

# FIRST ODESSA



## Student Handbook

"THE RIGHTEOUS ARE AS BOLD AS A LION." PROVERBS 28:1

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**STUDENT POLICIES**  
**2022-2023**  
**[www.firstodessaacademy.org](http://www.firstodessaacademy.org)**

**Tony Parris**  
Head of Schools  
**Jeffrey Ellsworth**  
Athletic Director  
**Rose Macedo**  
Administrative Assistant

## **FIRST ODESSA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

### ***Mission Statement***

The Mission of the First Odessa Christian Academy is to boldly teach Biblical truth, Christian character, and rigorous academic curriculum in a safe and nurturing learning environment.

### ***Vision Statement***

The Vision of First Odessa Christian Academy is to produce academically-excellent students with a sound Biblical worldview to impact their community for Christ.

### ***Core Values***

- Belief in Jesus Christ
- Academic Excellence
- Honorable Conduct
- Servant Leadership

### ***Core Family Values***

All members of the board, administration and staff of First Odessa Christian Academy believe that the Bible is the Word of God and without error in all its teachings. Because of our understanding of the Old and New Testaments, our school teaches these Core Family Values:

1. That it is unacceptable for Christians to teach hatred towards any group or individual.
2. That human life begins at conception and that an unborn child at any stage of development is fully human and should be treated as such.
3. That extramarital sexual intimacy, heterosexual or homosexual, is morally and Biblically wrong.
4. That marriage is an exclusively heterosexual institution involving one man and one woman.

### ***Christian Perspective of Education***

A traditional public education centers around a worldly view and the student's intellectual, physical, and sometimes social wellbeing. Christian education at FOCA centers around a Biblical worldview. God, His principles and precepts found in the Bible, guide all that we believe and teach. This allows us to develop not only the intellectual, physical, and emotional (social) aspects of a student but adds the piece missing from a worldly view - the spiritual piece. Mark 12:30 Jesus tells us, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The mind is your intellect, your strength is the physical, the heart is the social/emotional, and your soul is the everlasting spiritual piece the worldly view will not address. We believe it takes all four parts to fully and rightly educate a student. To have a Christian education at FOCA means that we will focus on high academic standards in all classes while infusing Biblical principles and teaching into everything we do. Prayer is practiced and encouraged. Bible classes happen every day, in every class. Education will change a life. Belief in Jesus will change a forever.

### **Description**

First Odessa Christian Academy is a ministry of First Baptist Church, offering a program of quality education for children from kindergarten through ninth grade, with plans to grow to a full K-12 program. It began March of 2019 under the leadership of Dr. Byron McWilliams, pastor of First Baptist Church.

### **Accreditation**

The Accreditation Commission of the Texas Association of Baptist Schools accredits First Odessa Christian Academy under an agreement with the Texas Education Agency.

### **Affiliations**

First Odessa Christian Academy is a member of the Texas Association of Baptist Schools, a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), a member of the Texas Private Schools Association, and a charter member of the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools.

### **Chapel**

Chapel will be held on Wednesdays at 12:15 PM.

### **School Schedule**

- School starts at 8:00 am and ends at 4:00 pm.
- Doors open at 7:30 am and are locked at 8:00 am.
- All students who arrive after the 8:00 am are late and must check in with the school office located across the hall from the church office.
- After school pick up is at 3:55 for K, 2, & 4, at 4:00 for 1, 3, 5, & secondary school
- A late fee of \$15 will be charged for students picked up after 4:30 (exception - extended day)
- Extended day, or After Care, is available for parents who need a later pick up time later than 4:30. Care is available until 5:30. The cost of After Care is \$75 per week.

## **ACADEMIC SERVICES**

### **Awards Ceremony**

The awards ceremonies for all grades are scheduled for the last week of the school year. Students are then dismissed to go home with their parent/guardian, or if the parent prefers, students may remain until dismissal.

### **Class Size Guidelines**

School board guidelines for class size and core subjects: Student:Teacher ratio for Kindergarten is 18:1, and for all other grades is 20:1.

### **Parent and teacher communication**

Parents and teachers are encouraged to communicate regularly regarding a student's behavior and academic progress. Communication methods range from text, emails, and phone calls, to in person conferences.

FOCA faculty and staff welcome constructive communication from parents/guardians at any time. Any of the following methods may be used to contact a staff member:

- Mailboxes - Notes or letters may be left with the school office for placement in the staff mailboxes.
- Email - All FOCA faculty and staff have email addresses. A directory of emails is available on the school website. Every attempt will be made to respond to all email messages within 24 hours during the school week.
- Phone - Messages can be left for faculty and staff by calling the school office at (432) 339-0770. Every attempt will be made to respond to all phone messages within 24 hours during the school week.
- Please contact the teacher or administrator to arrange a conference,-Teachers have conference times built into their schedules when they are available to meet with you.
- We respectfully ask you communicate with faculty through the school office or email.
- Office personnel are not free to leave the office to take messages to students or teachers.
- In seeking to solve any problem or misunderstanding originating in class, students and parents/guardians should work with teachers first, then administration, if needed.
- Parents/guardians must come to the FOCA Office for all student needs. A visitor pass will be issued in order to visit a classroom, eat lunch, attend chapel, etc.
- Concerns involving students and classroom procedures are appropriately directed to the teacher.
- Questions concerning school policy should be directed to the administration.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent and teacher conferences are set up at various times throughout the school year to discuss grades, test scores, and discipline issues.

### **Conflict Resolution**

As we relate to one another in the business and activities of a school, situations will inevitably arise that challenge our patience, possibly producing anger and personal conflict. It is vital to the health of our school that we handle these situations in a Godly, Biblical manner. Matthew 18 and other scriptures set forth principles that guide us through such times. We expect our school staff and our families to follow the guidelines below when faced with a conflict in the school setting.

1. Pray about the situation. (Ephesians 4:1-3, Colossians 3:12-13)
2. Decide whether the offense can be overlooked. (Proverbs 19:11 says that the glory of a man is to overlook a transgression .)
3. If the situation does require action, go only to the person with whom the conflict exists. Avoid discussing the conflict with people who are not part of the immediate problem. Avoid "sowing discord among the brethren." (Proverbs 6:19)
4. Be wise in choosing the time and place for this meeting. If anger and tension levels are high, a cooling-off period may be in order.
5. If the conflict is between parent/guardian and teacher and the parent/guardian feels the matter is still unresolved after visiting with the teacher, it is appropriate to take the matter to an administrator. The administrator will mediate disputes between the parties involved during an appointed meeting.
6. Displaying grievances on social media or with other parents or teachers is not handling the issue in a Godly, Christlike manner.

### **Homework**

We are a "homework free" campus. This means that teachers will not specifically assign work to be completed at home. Work not completed during instructional time would need to be completed at home. Exceptions include: reading at home every night, practicing memorization facts and spelling, projects to be completed over time outside the classroom.

### Corrections

Students may correct classwork assignments. If a student decides to make corrections on classwork they can earn half credit of what was missed. Students will have one week from the date the assignment was handed back to turn in corrections. After the one week period is over corrections for that assignment will not be accepted.

### Missed/Late Work Policy:

1. Twenty points will be taken off of an assignment for the first day that it is late. Ten points will be taken off every day thereafter.
2. After a week, a zero will be given on the assignment.

### Cheating/Dishonesty

Students are responsible for preventing the giving or receiving of assistance (written, oral or otherwise) on tests, examinations, final evaluation or class assignments that are to be graded as the work of a single individual. This also includes lying, plagiarism, or forgery. In addition, students will receive a "0" on the assignment in question, and other possible consequences.

### Grade Reports

- One copy of the report is placed in the student's permanent file in the school office.
- The teacher will assess students on their progress toward mastery of assignments, exams, and other classwork.
- Report Cards are sent to the parents at the end of each 9 week period.
- Parents can see current grades and assignments through their FACTS account.
  
- Progress reports are sent home at the end of the 3rd week and 6th week of each quarter.
- Teachers will update grades in FACTS at least once each week. Parents can view the assignment and the grades for each subject through the parent portal in FACTS.

### Grade Requirements

Teachers will take at least 9 grades per subject each grading period. Only one daily grade may be dropped during the quarter, per subject.

### Grading Scale for First grade through Middle School

#### Number Grading Scale

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
F	69 & below

#### Grade Point Average (GPA) Scale

A+	97-100	4.0
A	93-96	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
F	67-69	1.3
F	65-66	1.0
F	64 & below	0

**Kindergarten will receive a detailed developmental checklist indicating progress/mastery in academic, behavioral and social milestones.**

### **Academic Probation**

Students will be placed on academic probation if failing a report card. Elementary students if failing reading, math, or both reading and math. Secondary students if failing grade in any of the following areas; math, science, social studies, and/or ELAR. If students are still failing any of the above subjects at the next report card the academic committee will review the case for possible dismissal. If the semester average is failing the committee will review for possible dismissal or probation.

### **Extra Credit**

Extra credit is often requested by a student and/or parent/guardian in order to improve a student's grades. If a student is completing his/ her assignments in a timely manner with his/her best effort, extra credit is not needed. **Extra credit is not offered in any class.**

### **Promotion to Next Grade**

If your elementary student is consistently struggling academically or socially, a parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the possibility of retention for the following year. Students will not be promoted to the next grade if they have a failing yearly average in math, reading or both (failure is considered anything below a (70).

### **Retention**

Retention will only be a consideration in Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades. If a student in grades 3 or above is failing math, science, social studies, or ELAR, the academic committee will review for possible dismissal from First Odessa Christian Academy.

### **Field Trips**

The Field Trip Release/Emergency Medical Form must be on file before your child **is able to attend a field trip**. Any parent/guardian who wishes to participate as a teacher-assigned chaperone must have a completed Driver/Chaperone Agreement Form, including copies of a current driver's license and current vehicle insurance information. You will also need a current background check on file with FOCA. If you are driving your own child and are not chaperoning others, you do not need a background check, etc.

### **Field Trip Guidelines**

1. FOCA activities are for current FOCA students only. No other students are allowed to attend. Siblings are not allowed to attend.
2. Students may be excluded from the field trip for disciplinary reasons.
3. School rules, regulations, and policies are in effect on all field trips on or off campus.
4. Field trip forms will include all necessary information and must be signed by parent/guardian before each field trip.

### **Fundraising**

The school will have at least two major fundraising events each year; primarily Feed the Need in the fall and Mane Event Gala in the spring. All families are expected to participate as best they can.

### **Standardized Testing**

The NWEA MAP test will be given to students three times per year for all grades. Test results will be provided to parents. A copy of the test results will be kept in each student's permanent file. College readiness exams occur throughout the HS years: PSAT, SAT, Pre ACT, and ACT. The TSI is required before students can take dual credit courses.

## **ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL**

### **Procedure for Admission**

- Apply online at [FOCacademy.org](http://FOCacademy.org) under the ADMISSIONS tab. Click on Student Application. There is a one time fee of \$100 to submit the application.
- Call the school at 432-339-0770 to arrange a tour of the facilities.
- Before acceptance, a copy of the most recent report card and results from STAAR or NWEA MAP tests will be required. If test results are not available, a screening test will be given.
- FOCA reserves the right to dismiss any student based on academic performance or behavioral issues.

### **Kindergarten**

Children must be five years of age on or before September 1st.

### **Special Education**

FOCA does not provide formal special education services. Specific accommodations will be determined by the academic committee on a case by case basis. Students with a specific diagnosis that affects academic achievement should provide documentation (evaluation results, eligibility results) with application. FOCA does not have a licensed diagnostician on staff. It is the responsibility of the family to provide appropriate testing results.

### **Registration**

The enrollment fee of \$150 is non-refundable and is due upon admission or annual registration. Payment assures a place in class. Registration for the coming school year begins in January for currently enrolled students. In order to ensure placement of any new students from current families, it is necessary to proceed with enrollment in January. Registration for the public begins in late January.

### **Tuition Assistance**

- Families are able to apply for tuition assistance on the school website.
- Tuition assistance is based on need.
- The maximum award for elementary students is \$1,500, and for secondary is \$2,000.

### ***Direct Withdrawal Payments***

Payments will be drafted from your bank or credit card account each month through FACTS.

### ***Student Withdrawal***

**To withdraw a student, follow the guidelines listed below:**

1. Notify the school office in writing and complete a withdrawal form.
2. Return all textbooks and school-purchased materials to the office.
3. No student records will be released if fines, fees, technology or tuition is still owed to FOCA
4. If any student is dismissed from the school for academic or disciplinary reasons, that student will not be allowed on campus or at school-sponsored events.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### ***Absences Allowed***

Students must be in attendance a minimum of 93% of the school year. Any student missing more than 6 days per semester will have absences reviewed by the attendance committee and is at risk of repeating the grade level, being placed on probationary status, or dismissal due to lack of attendance.

### ***Request for Make-up Work***

The request for make-up work can be made to the classroom teacher or the school office by 10:00 am on the second day of the student's absence. The make-up work may be picked up at the end of the school day.

### ***Procedures for Absences***

1. Teachers and the receptionist will maintain an accurate record of attendance and tardiness. The attendance record will appear on report cards.

**Please call (432-339-0770) or email the receptionist by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.**

2. Students who are not present for two full academic subjects of the school day may not be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities on that particular day without administrative approval.
3. If a student is not present by 8:15 am, he/she will be counted absent. If the student arrives before 9:30 for elementary, or 9:00 for secondary, the absence will be changed to a tardy. If a student leaves before 9:30 am and does not return, he/she will be counted absent.
4. If an absent student needs homework assignments, students or parents can email the teacher requesting the assignments.
5. The request for make-up work can be made to the classroom teacher or the school office by 10:00 am on the second day of the student's absence. The make-up work may be picked up at 4:00 pm. Students will have one day for each day absent to make up work, provided the absence is excused. A plan for making up work for an extended absence should be arranged with each teacher.
6. An absence that is initiated from the school and given prior approval by the administration is not reflected on the report card. These include school-scheduled field trips, activities, and school sporting events where the participant is involved.

### **Attendance Probation**

**The maximum number of allowable absences for each student in all grades is 12. High school students will not exceed 6 absences per semester.**

Once a student has reached 6 absences, parents will be notified by the classroom teacher. When a student has had 9 absences, the school office will set up a meeting with school administration. If a student has accumulated 12 or more absences, parents will be required to meet with the attendance committee to review student absence data. After review, the committee will determine requirements necessary for continued enrollment or possible dismissal. The committee will take into consideration the reasons for absences.

### **Excused Absences**

The following absences will be considered excused if the school receives a note from the parent within 24 hours after the student returns to school. If a note is not received within 24 hours, the absence will be considered unexcused. These absences include illness of a student or a doctor's appointment, death in the immediate family, unavoidable family emergency, or a court appearance.

- Family trips or parent requested absences will be included in the total absences permitted. Please submit requests for these absences in writing or by email to the principal with at least two weeks' notice. Upon administrative approval, parents need to contact each teacher for their student's assignments. Students are expected to turn in assignments *on the day they return to school*, and they must take tests that are given on that day if the test was announced prior to their departure.
- Make-up Work: Students must make up all work missed due to any absences. Students are required to meet with the teacher to make arrangements for missed work. A student who misses any portion of the day must have a note from the doctor or approval from administration in order to participate in any extracurricular activities that day. A student will have one day for each day (plus one additional day) he/she is absent to make up any work or tests missed in class.

### **Unexcused Absences**

All other absences not mentioned above are **unexcused** and counted with the student's total absences recorded on the student's report card.

**\*\*ALL ABSENCES EXCEPT FOR SCHOOL RELATED FUNCTIONS ARE CONSIDERED PART OF THE 12 ABSENCES FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR.**

### **Attendance Codes**

The following codes will appear on progress reports and report cards. All of these count towards the student's 12 allowed absences for the school year.

- A - excused absence (the parent has called in the student for that day)
- U - unexcused absence (the school was not notified of the absence)
- D - doctor's note covering the day(s) absence(s)
- S - suspension, student was suspended for disciplinary reasons
- F - family trip (these must have prior administrative approval)

### **Tardies**

Students are expected to be in attendance in the chapel area by 7:45 AM and ready for the school day. At 8:00 AM, the double wooden doors on Lee Street will be locked. In order to be on time, students should be dropped off no later than 8:00 AM. Students arriving AFTER 8:00 AM, must be accompanied by an adult and sign in with the school receptionist at the main entrance on 7th Street, and receive a TARDY pass. After 8:15 AM, students will be counted absent.

**Three tardies will count as one absence.** In the event of excessive tardies, an administrator will notify the parents.

### **Medical Appointments**

Please make every effort to schedule medical and dental appointments after school hours.

### **Picking Up Students During the Day**

If you need to check your child out early, parent/guardian must check in at the FOCA Office and sign the student out. Everyone picking up a student must have a photo I.D. and must be on the Student Information Card as an approved person for pick up. If a person is not listed, they will not be allowed to pick up your student.

## **DISCIPLINE**

First Odessa Christian Academy provides an atmosphere of order that is essential in allowing a student to lead a Spirit-controlled, Christ-like life. It is the responsibility of the teacher to define behavioral boundaries consistent with Biblical principles and developmental capability. Teachers will establish classroom procedures and discuss school-wide rules with students at the beginning of the school year. In all cases, the administrator reserves the right to make the final decision for any disciplinary action. Our school code of conduct and discipline applies to After-School Care as well.

### **Classroom Guidelines**

- Remember the teacher is the leader.
- Be kind, truthful, and respectful to everyone.
- Pay attention.
- Follow directions (be diligent to duty).
- Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself (respect others and their property).

### **Philosophy**

The word "discipline" comes from the word "disciple," which means "learner." We believe that God has given parents/guardians the ultimate responsibility in the training of their children. It is the goal of First Odessa Christian Academy to assist in that process, teaching students to possess self-control, respect, obedience, honesty, and moral purity. First Odessa Christian Academy is made up of individuals and families who are attending our school for various reasons. We are a community of Christ-followers, but there are individuals with diverse beliefs. Our students must learn to work and play together in ways that are mutually beneficial and satisfying. We expect students to behave respectfully, intelligently, and with sensitivity to others at all times. Students will learn both to strengthen their individual qualities and to understand when love for others and their beliefs requires us to temper our response. Examples of unacceptable communications include but are not limited to foul language or gestures, sarcasm, disparagement, slander and humiliation. When students express themselves in offensive ways, displaying a lack of respect and sensitivity for others, they will be asked to modify their behavior and a disciplinary intervention will be provided. The best kind of discipline in a school setting is self-discipline. Our desire is to develop such in our students. To that end, corrective measures are sometimes required. These measures are intended to be developmental and not humiliating nor merely punitive. They include (but are not limited to) lunch detention, after-school detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension, and expulsion.

### **Code of Conduct**

Students are expected to represent FOCA in a positive manner even when they are not on school grounds and/or attending school functions (including extracurricular activities). Students and their parents acknowledge and understand that students are subject to discipline for conduct occurring off-campus or during non-school hours, including weekends, holidays, and summers. The administration will deal directly with any student who violates the Student Code of Conduct or draws attention to FOCA in a negative manner which may result in disciplinary action or a student's dismissal from the school. A student may be removed from participation in extracurricular activities or may be excluded from school honors or more for violation of extracurricular standards of behavior for an activity or for violation of the Student Code of Conduct relating to 24/7/365.

### **Bullying Policy**

Negative behavior exhibited by students will be addressed in a fair and balanced manner. Once the school is made aware of any such behavior, the situation will be evaluated as to the seriousness of the behavior by using the guidelines below:

#### **Immature Behavior**

- No intent to be unkind
- Annoying activity that causes discomfort
- Foolish actions that may cause harm to others and/or their property

Immature Behavior - Such behavior will primarily be addressed by the classroom teacher. Consequences for this type of behavior will require restitution and possible loss of privileges and/or detention.

#### **Unkind Behavior**

- Intent is to be unkind
- Behavior is not frequent
- Behavior intensity level is low
- Behavior may reflect impulsivity and is infrequent
- Behavior duration is short

Unkind Behavior - Such behavior may be addressed by the classroom teacher or school administration. Consequences for this type of behavior will require restitution and some type of detention. In addition, a Saturday School may be given. A parent conference will take place.

#### **Bullying Behavior**

Bullying is an act of repeated aggressive behavior (including ridicule) in order to intentionally hurt another person, physically or emotionally. Bullying is characterized by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain power or control over another person.

- Intent is to be harmful (physically or emotionally)
- Behavior is frequent
- Behavior intensity level is moderate to severe
- Behavior duration is long
- Negative behavior is mostly one-sided

Bullying - Such behavior will be determined and addressed by the classroom teacher and school administration. Consequences for this type of behavior will require restitution, a parent conference, and a minimum of one-day suspension.

### ***Guidelines for Disciplinary Actions***

The faculty and staff at First Odessa Christian Academy will lead the integration of Christian beliefs and principles into all areas of life and train students to base their conduct on faith in God. Listing all examples of misconduct that may result in student disciplinary action is impossible. Many of the behaviors listed below have never occurred at FOCA, but the experiences of other schools (particularly area public schools) make these warnings necessary. These disciplinary actions are examples and may be modified at the discretion of teachers and administrators for specific situations.

### ***Level 1 Offenses (Classroom Issues)***

- Not Displaying hallway behavior
- Littering on campus or in buildings
- Chewing gum (Middle School); eating or drinking in class (with the exception of water)
- Excessive talking, disrupting class or Chapel
- Failure to bring materials to class -textbook, paper, pen, etc.
- Horseplay
- Any other offense that which FOCA administration of the school may deem sufficiently detrimental or offense such that it would reasonably fall in this section of misconduct.

**NOTE:** Teachers should attempt to resolve Level 1 behaviors when appropriate before referral to Mr. Parris for official disciplinary action. A series of discipline reports for these offenses may lead to suspension or dismissal from FOCA.

### ***Level 1 Disciplinary Actions***

- Teacher/Student Conference
- Parent/teacher communication and/or teacher discipline

If the student continues their behavior more than three times the discipline moves to the Level Two offense.

### ***Level 2 Offenses***

- Repeated Level One offenses (using teacher discretion)
- Disrespect during Chapel
- Disrespect for teachers
- Dishonesty/Deceit
- Use of abusive or obscene language (written, spoken, or gestures)
- Cheating/plagiarism (homework or minor assignments) \*\*Teachers will give a zero on assignment
- Horseplay with injury (with no intent)
- Inappropriate public display of affection
- Destruction of or damage to property of others
- Failure to follow the instructions of school adults
- Minor occurrences of teasing and taunting
- Out of class or leaving without permission
- Any other offense that which FOCA administration of the school may deem sufficiently detrimental or offense such that it would reasonably fall in this section of misconduct.

### ***Level 2 Disciplinary Actions***

- First Offense- Lunch D-Hall
- Change of Environment either office or classroom
- Third and subsequent offenses become a Level 3 offense

### Level 3 Offenses

- Repeated Level 2 offenses
- Major classroom disruption or disrespect
- Fighting: Students are responsible for settling confrontations in a peaceful manner and without the use of violence. Fighting or play fighting will not be tolerated.
- Use of abusive or obscene language (written, spoken, or gestures)
- Cheating/plagiarism (tests or other major assignments) \*\*Teachers will give a zero on assignment
- Vandalism or defacing school property
- Improper conduct of sexual nature that does not fall into the category of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct as outlined in Level 2 and Level 4
- Significant misuse or abuse of technology
- Significant occurrences of bullying or cyber-bullying
- Any other offense which Mr. Parris of FOCA may deem sufficiently detrimental or offensive such that it would reasonably fall in this section of misconduct.
- Possession of prohibited items

Examples of prohibited items (this is not an exhaustive list)

- Tobacco
- Vapes
- Electronic Cigarettes
- Obscene literature
- Laser pointers
- Electronic games
- Pocket knife

### Level 3 Disciplinary Actions

- First Offense- Suspension up to 3 days
- Second Offense- Offenses will be reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee and recommended consequences (additional suspension or dismissal)
- Third Offense- Offenses will be reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee for dismissal

### Level 4 Offenses

- Misuse, abuse, or distribution of medicine or substances  
**Drug Use/Substance Abuse:** The possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs, controlled substances, or alcohol and/or misuse of over-the-counter or prescription drugs are prohibited. Students connected to, or associated with, any drug-related persons or events may be required to submit to drug testing and subject to dismissal. Students in the presence of these substances may be disciplined as well. Violation of this rule will be dealt with whether on or off-campus. FOCA is considered a drug/alcohol-free zone and therefore practices a zero-tolerance policy as it relates to the possession, use, and/or distribution of illegal drugs or controlled substances on its campus.
- Possession of prohibited items  
**Possession of Weapons:** The possession, use, threat of use, distribution, or attempted distribution (by sale, gift, or otherwise) of any type of operable or inoperable weapons such as firearms, knives, switchblades, pepper spray, mace, tear gas, bullets, fireworks and other explosives are expressly forbidden. Whether designed as a weapon or not, an object will be considered a weapon if it is used as a weapon. This includes toys and/or replicas of weapons.  
**Tobacco Use:** The possession, use, or distribution of tobacco or tobacco/nicotine products such as but not limited to electronic cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, etc., is prohibited. FOCA is considered a tobacco/nicotine-free zone.
- Sexual Misconduct (including but not limited to lewd and obscene behavior; intercourse; or homosexual behavior)
- Sexual Harassment or Abusive Comments (including but not limited to sexual harassment or abusive comments)
- Physical assault or threats of physical assault

- Disorderly conduct
- **Violation of Fire Safety Regulations:** Violations of fire regulations, including tampering with fire alarms, using matches, lighters, or firecrackers, will be considered serious offenses.
- Any other offense which Mr. Parris may deem sufficiently detrimental or offensive such that it would reasonably fall under this section of misconduct.

**NOTE:** These are the most serious offenses and pertain to behavior anytime and anyplace.

#### **Level 4 Disciplinary Actions**

**Level four disciplinary offenses are immediately reviewed by the Disciplinary Review Committee for dismissal.**

#### **Out-of-School Suspension**

An administrator has the authority at any time to suspend a student for any violation of a school rule. The length of suspension will be one to three days as determined by the administrator. A student will be suspended from school following a parent/guardian communication. Specific changes in attitudes and actions will be expected prior to readmission. If there is a third suspension, the student and parent/guardian must meet with the Review Committee before returning to class.

#### **Dismissal**

**Attendance at First Odessa Christian Academy is a privilege. Any student whose conduct, in or out of school, that shows him/her to be in opposition to the basic principles and purposes of First Odessa Christian Academy will be required to withdraw from the school.**

Dismissal will be required if it becomes apparent that the school will not be able to meet the needs of a student or that the student's behavior is preventing classroom instruction. When the Review Committee recommends dismissal, the date of withdrawal from the school will be set and the withdrawal procedure followed.

#### **Search and Seizure**

School personnel may conduct a reasonable search of a student, his/her backpack, desk, locker, and/ or belongings when they have probable suspicion to believe that the student has an item in his/her possession that may constitute a criminal offense under the laws of this state or other items prohibited by school rules.

#### **Cyber-bullying**

First Odessa Christian Academy takes the safety of its students very seriously. Students have the right to feel safe and secure while at school. **Bullying and/or cyber-bullying** may be punishable by detention, suspension, or expulsion. Both bullying and cyber-bullying are intentional, hurtful acts, words, or other behavior such as but not limited to, name-calling, threatening or hurtful letters or emails, text or instant messaging, telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and hostile and/or defamatory personal web sites. Although cyber-bullying will most likely occur off-campus, the effects of it are definitely felt on campus. Therefore, FOCA will take the appropriate steps necessary to stop the act and restore the safe atmosphere of our campus.

We have been advised by the Odessa Police Department that all incidents of sexting and similar behaviors including all social media must be reported to the police. Students in After School Care will be governed by the same basic code of conduct as outlined in the Student Policies handbook.

## TECHNOLOGY

### *Use Policy*

The use of the FOCA technological resources (network and computing equipment, etc.) is a privilege granted to all FOCA students. Students are expected to abide by the provisions listed below. If a user violates any of these provisions, his/her privilege may be terminated, disciplinary action may be taken, and future access may be denied.

### *Acceptable Uses*

The student is not to use a computer without permission from a teacher. The use of the school network and computing equipment by a FOCA student must be for educational purposes only and must be consistent with the educational objectives of FOCA. FOCA reserves the right to place restrictions on materials that a user accesses through the school network. The transmission of any material in violation of any U. S. or state regulation is prohibited, including, but not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material. Students are **not** to check their personal email at school, play video games, view non-educational videos, or enter an unauthorized site.

### *Unacceptable Uses*

Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the FOCA network or go beyond their authorized access on the network. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing." Unauthorized access includes accessing software, games, pictures, music, or any networking site that is not intended for a FOCA school project, attempting to log on through another person's account or accessing another person's files. Users are responsible for their individual network account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from using their account. Students should not provide their network password to any other student. Users will not make any attempt to disrupt the operation of the FOCA network or vandalize any of the technology equipment. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy hardware or software, another person's data files, or any other networks connected to the FOCA network. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Vandalism will result in the cancellation of technology privileges and disciplinary action. Printers are to be used for school work only and only before and after school or between classes.

### *Technology Code of Ethics*

***All users of FOCA's technological resources will adhere to the following code of ethics:***

- I will strive to act in all situations with honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights and property of others and to help others to behave in a similar fashion.
- I will make a conscious effort to be a good testimony to my fellow students, faculty members, and others as I use the school's equipment and communicate my ideas to others.
- I will strive to apply Philippians 4:8 to all of my academic work and electronic communication.

***"Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."***

## UNIFORM DRESS CODE

### *Required for all students*

- Appropriate shoes for PE and recess
- Shirts must be tucked in
- House ties must be worn on Chapel day, and are optional on other days.

### *NOT permitted for all students*

- Clothing that is saggy, baggy, has holes, or is too tight
- Undergarments or cleavage showing
- Cleats, flip flops, slides, or Crocs
- Heelies (wheeled tennis shoes)
- No hats, caps, or hoods worn in the building unless designated as a "hat day"

### *Boys' Grooming*

- Hair should be neat and attractively maintained. Hair must be a natural color. Extreme styles that detract from the educational atmosphere of the classroom are not permitted.
- No earrings or other body piercing jewelry or visible tattoos
- No facial hair
- Shorts length should be no more than four inches above the knees.

### *Girls' Grooming*

- Hair should be neat and attractively maintained. Hair must be a natural color. Extreme styles that detract from the educational atmosphere of the classroom are not permitted.
- Make-up is not permitted in elementary school.
- Skort, skirt, or shorts length should be no more than four inches above the knees.
- No body piercing jewelry or tattoos
- Leggings may be worn only with skorts, skirt, or shorts

### *Coordinated Dress Attire*

Students are required to wear the school uniform every day, unless otherwise notified. The uniform consists of:

- sweater vest with monogram
- short or long sleeve Oxford button down shirt
- house tie
- shorts, pants, skirt, skort, or jumper in khaki or navy blue
- Skirts and jumpers purchased thru French Toast will have a plaid pattern

### *Additional Guidelines*

- Secondary students must wear PE workout uniforms in PE & Athletics.
- Only the FOCA fleece jacket or a solid navy blue jacket with no logos are allowed to be worn in class.
- Hoodies can only be worn in PE or Athletics.

## SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

### Lunch service

- Lunches can be purchased monthly through RenWeb (FACTS).
- A menu will be provided monthly. Parents must return the menu and have paid for lunches by the given date on the menu.
- Parent/guardian may select as many meals from the menu as his/her child wishes to eat for the month.
- Parent/guardian will specify the number of lunches for the week or month and submit payment through RenWeb (FACTS). **No lunch orders will be accepted after the deadline.**
- If a student is absent they will still be responsible for the lunch that was ordered.
- Children may bring lunches to school
- Parents/guardians and guests may also bring lunches from outside sources.
- Parents/guardians or guests dropping off lunches should take them to the school office. Lunches must be labeled clearly with the student's name.
- If a student forgets his/her lunch, the school will do their best to provide a lunch, and the parent/guardian will be charged for that meal.
- Parents/guardians and guests are invited to eat with their children anytime. Please sign in at the School Office and get a visitor's badge.
- Parents/guardians and guests will need to bring their own lunch unless a hot meal is purchased prior in RenWeb.
- No drinks of any kind allowed in classrooms except water. Any drinks brought for lunch must be finished before leaving the lunchroom.
- All students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school each day. Refill stations are available.

### Parties

Parties for elementary grades are only allowed at Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter, and end of the year.

### Birthdays

A student's birthday is very special. Parents/guardians are allowed to bring a small edible treat to be consumed at lunch or scheduled snack time. There will be **no** classroom birthday parties.

For birthday parties outside of school, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Invitations may not be distributed in school unless the entire class is invited.
- If they are distributed in school, they may be distributed only at a designated time approved by the teacher.

## HEALTH and SAFETY

### **Immunizations**

Immunization records must be kept up to date. Complete shot records must be received within thirty days of the first day of school, or it will be necessary to exclude the student from attendance. If your child is unable to receive an immunization, a written statement from the child's physician stating the reason is required. Students must be vaccinated as required by the State of Texas, or provide the appropriate vaccine exemption document(s) or doctor's note exempting student from vaccinations.

### **Immunizations requirements can be found online here:**

[https://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/pdf/6-14-2022-2023-MinReq\\_K-12.pdf](https://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/pdf/6-14-2022-2023-MinReq_K-12.pdf)  
or by requesting a copy of the document from the FOCA Office.

### **Medical Emergencies**

- A Student Emergency form is required every year for every student at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment.
- All major changes in your child's health and/or medication or medical procedures, or any changes in phone numbers must be kept current by the parent/guardian.
- In the event of an accident or emergency, 9-1-1 will be called if deemed necessary by the school nurse or Head of Schools.
- In the event of an accident or emergency, the child's parent/guardian will be notified immediately after the welfare of the child has been attended to. In the event that the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the contact person listed on the Student Emergency Form will be called.

### **Medication**

- Any student who requires non-prescription or prescription medication at school must have a completed, physician-signed medication form on file in the school office, including the dosage and time to be given. State law permits school personnel to give medication to students at school only when it is provided by parent/guardian and with written permission from the student's doctor.
- Non-prescription medication (Ibuprofen, Tylenol, etc.) must be in its original container labeled with the student's name and dosage.
- Prescription medication must be in its original container and properly labeled by a registered pharmacist.
- The student must leave the medication with the school office and report to the school office at the proper time.
- Students are to never have medication of any type in their possession including backpack, locker etc.

### **Illness**

If a student becomes ill during the day the office will call a parent to come pick them up. If the parent has not arrived within a reasonable time, the office will call one of the emergency contacts on the student's SIC card to pick them up.

Students are required to stay home if they have had a fever of 100 degrees or more within the last 24 hours, an unusual rash, matted eyes, pink eye, diarrhea (two or more loose bowel movements in an hour), vomiting, or other symptoms of illness, such as a yellow or green runny nose. After an illness, children must be free of fever or have been on medication for a 24-hour period before returning. Children may return to school only after symptoms are clear. Children may not return to school after a communicable disease until a physician or the health department releases them. The child must bring a statement from the physician to that effect.

## **Contagious diseases**

We reserve the right to request a doctor's release in writing before the student returns to class.

- Parent/guardian will be notified of the first diagnosed case in a classroom of the communicable diseases listed below.
- Diphtheria Hepatitis A Polio Tuberculosis Encephalitis Hepatitis B Rubella (German Measles) Typhoid Fever Fifth Disease Meningitis Rubeola (measles) Whooping Cough Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease Mumps Scarlet Fever **Chicken Pox:** Parent/guardian will be notified if a second physician-diagnosed case of the disease occurs within six weeks of the first diagnosed case.

## **Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather such as snow or ice, parents/guardians should tune to any local TV station for information regarding the closing of school. An announcement will generally be made the morning of the school day between 6:00 and 6:30 am. Our primary concern is for the safety of students, parent/guardians, and teachers. We will respect the parent's/ guardian's judgment if they do not feel they can safely drive his/her child to school. FOCA will send an email or classroom text message communicating the schedule changes for a bad weather day.

## **Drills**

We practice three kinds of drills at First Odessa Christian Academy - fire, weather, and intruder.

## **Building Evacuation**

In case the building has to be evacuated because of an emergency and the parent/guardian cannot be reached by the emergency contact phone number, the student will be transported to the other church property at 601 N. Lee Ave.

## **Classroom and Lunch Room Visits**

We welcome visitors to our classrooms and/or lunchrooms. However, we want to minimize disruption to classroom instruction. Visits will not be scheduled during tests, the last three weeks of school, and the day before a holiday or a special event day. At the time of your visit, you must sign in at the FOCA Office and receive a visitor's badge. You must also sign out at the conclusion of your visit. At school parents, guardians, or any other adults are not allowed to address or discipline any student other than their own. Parents, guardians, or other adults must use appropriate language on campus. Observing one's child in a classroom setting can provide the parent/guardian with helpful insight into the child's "world."

### **Rules for classroom visits are as follows:**

- There is a maximum of two adults allowed in the classroom.
- Younger children are not allowed in the classroom.
- There should be little or no conversation with other observers or the children.
- Parents/guardians are asked to take a seat in the back of the room or where the visitor's chair has been placed.
- Parents/guardians are asked not to sit next to their child's desk.
- Parents/guardians are asked to refrain from conversing with the teacher until before or after school to discuss their child's progress.

### ***Things to look for during classroom observation:***

- Your child's response to the teacher.
- Your child's response to the other children in the classroom. (At times, try to observe P.E. or lunch periods when children are freer to interact with students.)
- Does your child prefer group activities, or does he/she prefer being alone?
- Do you see areas of strength/weakness in your child's academics?
- Do you see certain areas of his life where you need to help him develop godly character qualities? (Please realize that your child will not react exactly the same way as when you are not in the classroom.)
- Is your child attentive?
- Does he/she ask questions when he/she does not understand?
- Does your child seem sleepy, tired, or fidgety?
- Does your child seem prepared for the day's work?
- Is your child easily distracted?

### ***The following list may help you find areas where you may help your child after observation:***

- My child needs more rest.
- My child needs to be more organized.
- My child needs to be more attentive.
- My child needs to build more relationships with peers.
- My child needs to learn to ask questions when he/she does not understand.

### ***Prospective Students or Others***

- Students are welcome to shadow in a specified grade for a partial or full day, when prearranged with administration.
- Youth pastors are welcome to join students for lunch. Please check in at the Welcome Center.
- Alumni and families from out of the area are welcome to visit at lunch after checking in at the Welcome Center, but will not be allowed in classrooms during scheduled class time.
- Former FOCA students who have chosen to attend another local school are asked to visit our students outside of school.

### ***NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE***

First Odessa Christian Academy makes no distinction concerning an individual's race, color, or ethnic background because we acknowledge that there can be no preferential treatment with God (Romans 2:11). We are bound to extend our ministry to all we can reach if we are to carry out our Lord's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18). First Odessa Christian Academy neither supports nor endorses the World or National Council of Churches, or any world, national, regional, or local organizations which give Christian recognition to non-believers or advocate a multi-faith union.

First Odessa Christian Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic background in the enrollment of students.

## **STATEMENT of FAITH**

**First Odessa Christian Academy adheres to the doctrine found in the First Baptist Church Bylaws.**

### **First Baptist Church Bylaws**

#### **The Bible**

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, divinely inspired; that it is inerrant in the original manuscripts and preserved by God for us; that it is authoritative for this church and each of us for every age.

#### **God**

We believe that God exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are one God. We believe God created the universe by His Power and Word. We believe that God is all knowing, all powerful and ever present.

#### **Jesus Christ**

We believe Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father into the world to save sinners. We believe that Jesus Christ was virgin born, sinless in life and mighty in words and deeds. We believe Jesus was both God and man, that He was crucified for our sins, and was bodily raised from the dead. He then ascended to His Father's side where He is head of the church and intercedes for believers. We believe Jesus Christ is coming again personally, visibly and bodily to reign as Lord.

#### **Holy Spirit**

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person, is God, and has all the divine characteristics. He indwells all believers, baptizes and seals them at the moment of salvation. He fills them in response to confession of sin and surrender to Him. He provides understanding of spiritual truth and guidance in doing the will of God.

#### **Salvation**

We believe that Jesus, through His death on the cross, provided salvation for all. However, to receive salvation one must repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ alone. The true believer is eternally secure and cannot lose his salvation. He may, however, lose his joy by sin and bring the loving discipline of the Father upon himself. Through this salvation, all who have received Christ will at death depart to be with Him in their spirits and at Christ's return receive a new body which will be like His glorious body.

#### **The Church**

We believe a New Testament church is a local body of baptized believers who have agreed together to worship Jesus Christ, edify the believers, evangelize the lost and minister to others.

The church has two ordinances: Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

- Baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the new life we have in Him.
- The Lord's Supper is a reminder of Christ's death and anticipates His Second Coming.

Board approved August 11, 2022