

## Student Handbook

The purpose of a handbook is to keep *channels of communication open*. There may be changes as needed to this handbook. These will be communicated in writing. If there are ever any questions or problems with this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the principal.

### Educational Approach

Our school's mission is to help students:

- find their purpose in God's history of grace and
- learn the skills they need to exercise the gifts He has given them

The Classical Method is used for teaching and learning, with a special emphasis on college and career preparedness. Classrooms are not grade-leveled by age; instead, students at roughly the same academic level are grouped together.

### How to Succeed at this School

- 1) Be there!
- 2) Make homework a priority before fun time—keep up with assignments or *get ahead*.
- 3) Follow the four rules: Do to others as you would have them do to you. Be safe. Respect others. Do everything as to the Lord.
- 4) Communicate with the teacher if a class-related problem arises.

### Attendance and Sick Policy

Students are required to attend classes each day that school is open. Regular attendance is critical to a student's progress; in fact, if a student is absent more than 10% of the time, that student may be dropped from the class. If, however, a student is sick or has another unavoidable reason for being absent, he/she should bring a note signed by the parent with the explanation. The principal decides whether or not it is an excused absence. Common reasons for excused absences include:

- sickness
- death in the family
- doctor/dentist appointment

Please try to schedule routine appointments during non-school hours. If it must be during school hours, the student should return to school for the remaining classes. Possible reasons for unexcused absences include:

- private lessons
- vacation or business trips
- healing from injuries where it does not affect school work and the doctor has said the student may return to school

For excused absences, the student will have the opportunity to make up missed work. The number of days absent is the number of days allowed to complete the missed work, in addition to keeping up with regular assignments. Arrangements should be made in advance if possible. Unexcused absences are not given the opportunity to make up work afterwards. This will affect the student's grades. If parents anticipate the student being absent frequently, they should consider a different school.

Anyone who exhibits the following needs to stay home from school:

- Green, yellow, or thick nasal discharge or discharge from the eyes indicating an infection
- Excessive coughing or sore throat
- Wheezing or chest congestion ("croup")
- Rash associated with viral or bacterial infection
- ANY contagious illness
- ANY fever in the last 24 hours
- ANY vomiting in the last 24 hours
- ANY diarrhea in the last 24 hours

Also, in the unfortunate circumstance that your family is "blessed" with lice, please do not participate in school until complete treatment has been administered. Periodic head-checks may be administered by the principal or school health officer in a discreet manner.

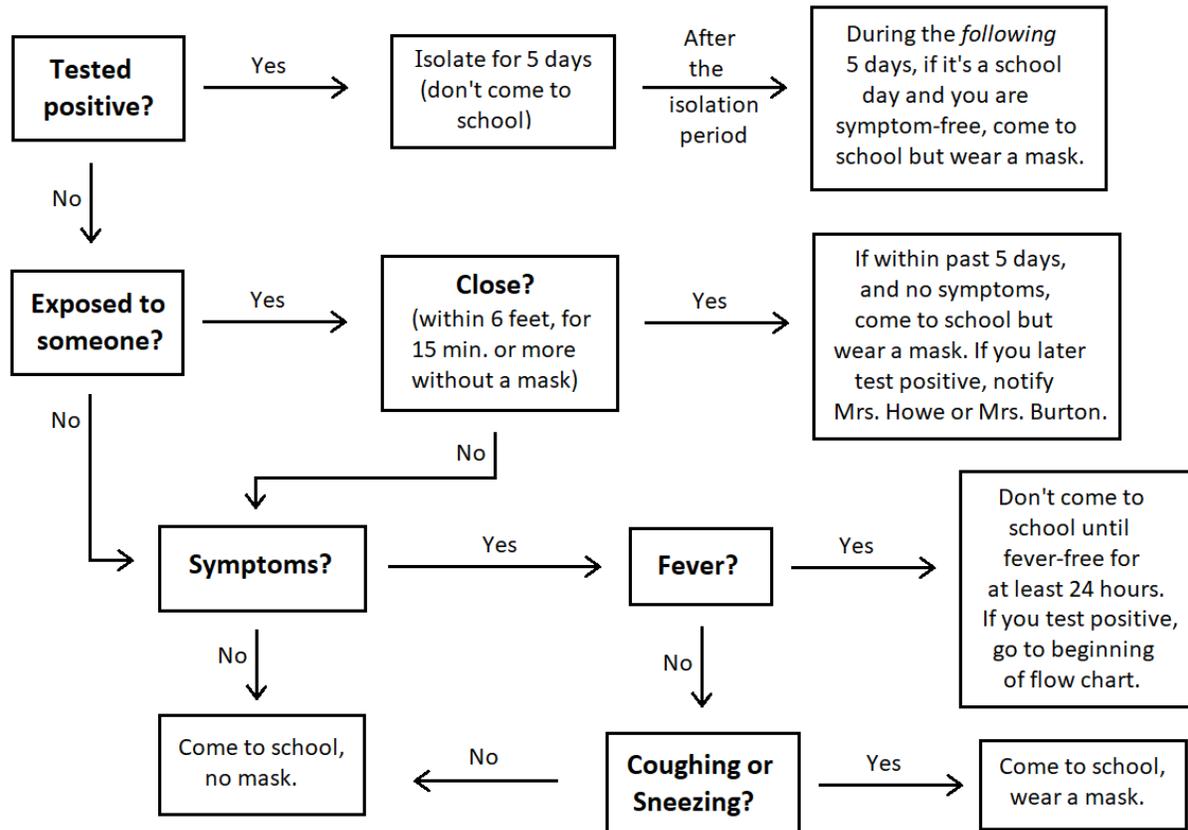
#### Symptoms-based Covid Policy

1. If you tested positive for covid, please isolate for 5 days. After that isolation period, for the *following* 5 days, please wear a mask if it's a school day.
2. If you were around someone who tested positive for covid, but it was not close, come to school. No mask required. If you develop symptoms, please get tested and let Mrs. Howe or Mrs. Burton know if there's a positive test result.
3. If you were close to someone who tested positive for covid ("close" means less than 6 feet away, for 15 minutes or more, without a mask), but you do not have symptoms, then please come to school and wear a mask. If you do not develop symptoms for 5 days, and then a school day comes, then no mask is needed.
4. If you are coughing or sneezing but do not have a fever, please come to school but wear a mask.

5. If you have a fever, please do not come to school until you are fever-free for at least 24 hours.

Symptoms: a change in the way things smell or taste, shortness of breath, fever, headache, coughing, sneezing, significant muscle pains and aches

Focus Preparatory School Board on 3/8/22 asked that this policy be written up and given to families in an easy-to-read format. See below.



Remember to wash your hands!

School Times and Dates

Students should arrive at their classes 5 minutes early. Excessive tardies and absences indicate that this school is not a good fit for that family, and the student will be dropped from the class. If parents cannot pick up students by the end of their class(es), it is the parent’s responsibility to make arrangements for someone else to pick them up. A full study hall period must be considered as a class, with tuition paid for it.

School is in session on Mondays. The School Calendar for 2022-2023 is:

August 22 – First Day of School  
September 5 – Labor Day  
October 25-27 – Pilot Conferences  
October 25 – Beginning of Second Quarter  
November 21-25 – Thanksgiving Break  
December 14-January 1 – Christmas Break  
January 16 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
January 17 – Third Quarter Begins  
March 13-17 – Spring Break  
March 28-30 – Pilot Conferences, optional  
March 21 – Fourth Quarter Begins  
April 7 – Good Friday  
May 22 – Last Day of School

### Emergencies

The school will conduct fire drills and severe weather drills at certain times to prepare for emergencies. In case of an emergency where students must be evacuated off the property, we will walk to Calvary church at 204 N. Main St. If students must be moved out of the vicinity, we will go to the American Legion building at the intersection of Silent Valley Road and Highway 183.

If a student becomes sick at school, medication will not be given without written permission from the parents. Parents will be called, and the student will be allowed to rest quietly until a parent or designated person (on enrollment forms) picks them up. If the teacher believes it to be life-threatening or extremely urgent, she/he will call 911. Students will at no time be left without authorized adult supervision.

If a student has medication that is of a critical nature that must be given during school hours, an administrator or the health officer will administer the medication. Other teachers/staff cannot give medication.

Parents will be notified by text, email, and/or phone if there are urgent weather conditions or another reason, such as utility failure. It is important that another emergency contact is available in case a parent cannot be reached.

### Student Conduct

The school's conduct expectations can be summed up in four simple rules:

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Be safe.

Respect others.

Do everything as unto the Lord.

These four simple rules outline the type of behavior expected at our school, as it is necessary for a good learning environment. Specific things which would fall under each rule include:

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

- Take care of school books, supplies, etc. and do not touch others' property without their permission
- No teasing or bullying
- Share and take turns

Be safe.

- Wash hands with soap if dirty, before meals, and after going to the bathroom
- Do not speak to strangers, unless directed by the teacher
- Cooperate during fire drills and severe weather drills
- Avoid coming to school when sick (See Sick Policy above)
- No weapons of any kind at school
- No illegal activity, including drugs or alcohol
- Stay in the school boundaries, which are: in the building, in the schoolyard, and on sidewalks going to and from these two. Do not go into the parking lot or nearby

streets or businesses, unless by permission and accompanied by an adult. ***This is a closed campus for lunch.***

Respect others.

- Speak respectfully to the teacher and to others
- Keep hands to yourself
- Do your own work (no copying or cheating, see Academic Dishonesty below)  
If you use work from some other source, for example in a report, be sure to give credit to the author or artist.

Do everything as unto the Lord.

- Obey the teacher and class rules
- Turn in work on time and neatly done
- Deal with frustration in a positive way

- Act in a calm and mannerly way (no running, except at recess or organized physical activities)
- If items are taken out during P.E., put them back at the end of that period
- Keep classroom and especially desk area clean
- Wear modest clothes suited to learning (see Dress Code section).
- School standards apply to social media and personal websites (Christ-like content)

### Academic Dishonesty

Cheating in the form of (a) copying others' or the answer key's work and presenting it as one's own, (b) lying about data, (c) telling the teacher that the assignment was completed when it was not, (d) giving or receiving answers on a test, (e) bribing someone else to do one's homework, and (f) preventing someone else from doing their assignment by sabotage such as tearing a page out of their book is *not tolerated*. If a student has cheated in any way, a conference will be called with the student, parents, teacher, and principal. The assignment will receive a grade of 0 with no opportunity to make up the grade, and the student will have to say and write an apology. The student will be placed on academic probation for the rest of the year. If the student chooses to cheat again, the student, parents, teacher, and principal will meet with the board. The student may be given further consequences or may be dismissed from the school permanently. Education without integrity is meaningless.

### Discipline

Discipline means training. Its purpose is to help form Christian character. If students do not follow the conduct rules, they will usually be given one warning. If they do not adjust their behavior, they may:

- Lose a privilege
- Be sent to a designated "Cool-down" area
- Be assigned an unpleasant chore or task, such as writing a sentence many times
- Write a letter of apology
- Pay for it if they break something
- Have a grade lowered if it is academically related
- Have parents called
- Have a parent-teacher or parent-teacher-principal meeting called
- Be sent home

Examples of the privileges which students may lose include:

- using technology

- interacting with others at free time or lunch
- getting to participate in a special activity

#### Reasons for Dismissal:

- Bringing a gun on the school property
- Bringing alcoholic drinks or illegal drugs on the school property
- If a student does physically combative actions to another person, such as purposely hitting, kicking, or fighting, or bullies another person, she/he will be suspended from school for one week. If the student does another physically combative action or bullies someone, he/she will be dismissed permanently from school.
- Academic dishonesty, second offense (see section above)
- Other criminal or serious harmful/threatening behavior

#### Dress Code

Our goal with clothing is to bring glory to God, to be comfortable while learning, and to look professional to prepare for college and future careers. Teachers and students alike will follow a professional dress code. We want this to be very clear and openly stated.

Pants – Shorts and skirts/dresses are allowed, no shorter than 6 in. above the middle of the knee. If a skirt is worn above the knee, shorts should be under it. Pants can be nice jeans, khakis, etc., but no skin-tight legging-type stretch pants should be worn without having a skirt or dress following the 6-in. above the knee rule to cover them.

Shirts – should look nice with no non-Christian writing, logos, holes, or cut-outs. No tank-tops, spaghetti straps, or shirts with midriff showing are allowed. If a shirt is sheer or see-through fabric, the undershirt must also follow dress code (no tank tops, etc.).

#### General Rules for All Days –

- No holes or obvious stains
- Hats should be removed in the school building
- Clothes should not be tight, no cleavage showing, and shoulders must be covered (no tank tops, visible undergarments, holes, or cut-outs)
- Hair and clothes should not be startling or interruptive to learning, including mohawks or un-natural colors of dyed hair. Only themes consistent with being a Christian are allowed.
- No piercings, except for girls' earrings
- No outrageous make-up or items that distract from learning

- Boys should not have hair past their collars
- Shoes should be practical for walking: no flip-flops or beach-type shoes, and no high heels. Non-startling boots are allowed (no platform, biker, very tall lace-up, go-go type boots, etc.), but keep in mind that students may be participating in gym time, so sneaker-type shoes are recommended.
- If a person already has a tattoo, we ask that it be covered. Refrain from getting additional tattoos.

If anyone does not follow these rules, they may have to change into a different set of clothes/shoes which will be provided from the office. In addition, a note will be sent home as a reminder, and the student may lose a privilege for that week. If compliance becomes an issue (after more than 3 times) for one student, fees may be charged and/or the student may be asked to find a different educational option.

### Technology

Technology is a tool to communicate and learn. It can also hold people back from following God and from using all the intellect He gave us. In other words, it can become a crutch.

In the Grammar School, no personal technical devices can be brought by grammar students (grades K-5) into the classroom, including a cell phone or music playing device. If a student brings one, it will be kept by the office person until a parent comes to pick him/her up.

In the Dialectic and Rhetoric classes (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>), students may bring phones, but they must put them in their assigned technology bay, on silent, during the entire time they are here. If a parent needs to contact their child, they should call the school office at 512-537-0493 or the principal, Mrs. Howe, at 512-924-5494. Note that all teachers will have a phone in their classrooms in case of emergency. Failure to abide by these rules may result in a fee.

There will be no computer/video games, Youtube, or similar digital entertainment during school hours (8:30-4:35), even in study hall.

If the teacher wants the students to use their devices for learning, he/she may ask students to retrieve them. However, there will be no non-school use, such as texting, checking email, and social media, during class. After school, students may use their own devices for personal purposes as long as they do not violate school policy. These are privileges that can be lost. Note that the entire school may occasionally have technology-free days.

### School Technology Policy

- Use technology with Christ in mind and following other school conduct expectations

- Do not download, install, or modify any program on school devices without permission
- Do not post or distribute unauthorized materials
- Do not copy material and claim it as your own
- Do not tamper with others' files
- Do not use the school computers or laptops for non-school-related activities
- ***Only classical and Christian-message music is allowed to be played on the school grounds.*** No music or data that is offensive to Christ or that is inconsistent with the Bible's message is even allowed on devices at school, whether it is personal or school property.
- The principal and teachers are permitted to check any technical device and ask the student to remove offensive content when retrieving it after school, even if it is not being listened to or used at the time. *Unannounced periodic checks may be performed of any and every device.* Technological devices with offensive content will immediately be put in a locked area in the office until the school day is over, at which time the music or data must be removed. Parents will be notified.

### Progress and Grades

Students will be graded for their work. Progress reports will be sent out after the first half of a quarter, and report cards will be sent out at the end of every quarter.

There is no late work accepted. If a little grace is needed, the teacher can decide to accept work by a certain time the night it is due (talk to the individual teacher).

Academic report cards are skills-based. Each class has specific skills that must be mastered. If a student has not demonstrated *mastery* of a subject, even if she/he did not 'fail', that subject may need to be repeated.

### Dialectic and Rhetoric School

Grades will be given according to the following scale:

A	90-100	Excellent – student goes beyond what was expected
B	80-89	Good – student has mastered the material
C	70-79	Fair – student needs help to fully understand the material
F	below 70	Poor – student must repeat the class and might need to consider a different education option

Number grades for each subject are given. High school transcripts are available upon request of the parents or student. Three business days' notice should be given.

If a student is making below a 50 in any subject on a quarterly report card, they will be *automatically* dropped from the class. A student may also be dropped from a class if their behavior or attitudes are not pro-learning.

Each student can meet at a *Pilot Conference* with their teacher(s) and parents in October and/or March to review their individual academic progress.

If a teacher would like to offer out-of-class tutoring, she/he will arrange that independently of Focus Preparatory, and families should expect to pay the going rate.

### Mobile Classroom

If the host church needs the building during school hours, we may have a mobile classroom day. This is when the whole school packs up their schoolwork and goes somewhere else to do school, like at a park. This is a privilege; if a student's behavior is anything below excellent on a mobile learning expedition, he or she will not be allowed to go on the next one. She or he will be given an assignment in an alternative place—usually at home—instead.

A permission slip—including a statement releasing the school and its employees from liability – will be sent home in advance if there is a mobile classroom day. It must be returned, signed, by the day before the trip. Volunteers will be needed as chaperones/drivers, and there will sometimes be small fees for admission and/or transportation.

### Environmental Responsibility

We believe that God made the world and gave mankind the special responsibility of stewardship of the earth. We practice energy and resource conservation, recycling, and composting.

### Lunches

Students must bring their own lunches. Lunches should be labeled with the owner's name. A refrigerator and a microwave or toaster oven will be provided. The students are also responsible for clean-up.

### Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Our school promotes healthy lifestyles, not because it is popular or unpopular but because we want to be ready and able to do what God has purposed for our lives. The following guidelines are in place.

- 1) Healthy snacks, lunches, and refreshments are encouraged.

- 2) Only one dessert or type of sugary snack will be served at birthdays or any school celebration. Any party-like event must be approved by the principal, and the 'only one dessert or sugary snack' rule will apply there as well.
- 3) If a class member has a food allergy or dietary restriction, please have an alternative available. If it is a potentially life-threatening allergy, parents will be notified and the class will have special restrictions to follow. Don't forget to do to others as you would have them do to you.
- 4) No sodas, energy drinks, red kool-aid, or red sugary drinks are allowed during school including red sports drinks. Carbonated flavored water is allowed, as long as it is not red.

### Athletics

At this time, school-sponsored athletics are not available. We do promote physical activity by having P.E. classes. If more is desired, we encourage students to take advantage of sports opportunities available in the community or by other Christian leagues in the area.

### Visitors

Parents are encouraged to visit school on regular classroom days from time to time. All visitors must first report to the school office and sign in. They may be asked to present a valid government-issued I.D. ***Student-aged friends and relatives are not allowed.*** All visitors must be polite in dealing with school staff. As with students and school staff, visitors are not permitted to be disrespectful, threatening, abusive, lewd, or profane. While we encourage parents to be involved in their children's education, if frequent and lengthy visits to the classroom become disruptive to teaching and learning, the principal or school board can ask the parent to limit the frequency and duration of classroom visits in order to support the learning process. On the other hand, if a teacher needs help in the classroom, she/he can certainly request a parent to be there, especially for hands-on or active projects.

### Standardized Testing

Usually, the last week of May is when the Iowa Test of Basic Skills is offered. This test is simply given to identify strengths and areas that need improvement. It does not affect the student's academic grades, nor do students study or prepare for it in any way. It simply offers a snapshot of where the student is, academically. Students in 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grades are encouraged to take the PSAT in place of the ITBS; in 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, the SAT and ACT are often taken instead of the ITBS. *Office staff will order the Iowa test, but families must pay for these tests individually at the time they are ordered.*

### End of School Celebration

At the end of the school year we may have an end-of-the-year program for all grades to celebrate the students' accomplishments. Students can be presented with awards and may have an opportunity to demonstrate skills and knowledge they have learned. Focus Preparatory will also have a high school graduation program, if there are any seniors, local homeschoolers included, who want to participate. Please visit with the principal for more information.

### Faculty and Staff

All faculty and staff are chosen because of their love of kids and their gift for relating wisdom to them. The hiring process is filled with communication and prayer. On the spiritual side, the teachers have a strong personal relationship with Christ and a Biblical foundation. On the academic side, teachers have a college degree or teacher's certificate. All staff provide references and undergo a background check. Please support these wonderful teachers by giving help and encouragement whenever you can.