9
Morning Meeting/Starting the Day	page 9
Gradebook	page 9
Report Card/Interim Reports	page 10
Make-Up Work	page 10
Parent/Teacher Conferences	page 10
Special Needs	page 10

Testing	page 11
Recess Time	page 11

PART 4: STUDENT SERVICES

Attendance	page 12
Tardies	page 12
Student Dress Code Enforcement	page 12
Behavior	page 12
Behavior Management	page 13

PART 5: HUMAN RESOURCES

Anti-Discriminatory Hiring Policy	page 14
Alcohol, Drug and Smoking Policy	page 14
Harassment Policy – Including Sexual Harassment	page 14
Cell Phone Policy	page 14
Faculty Professional Dress	page 14
Social Networking Sites	page 15
Arrival/Dismissal	page 15
Staff Meetings	page 15
Prayer Time	page 15
Staff Unplanned Absence or Tardiness	page 15
Make-Up Day for Inclement Weather	page 16
Employee Leave	page 16
Substitute Plans and Scheduling Substitutes	page 17
Staff Disciplinary Policy	page 17
Grievance Procedure	page 17
Payroll Information	page 17
Staff Observations and Evaluations	page 17
Annual Review	page 18
Employment Agreement and Salary Increases	page 18
Annual Background Check	page 18
Allegations of Abuse/Neglect	page 18
Child Pick-Up	page 18
First Aid/CPR Training	page 18
Emergency Procedures	page 19

PART 1: PHILOSOPHY & FOUNDATION

Welcome Letter

Welcome to Faith Community Academy Elementary where you will be a valuable part of our education team. As an Academy, we continue to flourish as a full-time Christian elementary private school, from our first seed years ago as a homeschool cooperative. In addition to grades first through fifth, we also have a preschool division which serves children ages two-years through kindergarten.

We are happy God has brought us together on this path to spread His Word and His teachings. Our Academy is located at Berea Baptist Church, serving as a community outreach ministry. It brings us great joy knowing we are teaching the children of our community to love the Lord alongside providing them an engaging educational program.

We strive to prepare our students for a future as devoted followers of Christ with the foundation and education needed to live successful lives. Thank you for embarking on this journey with us as we allow God to guide our path!

FCAE Director

Jennifer Gailey

FCAE School Board, Chair

Gay Donna Vandergriff

Mission Statement

Faith Community Academy Elementary provides a giving, caring environment, geared to reach each child with God's love. Our teachers minister to the emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual growth of the children in our community. We strive to help children form habits of respect, courtesy, self-confidence, responsibility, cooperation, and independence as life-long learners.

Statement of Faith – *Acceptance of employment conveys your agreement with the following:*

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God.
2. We believe there is only one God, eternally existent in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father and His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith alone we are saved.
5. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation. Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

6. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

8. Faith Community Academy Elementary affirms that all human beings, male and female, are created in the image of God their Creator (Genesis 1:26-27), and therefore have inestimable value and must be treated with dignity and respect.

As a community that seeks to be an authentic Biblical community, FCAE is committed to addressing all issues of human sexuality with grace and truth and recognizes that the most loving thing that we can do for our brothers and sisters in Christ is to graciously point them to the Truth of His Word. FCAE affirms the following statements regarding God's intent for human sexuality:

God created two genders, male and female, determined biologically at conception and made evident at birth (Genesis 2:18-25).

The Creator's intent for human sexuality, based in creation and stated in the seventh commandment, finds its fulfillment between a man and a woman within the bond of the marriage covenant. To experience the fullness of God's loving intent, sexual experience is intended to be celebrated between a man and a woman within that covenant union (Genesis 2:22-24; Proverbs 5:18-19; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16).

Read and Respect Handbooks

Employees of the Academy must read and respect this *Elementary Staff Handbook* and the *Parent/Student Handbook*, to include all updates to these documents. Handbook version dates are in the footnote of each document.

PART 2: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Teacher Licensure/Certification

Faith Community Academy Elementary, as a ministry of Berea Baptist Church, operates as a private school seeking to achieve accreditation through ACSI.

- All teachers who do not have a current ACSI Standard Certificate must obtain at least a current temporary certificate within the first year of employment.
- Teachers will complete an ACSI Certification Plan and update it yearly.
- Every teacher is to work towards Standard Level Certification within their first two years of employment as a teacher. If an ACSI Standard Certification cannot be obtained within the noted time constraints, a written application for extension must be submitted to administration. The plan to obtain the required certifications and progress toward certification must be included. Failure to meet certification requirements may result in termination.
- It is the responsibility of each teacher to be aware of the requirements for renewal of certification or upgrade. Each teacher is responsible for working towards and maintaining current ACSI certification. This includes applying for a new certificate 90 days before a current one expires.

Virginia Standards of Learning

Copies of the Virginia SOLs are available for teachers to reference as a comparative measure of student progress. It is our goal that FCAE students are prepared to meet and exceed these standards if/when they transfer into the public school system.

Teacher Expectations and Responsibilities

Teacher responsibilities are outlined in the job description provided with the teacher employment agreement. However, there are a few of these responsibilities that need to be detailed; hence, they are included within this Handbook. These specifics are identified and listed below.

School Honor Code:

“As a member of Faith Community Academy, I pledge that I will consistently act in a positive, Christ-like manner. I pledge that I will not lie, cheat, or steal and that I will uphold Biblical values, honesty, integrity, love and encouragement.”

Faculty Professionalism:

FCAE teachers and staff deliver instruction and spiritual guidance in a way that reflects the character of the creative-redemptive God. We strive to create an atmosphere of grace and engage in an educational process that exemplifies living the gospel instead of just talking about the gospel. We prepare very carefully to teach and to carry out our responsibilities. 2 Timothy 2:15 states, “Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.”

James 3 cautions the saints not to be too quick to be teachers. Teachers do a lot of talking and therefore exert a power that has great potential for good or evil. To exert the proper influence on the students we teach, we must exercise great discernment in what we say, how we say it, and how we conduct ourselves. “No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29) “We are not giving anyone an occasion for offense, so that the ministry will not be blamed.” (2 Corinthians 6:3)

- We only discuss students with their parents and no one else.
- We have discussions in private locations (not in public locations).
- We do not allow gossip.
- We support leadership and authority.
- We agree to report to work punctually as scheduled and be engaged fully in the duties and responsibilities of the assigned tasks.

Applying the Matthew 18 Principle

Issues between parents and teachers will arise from time to time. As a Christian school, we believe that issues and concerns should be resolved Biblically. We recognize that Matthew 18 requires open and fair discussion of potentially difficult matters. We believe the Matthew 18 principle is essential for maintaining good relationships. In addressing concerns, we adhere to the following steps taken from the pamphlet entitled, *The Matthew 18 Principle for Solving School Problems* by Dr. Paul A. Kienel, ACSI Founder and President Emeritus:

1. Keep the matter confidential. (Proverbs 11:9) Share only with those directly involved and respect confidentiality. Do not involve other parents or FCA teachers.
2. Keep the circle small. Person-to-person problems are usually solved at the two-person level. Be straightforward and lovingly forthright. (Proverbs 27:6) Anger is a work of the flesh and should not be present at the meeting.
3. Be forgiving. (Galatians 6:1) Once the matter is resolved, wholeheartedly forgive and restore the person who has offended you. Close your meeting in prayer.
4. If both parties agree that you have been unable to resolve the concern, then share the matter with the school administrator. Meet together - parents, teacher, and administrator – in the spirit of prayer and of humility, willing to submit to the Lord’s will in the matter and also willing to submit to reproof and correction if needed. An open and honest discussion to Godly principles will most likely result in an amicable solution.
5. If further intervention is deemed necessary due to the complex problem, all parties concerned will be required to meet further for final resolution with administration.

Confidentiality

Information regarding the children, families and/or staff is privileged and confidential. The staff is expected to keep information shared confidential and not discuss information in front of the children, other families, or other staff members. Information contained in a child’s record should be privileged and confidential. Parents should have access, upon request, to their child’s records at reasonable times.

Parent Contact

Communicating with parents is crucial to your success for the year. The key is to communicate early and often. Early and consistent communication leads to the development of good relationships with parents. Every effort must be made to make the parents feel welcome as an integral part of the Academy. Parent suggestions, comments, and criticisms must find a listening ear and a servant heart in every staff member. Teachers and staff are required to respond to parent emails/phone calls within 24 hours. These hours include work week only and do not apply to your time with family on weekends.

Classroom and Furnishings

It is important that classroom equipment and furnishings be properly cared for. Please be good stewards of all the items in your classroom. Cleanliness and neatness are vitally important to the professional appearance of the Academy.

Please make every effort to keep your room neat and attractive. Teach students to pick up and clean up at the end of each exercise or task. Students should keep tables, desks, and other belongings neat and clean. The church cleaning staff will clean weekly; however, teachers are responsible for making sure that students leave church facilities, including classrooms, restrooms, FLC, and The Gathering, in orderly condition prior to leaving that area.

It is the teacher's responsibility to set up his/her classroom for church use on Wednesdays and Fridays. Teachers should expect to set up their classrooms on Monday and Thursday mornings as needed from church activities. Please report all damaged property and items that may be missing from the classroom to the Academy Director.

Supplies

Teachers will be asked to create a parent supply list each year prior to August 1st. This list will then be sent out to parents so that they may purchase materials in a timely manner before the start of school. In addition, the Academy will do a supply drive via Amazon. Staff are asked to add additional items to this list for the classroom that is different from the supply list given to parents. If any supplies are needed in addition to what is purchased or donated by parents, a request should be made to the director.

Multi-Use Facility Expectations

Faith Community Academy and Berea Baptist Church are committed to 100% multi-use facilities. Both church and Academy staff members should view space sharing as part of our collective mission to reach people for Jesus. While conflicts may occasionally occur, our staff commit to temper their personal desires and share space in a spirit of grace. Any issues should be addressed through the proper chain of command while maintaining a spirit of unity.

Calendar

All events and activities must be entered in the school calendar and in the room reservation calendar jointly administered by the church and the Academy. This is a multi-use facility shared by a number of ministries of Berea Baptist Church. Events must be calendared well in advance in order to be approved. Please cooperate with the Academy Director as well as church office staff to reserve space outside of the typical classroom setting during the week, after school hours, or on weekends.

Lunchroom Guidelines

The lunchroom needs to be kept clean and sanitized for the next group using the facilities. This includes any tables, chairs, and floor space that is utilized. Each teacher is to eat in the lunchroom to supervise his/her class. Any trash or spills on the floor need to be put in the garbage or wiped up. The last teacher leaving the lunchroom at each lunchtime should survey the room for cleanliness and lost and found items.

Playground Guidelines

Children must be supervised at all times. Teachers must be standing up, moving around, and actively monitoring. Each teacher is responsible for monitoring their class on the playground unless there is a parent volunteer or teaching assistant available to monitor them. There must be at least one person with a current background check supervising the children at all times. Please do not allow students to climb up or stand on the slide, or climb on the outside of any playground equipment. Playground equipment is designed to be climbed on at a variety of angles. Teachers should use their discretion regarding climbing. If an activity a student is participating in makes the teacher nervous, the teacher should ask the child to stop. Do not allow students to bring toys on climbing equipment.

Supervisory Responsibilities of Staff

Student safety is a core responsibility of the Academy. When on duty, the employee is to be fully engaged in student supervision. Impromptu parent conferences and phone calls are just two examples of activities that distract from proper supervision. If you must leave a group of students you are supervising, you must have another faculty or staff member supervise the students. Student supervision during transitions can be challenging, so faculty must remain alert and focused on students during this time. Faculty should not become separated from students during a transition period. **Students are never to supervise other students, regardless of age.**

Child Abuse

If a teacher or staff member suspects abuse, he or she is to report the suspected abuse to an administrator immediately who will then file the report. We are required by law to report any child abuse to the Department of Social Services.

Suspicion of abuse or neglect is based upon indicators. Indicators consist of physical indicators (e.g. questionable injuries, consistent hunger, or poor hygiene), child behavioral indicators (e.g. begging or stealing food, fear of caretaker, or highly sexualized play), a child's statements reporting abuse or neglect, or a caretaker's statements (e.g. description of abusive or neglectful behavior).

Educators do not need to prove that abuse or neglect occurred to make a report to Child Protective Services. It is appropriate, however, to inquire about suspicious injuries and to support a child who discloses information. For example, "Can you tell me what happened?" or "I'm sorry that happened to you." Educators should not press the child for details beyond what the child is willing to share. Schools should not be conducting their own investigations.

Section 63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia allows teachers and staff, in lieu of a report to Child Protective Services, to immediately notify the person in charge or his/her designee "who shall make a report forthwith" to Child Protective Services. Liability for failure to report rests with the person in charge or designee. Section 63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia limits required reporting to persons acting in their professional or official capacities.

Reporting Incidents on School Property or School Trips

All staff members are responsible for reporting incidents that may be dangerous or questionable in nature to an administrator. Communication is critical, and withholding or delaying information that could impact the reputation of another faculty member, or the Academy is considered damaging. If you observe something you are unsure should be reported to an administrator, always err on the side of caution and bring it to his/her attention as soon as possible.

Emergency Drills

Practice of appropriate responses to emergency situations (fire, tornado, earthquake, and lockdown) is the crucial element in maintaining student, faculty and staff safety in the event of an actual emergency. Various drills will occur on a regular basis. Exit routes and drill information are posted in each classroom. The different procedures will be discussed with faculty and staff members prior to the drills.

PART 3: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Curriculum

The goal of our curriculum is to not only meet but exceed the state standards articulated by the Standards of Learning in Virginia and to do so with a Biblical worldview. The Curriculum Guide is our living resource that demonstrates our vertical alignment between grades, the specific standards we are addressing with our instructional design, and the Biblical integration.

Instructional Resources

Textbooks, workbooks, and other instructional resources, such as student manipulatives or teacher resources, will be provided by the Academy. All outside resources used in the classroom (i.e. class readers and material used to supplement in the classroom) must be approved. If you need any supplemental materials, please contact the Director.

Teachers are expected to incorporate manipulatives into instruction whenever possible. The goal is to meet the individual learning styles of all the students. Providing visual, tactile, and auditory modes for learning are crucial. Teachers will work to learn new ways to enhance this area of instruction and develop this aspect of their instructional delivery methods.

Technology Proficiency

All teachers will be expected to be proficient users of Google Apps, such as Google Forms, Slides, Sheets, and Docs. Teachers are strongly encouraged to learn additional Google Apps through Google Educator certifications.

Teachers should make appropriate use of technology during class time. All technology use should be student-centered, and teachers should be proficient at assisting students with basic technology support.

Morning Meeting/Starting the Day

During this daily organizational time, the following items should be taken care of:

1. Initial dress code check.
2. Pledges to the American and Christian flags and Bible are completed.
3. Each class should begin with a word of prayer to commit the class time to the Lord's use.

Gradebook

Grades should be kept up to date by the teacher, utilizing the gradebook system FCAE has in place. Each grade should be intentional and a reflection of what each child knows and understands. Grades are to be used based on the grading scale outlined in the *Parent/Student Handbook*.

A diligent attempt is always made to provide parents and students an evaluation of students' progress that is meaningful and consistent. Students' grades may include test scores, quiz scores, classwork, homework, notebook/supplies checks, labs, projects, reports, term papers, and classroom participation.

A teacher should make parent contact by phone or in person to discuss any interim or report card grade of a D or F. Parents should be informed of specific content or issues the teacher has observed, which are leading to lower than expected student academic performance. The discussion should include what the teacher and parents can do to help the student overcome specific learning challenges.

Any student who performs below age/grade level expectations in math or reading will be considered for retention. The final authority rests with the Academy Director.

Report Cards/Interim Reports

Interim Reports and End-of-Quarter report cards will be sent home with students for parents to review, sign and return within two (2) school days. Failure to return signed report cards in a timely manner will result in disciplinary action. End-of-year report cards will be mailed and do not need to be returned.

Make-Up Work

When students miss school due to an excused absence (illness or medical appointment), they will be required to complete any graded assignments from the missed time as make-up work. At the teacher's discretion, make-up work can be given to students to complete during the school day when they return or may be sent home for students to complete outside of school hours. Any missed assessments should be completed during regular classroom time on the first day the student returns to school, unless the teacher has granted an extension due to multiple missed school days. Students are not to miss any recess or lunch time to complete make-up work. Resource Classes should not be used for make-up work without prior approval from the Director. Teachers may coordinate with administration to assist with supervision and a quiet location as needed for any make-up work. Typically, only one day will be granted to make up work for each day of absence.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences will typically be held at the end of the first quarter. Any other conferences will be scheduled on an "as needed" basis throughout the school year. "As needed" conferences should be held during planning time or after school. Each conference should begin and end with a prayer.

Use the "sandwich approach" by beginning with a positive about the child, present the challenge or issue and end with the positive. Keep the conference focused on finding solutions to the challenges at hand for the student only.

Special Needs

If it becomes evident that a student requires additional support due to special needs, the teacher is expected to promptly meet with the Director to discuss the student's specific needs. A collaborative plan of action will be developed to ensure appropriate support is in place. Following this, a conference will be scheduled with the student's parents or guardians to review the plan and discuss further steps.

In cases where extensive support is required, parents may be asked to provide a trained assistant, who must be approved by the school, at the parents' own expense. This measure ensures that the student receives the necessary assistance for his/her success in the educational environment.

Testing

Prior to the start of school, students should be evaluated in math and reading (as necessary for enrollment). Based on this level, teachers should tailor their instruction, and therefore their assessments, to best meet the needs of their students. This type of diagnostic testing should be done on a regular basis in the classroom through mostly informal assessments.

Benchmark testing should be completed at the end of each unit of study to show mastery. This testing can also be very informal and should, most definitely, be very precise and straight forward. These benchmark tests can and should be used in report cards and interim reports.

Recess Time

Teachers should conduct a visual screening of the playground prior to releasing students to play. If there is broken equipment, the teacher should immediately ensure that the students do not have access to the equipment in question and contact the Director to request assistance.

- Teachers are to take their students outside for recess, weather permitting.
- Teachers are required to be alert at all times in observing students.
- The classroom Emergency Bag and a cell phone are to be taken with each teacher when going outside.

PART 4: STUDENT SERVICES

Attendance

Attendance must be taken during the class period and done so accurately.

Tardies

All students who arrive on campus after 8:45 a.m. must be counted as Tardy.

- When students accrue 3 tardies to school or class, they receive an email notification from the Director warning about consequences.
- When the student accrues 6 tardies, the parent will be required to meet with the Director to formulate a plan of action.
- If tardies continue to occur, the student may be in jeopardy of repeating the grade at the discretion of the classroom teacher and the Academy Director.
- Please see the *Parent/Student Handbook* for more information pertaining to tardies.

Student Dress Code Enforcement

All faculty/staff are expected to consistently enforce the dress code throughout the day. Please refer to the *Parent/Student Handbook* for dress code guidelines. If you are unsure about making a judgment call on an issue of modesty or any other dress code expectation/guideline, please see the Director for assistance.

The dress code applies whenever students represent the Academy. It begins the moment they come into the building and does not end until the moment they are off campus and no longer represent the Academy.

Behavior

Faith Community Academy has a coherent approach to student behavior based on a positive behavior model which enables learning to take place in a safe and orderly environment. The aims of this positive behavior approach are:

1. To allow teachers to teach,
2. To enable students to learn, and
3. To encourage students to develop self-confidence and self-discipline.

Teachers should find an opportunity to praise every pupil they teach during every lesson. Praise should be:

1. Both verbal and non-verbal,
2. Specific and descriptive,
3. Genuine,
4. Noticeable, and
5. Recognizing achievement and students' contributions to the life of the Academy.

Behavior Management

It is our belief that children can be influenced by their surroundings. If the environment is not developmentally appropriate, children can become frustrated. To alleviate this, we will provide a developmentally appropriate program with plenty of opportunities for children to make their own choices. That being said, conflicts will arise, and teachers will respond in a positive and appropriate manner. Teachers will use behavior management techniques, such as setting responsible and positive expectations, offering choices, and providing children with the proper opportunity to verbalize their feelings, which encourages children to develop self-control and problem-solving through understanding.

Parents will be notified of any behavior management concerns and will be asked to work along with the teachers and help the child with inappropriate behaviors. Prior to notifying a parent of behavior concerns, teachers will meet with the Director to discuss the student behavior. Teachers shall then use discretion and reinforcement that our staff wish to work alongside the parents to help the child with his/her behavior. Teachers will reinforce to the parents that the child is loved, but the behavior cannot be tolerated.

PART 5: HUMAN RESOURCES

Anti-Discriminatory Hiring Policy

The policy at FCA is to provide equal opportunity in education and employment. Faith Community Academy shall not discriminate against its students, teachers, or staff members on the basis of race, color, national origin, or ethnic origin. As a Christian school, we can and do discriminate on the basis of religion.

Alcohol, Drug and Smoking Policy

The use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs will result in immediate termination of an FCA staff member's employment. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers associated with FCA. Because we recognize the hazards caused by exposure to tobacco smoke, as well as the diseases linked with the use of all forms of tobacco, we are a tobacco-free campus. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers associated with Faith Community Academy.

Harassment Policy - Including Sexual Harassment

No harassment of any kind will be tolerated by Faith Community Academy. We strongly support the policy that allows all employees to work in an environment free from unwelcome attention by supervisors or fellow employees. If you feel that you are being or have been harassed, please notify the Director or School Board Chair immediately.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phone usage should be for teaching purposes only. Examples of this include taking photos, using a video for the classroom, or communicating between staff. Should you need to receive a call during work hours, please arrange to have the Director or other qualified staff cover the classroom while you step out to take the call.

Faculty Professional Dress

At FCA, we strive to create an environment that is both professional and approachable. As educators, it is important to set a positive example for our students while maintaining comfort and flexibility throughout the day. Our staff members accompany students at recess and engage in activities with students that may require them to sit on the floor or utilize paints/glue and other substances. With that in mind, we offer a dress code policy that offers our staff members the ability to play an active role as they plan engaging lessons and activities for their students. Below is the dress code policy for all FCAE staff members:

- Staff are expected to wear attire that is neat, clean, and appropriate for a Christian school setting.
- Appropriate clothing includes blouses, button-down shirts, collared polo shirts, sweaters, dresses, skirts, dress pants, and jeans.
- Jeans must fit properly—not too tight, ripped, or excessively worn. They should be free from distressing, holes, or embellishments.
- Leggings should only be worn under appropriate dresses that cover the buttocks.

- T-shirts and/or shorts should not be worn except as **approved in advance** for field trip days, school spirit days, field day, or other special school event.
- Shoes should be comfortable and appropriate for an active school environment. Flip-flops are not permitted.
- Grooming, styling, and hygiene are important aspects of professionalism. Teachers should be models for the students at all times. Clothing should never be revealing or distracting to students or other staff members.

This policy is in place to promote a professional and respectful atmosphere while allowing flexibility for teachers to feel comfortable and confident. Staff are encouraged to dress in a way that reflects the important role they have as Christian educators in the school community.

Social Networking Sites

- Teachers are not permitted to communicate with students and parents regarding school matters on any type of social networking site.
- All communication employees of FCA have with the public or with other employees should be of the highest possible quality. Therefore, employees are expected to pay close attention to any message sent internally or externally as it represents the Academy.
- Please be cognizant about what you are posting on your social media page as you represent not only Faith Community Academy but also Berea Baptist Church.

Arrival/Dismissal

Teachers are required to report to school 20 minutes prior to the start of school and work until 20 minutes after students are dismissed to assist in daily cleaning. If there is a scheduling conflict, please speak with the Director about how this issue could be resolved. Any staff member who is not in consistent compliance with these hours will face disciplinary action.

Staff Meetings

The Director and staff will meet after school hours once each month to address concerns, areas of growth, and to reflect and plan for past or future months. Staff will meet weekly during Monday Resource Class in order to address immediate concerns and plans for the week.

Prayer Time

Staff will take time each morning to share and pray together before students enter the building. This time does not have to be lengthy, but it is necessary for the start of each day.

Staff Unplanned Absence or Tardiness

Any staff member who cannot come to work on their scheduled day or by their scheduled start time, must contact the Director by phone as early as possible so that appropriate plans can be made.

Make-Up Days for Inclement Weather

In the event of a canceled school day due to inclement weather or other emergency, the school may designate a make-up day to ensure the full instructional calendar is met. If a “No School” day is converted into a regular school day, all staff members are expected to report to work as scheduled. Please plan accordingly, as attendance and duties on the make-up day are required.

Employee Leave

10-Month Employees (Teachers)

During the 10-month term, the employee shall be entitled to twelve days of paid time off (PTO). The employee may use PTO for vacation, personal leave, bereavement leave, or sick leave. Leave will be taken in $\frac{1}{4}$ day (1.75 hour), $\frac{1}{2}$ day (3.5 hour), or full day increments. Leave requests should be submitted a minimum of one week prior to the requested date except in unavoidable situations, such as illness. Any leave request that includes the day immediately preceding or immediately following a “No School” day for students will be approved only if substitute coverage for the classroom can be obtained or in emergency situations.

PTO days will be available beginning the first day of the school year. The first two days will be accrued after the first day is complete. The remaining ten days will be accrued one day per month on the last day of each month completed. While the employee will be permitted to use PTO days prior to their accrual, if the employee does not satisfy their employment agreement by the end of the school year, the salary portion of any unaccrued PTO days will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

A maximum of 5 unused PTO days can be carried over to the next school year. The employee will not be compensated for unused PTO days. PTO cannot be utilized for an employee's final day of work.

When an employee has exhausted all applicable leave, it is up to the School Board to approve or deny leave without pay (LWOP). If the School Board determines that it is in the best interest of the Academy to fill the position, the staff member's employment may be terminated.

12-Month Employees (Administrators)

During the 12-month term, the employee shall be entitled to fifteen days of annual personal leave and twelve days of paid time off (PTO). The employee may use PTO for vacation, personal leave, bereavement leave, or sick leave. Leave will be taken in $\frac{1}{4}$ day (1.75 hour), $\frac{1}{2}$ day (3.5 hour), or full day increments. Leave requests should be submitted a minimum of one week prior to the requested date except in unavoidable situations, such as illness. Any leave request that includes the day immediately preceding or immediately following a “No School” day for students will be approved only if substitute coverage for the classroom can be obtained or in emergency situations.

PTO days will be available beginning the first day of the school year. The first two days will be accrued after the first day is complete. The remaining ten days will be accrued one day per month on the last day of each month completed. While the employee will be permitted to use PTO days prior to their accrual, if the employee does not satisfy their employment agreement by the end of the school year, the salary portion of any unaccrued PTO days will be deducted from The Employee's final paycheck.

A maximum of 5 unused PTO days can be carried over to the next school year. The employee will not be compensated for unused PTO days. PTO cannot be utilized for the employee's final day of work.

When an employee has exhausted all applicable leave, it is up to the School Board to approve or deny leave without pay (LWOP). If the School Board determines that it is in the best interest of the Academy to fill the position the staff member's employment may be terminated.

The employee shall also be entitled to the same “No School” days as 10-month employees, as defined by the school calendar: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break, MLK Day, Spring Break, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, etc.

Substitute Plans and Scheduling Substitutes

If you must be absent from school for any reason, please submit a leave request email to the Academy Director. In any unplanned or emergency absence, please text the Academy director as soon as possible. The Director will notify you when your leave is approved and will schedule a substitute to continue instruction in your absence.

Substitute Lesson Plans must be submitted/mailed to the Academy Director. Hard copies may be kept in the classroom as a courtesy. The substitute plan should provide complete, detailed, understandable, and meaningful information (such as class roll, attendance form, seating chart, daily schedule, bell schedule, lesson plans, worksheets, classroom discipline procedures and rules, and location of materials) and any other activities or materials needed for any given day.

Staff Disciplinary Policy

A staff member will be suspended without pay if he/she fails to perform his/her job in accordance with the job description. A written report will be filed indicating the reason for suspension and the dates of the suspension. If a problem indicated on the suspension report is not corrected within the indicated time period, or if the staff member repeats the offense, the staff member will be dismissed from his/her position.

Grievance Procedure

If an employee has a grievance with another staff member that cannot be resolved between the two, then it should be brought to the attention of the Director. FCA administration has an open-door policy and will be able to assist in any situation that may arise. In the case that the grievance is with the Director, and the staff member feels they cannot correct the situation by talking with the Director one-on-one, the staff member should contact the School Board Chair.

Payroll Information

Following the acceptance of employment, each new team member must complete a W4 and I-9 form, as well as a direct deposit form in order to receive compensation. The pay period for personnel is bi-monthly, which will occur on the 15th and the last day of each month.

Staff Observations and Evaluations

The Director will complete an informal observation at least once each month. Staff performance evaluations are performed annually as part of the annual review process and include a formal observation. Staff members will meet with the Director after this formal observation to provide, sign, and return annual review documentation. Records of observations and consultations will be included in the staff member’s file for future reference to show professional growth over time.

Annual Review

At FCAE, we value the hard work and dedication of our teaching staff. To ensure that we continue to foster a positive and productive learning environment, we conduct an annual review process for all teaching staff. This review is an opportunity to reflect on accomplishments, identify areas for growth, and discuss professional development goals.

Employment Agreement and Salary Increases

Teacher salary increases are determined annually by the School Board based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to performance evaluations and budget considerations. Once the staffing requirements for the upcoming school year and salary increases have been finalized, teachers who are being asked to return will receive an official offer letter. This offer letter will outline the teacher's salary, the employment dates for the new school year, and require the teacher's agreement, which will be confirmed by signing the document.

Annual Background Check

All teachers and administrators are required to undergo an annual background check to ensure ongoing eligibility for employment. A failed background check will result in an immediate FCAE School Board review, during which continued employment will be decided. Employment may be suspended with or without pay or terminated based on the outcome of the School Board's review. It is essential that all staff maintain a clean background to uphold the safety and integrity of our learning environment.

Allegations of Abuse/Neglect

All staff are mandated reporters and should report suspected child abuse or neglect. The report shall be made to the program Director IMMEDIATELY. The Director will gather information from the staff involved and report the suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services and to the School Board Chair for reporting to the School Board. Allegations of abuse or neglect against a staff member will be documented and reported. Alleged abusive or neglectful staff members will not directly work with children until the Department of Social Services investigation is completed, and as for such time as the department determines.

Child Pick-Up

Children may only be discharged to those persons authorized on their pick-up forms. It is the staff's responsibility to know who those people are. If an alternative person is picking up a child who is not on the pickup list, the parent must notify the teacher or Director in person or in writing. The parent must give the complete name and spelling of the alternate person. Not following this policy will result in immediate dismissal.

First Aid/CPR Training

All teachers and staff will have access to First Aid kits in their classrooms. Upon exiting the building with students at any time, each teacher is required to take their First Aid kit. This includes but is not limited to - recess, lunch, field trips, and other special events that may be held outdoors in accordance with FCA.

- FCAE staff are required to have a First Aid/CPR certificate. If not provided by the Academy, it will be the employee's responsibility to take such courses as are necessary to keep a first aid certificate.
- Please use proper first aid techniques when a student is injured.

To protect both students and staff, the following procedures must be adhered to universally:

- Employees must wear gloves when administering first aid to anyone without exception and whenever contact with blood or other potentially infectious material is anticipated.
- Employees must wear gloves when assisting a student who has soiled himself/herself.
- Employees must properly remove the gloves and wash their hands after rendering aid.

Emergency Procedures

If a child needs emergency care due to an injury or a condition that requires more than first aid treatment, the following procedure will be followed:

- In the event of a life-threatening emergency, 9-1-1 will be called first; the parent(s) next.
- If a child's parents cannot be reached, their emergency contacts will be called.

If a staff member needs emergency care due to an injury or a condition that requires more than first aid treatment, a family member will be notified. All staff are required to fill out an emergency contact card to be kept in their file.

- In the event of a life-threatening emergency, 9-1-1 will be called first, the family member next.
- *Note: all emergency student/parent contacts are in each classroom First Aid Bag.