

**FACULTY
HANDBOOK
2008-2009**

First Academy-Leesburg

A Ministry of First Baptist Church
Leesburg, Florida

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I. Introduction

A. Historical Sketch

The primary purpose of First Baptist Leesburg is to reach our world for Christ. With this goal in mind, the church decided to investigate the possibility of sponsoring a Christian elementary school. The church took the initial step of faith by voting in 1988 to organize a pilot program with one kindergarten and one first grade class. During that year, church leaders evaluated their pilot classes, weighed the pros and cons, and decided to establish First Academy-Leesburg.

The school began its 1989-1990 year with two kindergartens, one first, and one second grade class, striving to add one grade during each year until it became a fully staffed elementary school. The 1992-1993 school year, began with a new building housing three classrooms and a library. A fifth grade class and a second first grade class were also added. During 1993, the church voted to add a middle school, with grades six through eight being added as space, students, and finances were available.

The school year 1993-1994 began with an additional building which housed three classrooms, an administrative suite for the administrator and a work area for teachers. An additional second grade and a sixth grade were added, making a total of ten classrooms. Enrollment was 165.

For 1994-1995, a second third grade and a new seventh grade class were added and enrollment was 210. At midterm, a school secretary was hired to assist the administrator.

The 1995-1996 school year began with the addition of another building. The school added a second fourth grade and a certified P.E. teacher.

The 1996-1997 school year saw the addition of a computer lab and a Spanish program. Enrollment was about 240 and the first eighth grade class began.

In 1997-1998 enrollment figures totaled 267.

During the 2000-2001 school year we added a second seventh grade class and began construction of a 20,000 sq. ft. education center. Our enrollment was 330. We began the 2001-2002 school year by moving into our completed facility. We had an enrollment of 350 and added a second eighth grade class, a computer lab, and full-time librarian.

First Academy-Leesburg was established to provide a quality, Christian education for the children of the Leesburg area. This goal is being realized daily as God continues to shape and design a quality school.

A. Philosophy

First Academy-Leesburg recognized Jesus Christ as its foundation. The school is dedicated to assisting children in their move toward Christ and maturity in Him.

First Academy-Leesburg seeks truth from God, the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the universe, the Source of all knowledge. The school recognizes that the world is becoming an increasingly complex place where moral, social, and political uncertainties abound.

First Academy-Leesburg is committed to academic excellence, ever aiming to develop and nurture within each student a desire for learning and an initiative that will direct him/her toward achievement.

B. Doctrine

We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God. Therefore, it is our sole norm for faith and practice.

We believe that God is Spirit, infinite, personal, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, grace, goodness, and truth.

We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.

We believe that Jesus was physically resurrected to purchase a place in heaven for us which He offers as a free gift, providing the only way of salvation for all men.

We believe in the Trinity consisting of three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – in one God.

We believe that God created man in His own image and in a state of innocence, but that through temptation man willfully transgressed. As a result, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and the wages for this sin is death.

We believe in the church, the body of Christ, whose mission is to preach the gospel to all the world.

We believe that a true believer is secure in Christ forever and is called to live a holy life.

We believe that the ordinances of the church are believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.

We believe in the personal, pre-millennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ, prior to the establishment of His kingdom.

We believe that those who are believers shall be forever in the presence of God and those who have rejected Christ will be separated from God forever.

II. Chain of Command and Conflict Resolution

The First Academy-Leesburg school board has the primary responsibility of making operating policies for the school. The chain of command at the school regarding personnel and staff issues is the school administrator, school board, associate pastor, and pastor.

If a staff member has a problem, the school administrator should be contacted. If the matter is not resolved, the staff member should then contact the school board, associate pastor, and pastor, in that order.

There are legitimate ways to handle any complaint which may arise during the school year. First Academy-Leesburg encourages each parent to respect the teacher as a professional, and likewise, the teacher to respect the role of the parents.

The common goals of Christian teachers and parents can be more readily achieved when a friendly, open relationship exists between the home and the school. Therefore, special mention is made of the best method for resolving problems. Please heed the following guidelines:

1. When a classroom problem, conflict, or other situation occurs, the teacher must first take the problem to the individual. (Matthew 18: 15-17) This can normally be handled by a telephone call, a note, or a short meeting.
2. If a conference is needed with the individual, contact the individual to arrange an appointment.
3. Should the matter still not be resolved, a conference with the parent, teacher, and administrator may become necessary.
4. If a matter is not resolved, contact the chairman of the First Academy-Leesburg school board.
5. If the problem is not resolved by contacting the school board, contact Art Ayris, church administrator.
6. If the problem is not resolved by contacting Art Ayris, contact the senior pastor.
7. Some do's and don'ts:
 - a. Do not discuss your problems with uninvolved parties (secretaries, other teachers, parents, etc.,) They cannot solve your problem.
 - b. Do not discuss problem situations in front of children.
 - c. Do remain calm. Remember, if you experience difficulties, the administrators are available to mediate. As angry as some people can get, they often calm down significantly by the time an administrator becomes involved.

If any step of this process is skipped, the teacher will be referred back to the appropriate person.

If teachers or parents lose their tempers, become verbally or physically threatening or hostile, including cursing and using foul language towards children, parents, or First Academy-Leesburg faculty and staff, the administration reserves the right to trespass the teacher/parent(s) from campus, from any and all extracurricular activities, dismiss their child/children from First Academy-Leesburg, or cancel the contract of the teacher.

If teachers are having difficulties with each other because of a situation occurring at school, it is expected that the teachers will involve administration in the resolution of these issues. Otherwise, any discussion of problems not involving the school should occur elsewhere.

If a faculty member fails to respond to the reasonable request of administration in regard to any aspect of their job responsibilities, performance, or assignments, it will be considered an act of insubordination and will result in appropriate action.

III. **Salary and Benefits**

All benefits except insurance are calculated to begin and change as of August 1st. Insurance enrollment is January 1st for employees who are returning and are given a new contract. For new employees, insurance begins one month after the first full month of employment. Full-time teachers are paid for 191 teacher workdays and five paid holidays. Teacher/administrator workdays begin at 7:45. For full-time teachers, the workday ends at 3:20. On days of scheduled staff meetings, the workday ends at 4:15. Checks are issued bi-weekly on Fridays.

A. Hospitalization/Medical Insurance

Hospitalization/medical insurance is available through the church group plan. The school pays 100% of full-time teachers' insurance premium costs. Family members may be added with a payroll deduction taken to cover the amount for the additional family members. If the teacher chooses coverage offered by a spouse's employer, reimbursement will be made to the teacher on a quarterly basis up to the cost of a church group plan when proof of coverage has been received. It is the employee's responsibility to provide quarterly statements in a timely manner. If reimbursement is not requested within one month of the end of a quarter, it will not be granted.

B. Tax-Deferred Annuity and/or Social Security

Social Security is withheld from each paycheck. It is possible for staff to participate in a tax-deferred annuity. Contact the bookkeeper for the proper forms.

C. Sick Leave/Personal Leave

All full-time teachers are granted five days of sick leave and two personal days per year. Unused days are not carried over from year to year. All teachers will fill out a substitute request form (whether or not a sub is needed) as soon as they know of a planned half-day or full-day absence. The administrator or his designee will then arrange for a substitute. WHEN A TEACHER NEEDS TO LEAVE DURING THE DAY TO RUN AN ERRAND, HE OR SHE MUST SIGN IN AND OUT ON THE CHART IN THE OFFICE. PLEASE USE THIS PRIVILEGE RARELY AND ONLY DURING LUNCH OR PLANNING PERIODS.

D. Retirement

Following the first complete year of full-time service, a retirement fund is begun for each full-time teacher. During the second year of service 3% of the annual salary is contributed to this fund. During the third year 5% of the annual salary is contributed; 8% during the fourth year; and 10% each year thereafter. Each teacher decides how his/her retirement fund shall be invested by completing the forms which are provided. This percentage is not taken from the teacher's salary but is contributed from the annual budget. Teachers may designate additional sums to this fund up to the amount allowable by law by completing a salary reduction agreement with the church financial secretary.

E. Tuition Discounts

Full-time teachers working at least 37.5 hours per week will be entitled to a 50% discount on tuition for each of their children. Part-time teachers who work at least 15 hours per week are entitled to a discount of 25%. These discounts will preclude discounts normally given for second and third children and will not be granted in conjunction with scholarships.

F. After School Care

Teachers are provided with free before- and after-school care for their children when they are working. Children of staff, regardless of age, will be in before- and after-school care when a teacher is on duty, is working in his/her classroom, or is attending faculty meetings or in-service meetings. If the child's parent is in the room, children may remain in the parent's room if they are working on homework, on a specific project, or are assisting their parent in some way. If it is

perceived that staff children are engaged in horseplay or non-directed activity, they will be asked to attend after-school care.

G. Contracts

Teachers are hired for a ten-month period. During February of each year all teachers will be asked to sign a statement of their intent for the next year. The intent form allows the teacher to state if they intend to return, if they are requesting a change of grade level, or have other specific requests. The intent form is not a contract and in no way implies a guarantee of future employment. Based on the intent of the teacher and the recommendations of the administrator, the school board will make appointments for the following year. Contracts do not imply tenure or future employment privileges. As with all employees of the church, the contract may be terminated by either party with two weeks' notice with or without a stated cause.

H. Worker's Compensation

All work-related accidents must be reported by the employee within 24 hours of the occurrence in order to be eligible for a worker's compensation claim. We strongly recommend reporting all work injuries and accidents in case later problems develop. Please contact Walter in church office.

I. Family Deaths

In the event of the death of an immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, sibling, or spouse's parent), a full-time employee may be paid for the absence from scheduled work for a period not to exceed three consecutive days if the funeral is local, or four consecutive days if the funeral is out of town. In the event of the death of other relatives, full-time employees may receive paid time off for the funeral (not to exceed one day).

J. Professional Development Fund

Limited funds are available for faculty professional development. Teachers may be reimbursed up to \$350.00 per calendar year for recertification courses. Courses need to be approved in advance. Proof of completion and a grade no lower than a "B" is required for reimbursement. Only one course will be paid per calendar year, with reimbursement limited to a maximum of two courses each five-year period.

K. Professional Library

A number of professional resources are available in the school library or in the administration office. The publications include many books on relevant education topics, journals (Phi Delta Kappan, Educational Leadership, School Board Journal, Education Week, Teacher K-8, Mailbox), and ACSI newsletters. Faculty is encouraged to utilize these resources.

Philosophy of Christian Education – All staff members must: 1) complete a philosophy of Christian Education course, or 2) complete a similar program as delineated by ACSI.

L. Leave of Absence

A leave of absence may be granted to a full-time employee by special approval of the administrator and school board. For any type of leave, advance approval is necessary. The school is under no obligation to grant leaves of absence. The following types of leave exist for employees:

- Medical Leave: For medical reasons, leave may be granted for a definite or indefinite period of time without pay.
- Personal Leave: For reasons of extreme personal necessity, personal leave may be granted for a definite period of time without pay.
- Military Leave: For employees called to serve in the Armed Forces, military leave may be granted for a definite or indefinite period of time without pay as required by law.

- **Catastrophic Leave:** For reasons of a catastrophic illness or disability, catastrophic leave may be granted for a definite period of time without pay. Only employees who have five or more years employment at First Academy-Leesburg are eligible for this leave.
- **Maternity Leave:** For employees who have newborn children, maternity leave may be granted, without pay, for twelve weeks. The Family Medical Leave Act and other government regulations will supersede any policy stated in this handbook, unless the organization is considered exempt from such acts or regulations as defined in said documents.

M. Other Benefits

First Academy employees are eligible for special discounts to many central Florida attractions and the Leesburg Regional Wellness Center. Employees are also able to join the Insight Financial Credit Union and/or SunTrust. Contact the financial secretary for more information on these benefits.

N. Jury Duty

Teachers who are called for jury duty will be paid at the normal rate. If attendance is not required for the entire day, teachers are expected to return to school to work for the remaining part of the day.

O. Intellectual Property

Rights to intellectual property developed by faculty and staff while employed by First Academy-Leesburg will be retained by the individual, unless said property was developed using physical and material resources belonging to First Academy-Leesburg. This does not include materials developed using computer resources which merely use existing software which is accessible to all faculty and staff, or software purchased by the employee and installed on the machine assigned to them. In these cases, the faculty or staff member will retain all rights to their work. This does not include materials assigned for accreditation, in-services, the betterment of First Academy-Leesburg, or projects assigned by the administrator. All materials produced for First Academy-Leesburg will remain the property of First Academy-Leesburg.

IV. Teacher's Job Description

A. Productive Teaching Techniques

1. The teacher uses probing questions for understanding of concepts, relationships and for feedback to the teacher.
2. The teacher uses student ideas in instruction.
3. The teacher uses structuring comments such as examples to serve as advance organizers.
4. The teacher is committed to the primary goal of facilitating pupil growth.
5. The teacher uses varied teaching strategies and material which stimulate student learning.
6. The teacher explains concepts logically and in an orderly manner.
7. The teacher provides opportunities for pupils to learn material that they will later be tested on.
8. The teacher develops and maintains a classroom environment conducive to effective learning within the guidelines of the First Academy school board.
9. The teacher displays enthusiasm toward subject matter and education in general.
10. The teacher utilizes community resources in instruction.

B. Positive Interpersonal Relations

1. The teacher shows love and respect for his/her pupils.
2. The teacher is tolerant of students who have ideas different from his/hers.
3. The teacher uses supportive criticism rather than blame, shame, or sarcasm.
4. The teacher is fair, impartial, and objective in treatment of pupils.
5. The teacher is readily available to students.
6. The teacher provides opportunities for all pupils to attain success.

7. The teacher is a good team worker.
8. The teacher is willing to work together with a Bible Fellowship teacher in sharing available space and materials.
9. The teacher reports pupil progress to parents in an effective manner.
10. The teacher is available for parent conferences by appointment.
11. The teacher models a consistent Christ-like character.

C. Organized/Structured Class Management

1. The teacher meets and instructs assigned classes in the locations and at the specific times designated.
2. The teacher constantly monitors pupils' academic progress and adjusts the pace accordingly keeping the "difficulty level of instruction" appropriate for each individual.
3. The teacher displays sensitivity to pupils' needs and is able to evaluate social and emotional progress.
4. The teacher presents material in a well-organized fashion in order to use class time efficiently.
5. The teacher prepares for classes assigned and submits written evidence of preparation each week by turning in a copy of lesson plans for the next week to the office preferably before leaving on Friday but no later than Monday morning.
6. The teacher has well-defined objectives for his/her pupils and is working toward them.
7. The teacher uses pupil assignments which are relevant and in sufficient amount for depth learning.
8. The teacher uses the First Academy-Leesburg discipline program effectively upholding and enforcing school rules, administrative regulations, dress code, and board policy.
9. The teacher is business-like and task-oriented.
10. The teacher takes all necessary and reasonable precautions to protect students, equipment, materials, and facilities of First Academy-Leesburg and First Baptist Church.
11. The teacher is well-organized as evidenced by reports and paperwork being done in a thorough manner and being turned in on time.
12. The teacher maintains accurate, complete, and correct records as required by law and administrative regulations and stores appropriate records.
13. The teacher assumes responsibilities outside the classroom as they relate to school.
14. The teacher provides one hour of tutoring for students at least one day a week after school.
15. The elementary teacher sends home newsletters each Friday. These need to be submitted to the assistant administrator for proofreading by Friday morning. All teachers should update their website page weekly.
16. The teacher keeps accurate attendance and academic records for his/her students, including dates of entrance and/or withdrawal as well as accurate evaluations of student work based on homework, tests, quizzes, projects, etc. Teachers are to update Edline weekly by Monday afternoon for the previous week.

C. Intellectual Growth and Stimulation

1. The teacher inspires students to seek more knowledge on the subject.
2. The teacher sustains pupil attention and response with activities that are appropriate to the pupils' levels.
3. The teacher makes class work interesting.
4. The teacher and pupils share in the enjoyment of humorous situations.
5. The teacher continues to enhance his/her professional knowledge base through research, current events, and continued education.

V. The Teacher

A. Spiritual Qualities

1. Be a born-again Christian (John 3:1-8; I Peter 1:22-23)
2. Teachers should look upon teaching as a divine call upon their life, at least for the time they are teaching.
3. Teachers should uphold Christian truth, communicate Bible truths with vitality, communicate the gospel to each child with dependence on the Holy Spirit, integrate the Christian view in relation to our curriculum areas, and exemplify a Christian outlook in speech and action.
4. Teachers should model a strong moral character for the students as evidenced by their examples of patriotism, recognition of responsibility, honesty, and respect for authority.
5. Teachers should exhibit a genuine love and concern for children. They should seek to minister to the total person of the child through the mediums that the school affords
6. Be in regular attendance at a Bible-believing church similar in belief to First Baptist/Leesburg. The school reserves the right to employ persons who, in the opinion of the administrator, school board, and church/pastor have a Christian background, philosophy of ministry, work history, and lifestyle which are consistent with the scriptural principles of First Baptist Leesburg. Lifestyles which would not be considered consistent would include, but not be limited to, involvement in sexual deviance or immorality as defined by God's Word, extra-marital affairs, use of illegal drugs, alcohol use, tobacco use, membership in cults, etc. Employees may be reprimanded or terminated for actions and lifestyles (even outside of the workplace), which do not properly represent the church or school, its philosophy/theology, and/or its ministries.

A. Professional and Personal Qualities

1. Hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in elementary education or child development (if applicable), or for part-time and full-time middle school and high school teachers, a degree appropriate to the subject matter being taught.
2. Be certified by the State of Florida or be eligible for certification. It will be the primary responsibility of each teacher to follow through with the appropriate forms and to maintain his/her certification.
3. Teachers should dress appropriately and modestly with acceptable grooming at all times. They should set an example of cleanliness, neatness, and good taste. The same standards as the student dress code should be followed regarding length of skirts and shorts for all school activities. Blue jeans may be worn only one day a month (either on a Friday or on a field trip). Jeans should not be faded, worn looking, frayed, patched, un-hemmed or baggy. Because some people are allergic to cologne or perfume, employees may be requested not to wear these during working hours.
4. Teachers should speak audibly and use acceptable English.
5. Teachers should write legibly and spell accurately on the whiteboards, on bulletin boards, and on all written communications with administration, fellow teachers, and/or with parents. All teacher-made materials and communications should be submitted to the Assistant Administrator for proof reading.
6. Teachers should exercise calm self-control in critical conditions or situations, speak and act only when full composure is attained (especially when disciplining), and meet every day stress with objectivity and optimism.
7. Teachers should handle the highly sensitive and confidential information about students, staff, and families with extreme care and confidentiality, using it as required in the performance of the teachers' duties. Unauthorized use of disclosure of the information, even if it is inadvertent, will result in disciplinary action.
8. All employees are expected to be supportive of First Baptist Leesburg's ministries, program, members, and staff. If an employee disagrees with a church policy, then the matter should be discussed with the appropriate supervisor or program coordinator. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD AN EMPLOYEE CRITICIZE A CHURCH POLICY,**

FELLOW EMPLOYEE, CHURCH MEMBER, OR FIRST ACADEMY FAMILY OUTSIDE THE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE. We encourage employees to give productive, constructive criticism to our program supervisors at the appropriate time and place. However, as Christians, we strongly abhor derogatory remarks, slander, and gossip, even if it is unintentional. Failure to comply with this policy could result in an employee's immediate termination.

B. Attendance and Punctuality

1. **Punctuality.** The teacher's workday begins at 7:45 and ends at 3:20 (30 minutes after dismissal for kindergarten teachers). Should an emergency arise which will make a teacher late, please call Joy at home between 6:00 and 6:45 or the school office between 7:30 and 7:45. The staff will meet promptly at 7:45 A.M. for prayer on specified days. Please be on time to all duties. Note: Before-school care duty begins at 7:30.

2. **Absence.** If a teacher knows in advance he/she will miss a day of school, the office should be notified as soon as possible so a substitute can be contacted (See III. C. Sick leave/personal leave). For an unexpected absence, a teacher should call Joy at home the day/night before or between 6:00 and 6:45am. She needs time to get her family to school and time to call substitutes.

3. **FAB.** First Academy Boosters is the teacher/parent organization. Teachers are expect to be in attendance at FAB-sponsored events, as well as orientation, special programs, and any other events designated by the administration or school board.

I. Behavioral Procedure

A. General Philosophy of Discipline

A well-organized and well-disciplined classroom is necessary for promoting a good learning environment. When discipline problems arise, it is important that the school staff and parents work together so that the problems may be solved.

A. General Classroom Behavior

Each teacher shall establish the behavior rules for his/her classroom and then seek student and parent support in maintaining these rules. No disrespect of any type shall be tolerated. A class should never be left unsupervised. Should a teacher need to leave his/her room for an emergency, the teacher in the next room should be notified and asked to stand in the hall to supervise both rooms temporarily. In a case where there is no adjoining classroom, the school secretary should be called for supervision. The faculty and/or staff will not physically reprimand, corporally punish, or yell at students. Only accepted non-violent methods of behavior modification may be used. Failure to comply with this method will result in at least a letter of reprimand placed in the employee's personnel file and could result in termination.

B. School Discipline Policies

Behaviors which are unacceptable at First Academy-Leesburg include:

1. Acts of disrespect to staff, parents, visitors to our campus, or other students
2. Classroom disruption
3. Chewing gum and/or eating and drinking except at designated times
4. Failure to do assigned school work or failure to get parental signature on papers with grades of *D* or *F* when requested.
5. Disregard for room or school rules, including violation of dress code
- *6. Lying and/or cheating
- *7. Profanity
- *8. Fighting
- *9. Stealing
- *10. Use of alcohol, tobacco substances, over-the-counter medicines or any other substance that induces an altered state of consciousness

*11. Possession of real guns, toy guns (with the exception of squirt guns on specified days), ammunition, knives (including pocket knives), lasers, weapons of any type, or explosives of any kind.

* Violations marked with an asterisk should be immediately referred to the school office where appropriate personnel will counsel with the student. For most of these situations, parents will be called or notified in writing the same day of the incident.

Should the above behaviors be exhibited, teachers are asked to deal with them in the following manner (in the order listed):

1. Warning and counseling/withdrawing privileges.
2. Contacting parents including a parent/teacher meeting and drawing up a contract with student.
3. Written documentation of inappropriate behavior or actions.
4. Detention. +
5. One-day home suspension. +
6. Three-day home suspension. +
7. Parent and child shall meet with the Administrator regarding possible expulsion.
8. Any further disruptions will result in proceeding to step #9.
9. Parent and child shall meet with the School Boards regarding possible expulsion.

+ Detention, suspension, and expulsion will be assigned by administration. Teachers should not tell students that they have a detention or assign detentions. By not having to revoke teacher-assigned detentions, administration can be more supportive of the faculty.

D. Non-Classroom Behavior - At all times, teachers need to be watchful of their students. Please keep conversations with colleagues to a minimum when you are on duty.

1. **Hallways** – Students should move in a quiet and orderly manner through the hallways at all times.
 2. **Restrooms** – Students should use the restrooms quietly and leave them in as good a condition as they found them. Only one student may use each restroom at any given time in those restrooms designed for single use.
 3. **Crossing the Street** – Students will cross the street only with an adult present to supervise crossing at the crosswalk. Individual middle school and high school students are deemed responsible enough to cross the street alone and may be sent on occasional errands. Entire groups or classes of middle school students should not cross the street without an adult. All students must cross at the crosswalk, without exception.
 4. **Playground** – Playground rules of safety shall be followed at all times; i.e., no running on the playground equipment, no pushing, only one student at a time on the slides, no sitting on top of the monkey bars, etc.
 5. **Chapel** – Teachers are expected to attend chapel and to sit with students to ensure appropriate respectful behavior.
- It is the responsibility of teachers to confront inappropriate behaviors when they are observed and to refer the individuals involved to the appropriate administrator.

E. Teacher/Student Attendance

First Academy operates for 196 days for teachers and 180 days per school year for students. Please see the appropriate student handbook for specific student attendance policies.

VII. Academic Procedures

A. Standardized Testing

Standardized testing is conducted at First Academy in the spring of each school year. Kindergarten students will be tested using the SESAT 2 and students in grades 1-10 will be tested using the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition. Students in grades 1, 3, 5, and 9 will also be tested using the OLSAT. The OLSAT is a group test that helps us identify students who may have learning disabilities or students who might qualify for gifted testing. Achievement testing will be scheduled by the guidance counselor. All teachers will conduct testing of their students in the regular classroom setting. A practice testing session will be held before the SESAT and Stanford Achievement Tests are given, using materials published by The Psychological Corporation. Any training necessary for teachers will be given before testing occurs. All teachers are expected to attend training sessions on testing procedures each year. Staff should never share the results of tests with the class, individual students, or parents. Requests for this information should always be referred to the Administrator.

B. Homework

No homework will be given at First Academy on Wednesday nights. On all other nights students are expected to spend at least 15-80 minutes (depending on the grade level) doing some work related to school. If specific homework has not been assigned by the classroom teacher, the student may read, practice math facts, or have a story read to him/her in lower grades. Upper grade students (4th-9th) should be encouraged to study vocabulary in spelling, science, or history, as well as the major concepts of each chapter. It is also beneficial to focus on geographical place names such as countries and capitals, states and their capitals, land forms, and bodies of water. It is possible that First Academy will be instituting a series of basic skills tests that students must pass at the end of the year in order to progress to the next grade. Parents should be reminded that if their child works unusually slowly or fails to stay on task, the assigned work may take more than the normal amount of time. Please see the appropriate student handbook for specific consequences for not turning in homework.

C. Appearance of Student Papers

All student work is to be done on lined paper, in pencil, unless otherwise specified by the teacher. All students are encouraged to do their best work at all times. If a parent or teacher feels this is not being done, a student may be asked to redo a paper. Middle school and high school students should complete homework using complete sentences.

D. Grading Scale

All teachers will maintain an electronic grade book using the GradeQuick software program. This program is accessible from each classroom.

First Academy reports student progress to parents every nine weeks with a report card. In addition, grades are available for parents to view on Edline weekly. Conferences may be requested by the teacher or parent. It is expected that if a student fails tests or projects, a parent signature will be obtained. This should then be kept for your records. Parents should not be surprised by a *D* or an *F* on a midterm report or a report card. If you notice a pattern developing, it is essential that you notify the parents. The only way to notice these patterns is to maintain accurate, up-to-date records on each student. It is expected that all teachers, including special area teachers, will do so.

1. Kindergarten skills are graded as follows:

S	Satisfactory (do not use S+ or S-)
I	Improvement Shown
N	Needs Improvement

A grade of 'I' may only be used when preceded by an 'N'.

1. First through eighth grades* use the following scale:

A	(94-100)
B	(85-93)
C	(77-84)
D	(70-76)
F	(0-69)

When a letter grade is given, a numerical value is also given.

* Any middle school classes for which a student is receiving high school credit will be graded according to the Uniform Grading Scale for the State of Florida.

2. Elementary art, information technology, music, and P.E. are graded as follows:
 - E Excellent
 - S Satisfactory (do not use S+ or S-)
 - N Needs Improvement

3. Emotional and Social Development (conduct) are graded.
 - S Satisfactory (do not use S+ or S-)
 - N Needs Improvement

4. Classes that are taken for high school credit are graded using the State Uniform Grading Scale as follows:
 - A (90-100)
 - B (80-89)
 - C (70-79)
 - D (60-69)
 - F (0-59)

Middle school students who maintain at least a 94 average during a nine week period will be exempt from taking exams in subjects with that average.

E. Report Card Calendar

Grading period ends	Grades due	Cards Distributed
10/10/08	10/14/08	10/21/08
12/19/08	01/07/09	01/14/09
03/13/09	03/16/09	03/20/09
05/22/09	05/26/09	Mailed week of 06/08/09

First Academy recognizes an Academic and Social Development Honor Roll at the end of each marking period. Kindergarten students are only eligible for the social Development Honor Roll. Social Development Honor Roll consists of students who receive only *S* grades in Emotional and Social Development. Academic ‘A’ Honor Roll is made up of students who receive only grades of *A* or *E*. Academic ‘A-B’ Honor Roll is for those students who receive all grades of *A* or *B* and *E* or *S*. Handwriting grades are not included in determining Honor Roll status. The B.U.G. Award (Bringing Up Grades) is given to students who improve grades without lowering any other grades. Grades 1-12 must bring up at least one subject by a letter grade (A-F) without dropping a letter grade in any subject.

F. Library Procedures

1. Our library is for the use of the students. Students are expected to exercise care in the use and handling of library materials. Should a student lose or damage a book beyond normal expectations, the student will be charged as follows:
 - First year of use: 75% of replacement cost
 - Second year of use: 50% of replacement cost
 - All subsequent years of use: 25% of replacement cost

2. Teachers should encourage their students to read and also to use the library facilities. A variety of reading should be encouraged. Teachers may check books out of the library for use

in their classroom. Each elementary teacher will be expected to demonstrate the ways in which they are encouraging reading in their classroom and at home.

3. Students will take Accelerated Reader tests on computers located in the library, computer lab, and in classrooms. Points may be accumulated to win prizes that will be determined by the librarian in conjunction with FAB.

A. Textbooks/Curriculum

The First Academy School Board chooses the curricula to be used in our school. The decision is made after surveying many publishers' materials and seeking teacher opinion regarding possible choices. The teacher is encouraged to supplement chosen texts with his/her own material or other available material which is consistent with our philosophy. We also choose to magnify the Biblical reason for Christian holidays rather than the secular since so much attention is given to the secular outside of school. During Christmas, Santa Claus should not be discussed or be used as decoration in classrooms. Easter eggs may be used as an evangelical tool. The Easter Bunny should not be emphasized. First Academy does not agree with nor promote the practice of Halloween and its familiar symbols (witches, goblins, jack-o-lanterns), magic, luck, dragons, or other occult or new age signs (such as ying-yangs).

B. School Materials

Textbooks are the property of First Academy. The instructional fee each student pays covers the use of all textbooks, library books, and other instructional materials, as well as the cost of workbooks, art materials, insurance, testing fees, and classroom supplies. If a student damages a First Academy textbook beyond normal expectations the student's account will be charged for the excess damage. Workbooks become the property of the students when they are completed and sent home by the teacher. This may be done page by page. Regular note book paper and pencils in grades two and above are also the responsibility of the student. Paperback textbooks at the middle school level are kept by the students at the end of the year. High school students purchase all of their own books. During the first week of school, teachers in elementary and middle school shall number and issue all textbooks which are allowed to go home. Teachers should issue the books and be sure students put their name on the next line available on the inside cover. Teachers should keep a record of textbook numbers and which student receives the book. A completed list of textbooks issued, with names and textbook number, should be given to Mrs. Cauthen by the end of the first week of school (Teachers also keep a copy for their use in checking the books in at the end of the year.)

NOTE: ALL HARDBACK TEXTBOOKS IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL MUST BE COVERED. FOR BETTER RESALE VALUE, HIGH SCHOOL BOOKS SHOULD BE COVERED, ALSO.

C. Student Records

1. Student cumulative folders are kept in a locked file. The file is locked at all times except when it is being used.
2. School staff has the privilege of using the information in the student record in order to help the student and to keep a record of progress for future use.
3. Parents may see their child's record upon request by making an appointment with the administrator.
4. The following items are kept in the cumulative folder:
 - a. A copy of the end-of-year report card.
 - b. A copy of test results (Stanford Achievement Test, etc.).
 - c. A current photo of child.
5. Teachers are responsible for adding the above information to the cumulative folder during the year they teach a student.

D. General Classroom Procedures/Schedules

Elementary teachers will make a copy of his/her schedule listing each subject taught and the approximate time it will be taught (include specials' times). The teacher will also have a written discipline plan that is followed in the classroom. Copies of both of these need to be given to the assistant administrator by the end of pre-planning.

E. Videos

Whenever a teacher plans to use a video during class time, a video form should be completed and submitted to the administrator at least two days in advance.

F. Copyright Laws

Teachers are expected to observe all copyright laws. Teachers are encouraged to find reproducible materials that may be utilized freely.

VIII. General Procedures

A. Classroom Appearance

Teachers are responsible for working with their students to maintain a neat orderly classroom. Although janitorial service is provided, large pieces of paper, paper clips, crayons, pencils, etc. should be picked up from the floor as they are dropped and not left for others to dispose. Chairs should be stacked at the end of the day. Desks are not cleaned by janitorial staff; they must be attended to by the teacher and students. Strive to have an interesting, exciting atmosphere in the classroom without having so much material that the room appears messy and cluttered. If your room is used for church meetings in additions to school, you will be expected to leave the room in an uncluttered condition. If a major change is required for use on Sunday, you will be asked to make a diagram of how you want the room rearranged for your use on Monday and every attempt will be made to comply.

A. Chapel

Chapel is held each Wednesday. Parents are encouraged to attend with their children. Teachers will escort their classes to and from chapel in an orderly manner and will stress respectful behavior during chapel. Speaking with the children about chapel manners before the first chapel is appropriate. Teachers are given a schedule of when they are responsible for the chapel program. The regular dress code should be adhered to on chapel days. Guest speakers will be used periodically. A guest speaker approval form should be filled out and given to the administrator when requesting a guest speaker. Teachers may also utilize students from their classroom if it is their week to conduct chapel. Parents should be notified well in advance if this is the case so that they can make arrangements to attend.

B. Restroom Procedures

Children are expected to leave facilities at least as clean as they find them. If a child needs to use the restroom other than at normal break times, the teacher must decide if the student is dependable enough to go alone or if another student needs to accompany him/her. Teachers of classes that meet in the church facility on the east side of 13th Street should always send students to the restroom in pairs. Students should be instructed to never flush paper towels or other objects down the toilets.

D. Student Dress Code

Please refer to the student handbook for specifics. There are length requirements for shorts, skirts, and shorts, as well as color restrictions. Pants for both boys and girls must be solid in color and a traditional fit. All shirts must display a First Academy logo and be tucked in.

All students wearing questionable or inappropriate clothing should be referred to the office. Part of each teacher's performance appraisal will be based on how well dress code is enforced in their classroom.

E. First Day of School

On the first day of school, a normal elementary schedule will be followed as far as times, special periods, etc. Each teacher needs to establish the rules of operation in his/her classroom. Distribute materials (texts, workbooks, pencils, etc.) as you are ready to use them. As this is done, the proper care of the materials should be explained to the students. At 8:10, thank parents for dropping in. Explain to them that you will begin class now and that you will see them at 3:00 (or 3:10 for secondary students). Middle and high school classes will have an assembly at 8:30 with Mr. Frescoln to review the parent-student handbook. MS/HS teachers are expected to attend with their handbooks.

F. Dismissal of School

At the end of the school day each class should spend some time evaluating what was done, discussing changes that need to be made, mentioning things to remember for the next day, and filling out the agenda. Each teacher will then accompany his/her class outside to the designated area where parents will be waiting. All of our students, who ride home, go to the designated pickup areas. Parents are asked to park in line only if they are staying in their car and are ready to leave as soon as their child arrives. Teachers will help the students into their car, checking for a GREEN pick-up card displayed on the dash or in hand. A classroom teacher or an After School Care worker will take students who are staying for After School Care to the designated building. All elementary children are to be at the pickup areas at 3:00. Students may not be released to someone saying they have a note from the child's parents. If they do not have the GREEN pick-up card, please refer them to the office. The teacher will maintain custody of the student until he/she receives verification (GREEN card) from the office as to the identity of the person intending to pick up the child.

A. Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards should be interesting and relate to classroom learning. One board should display the work of students whenever possible. They should be changed at least monthly unless they are boards that are ongoing in theme (calendars, helpers, etc.).

B. Copy Supplies

Materials which may legally be copied (see front of books you are considering copying) can be copied on the copy machine. If you have copying that you don't need for a day or two, a volunteer may be able to do it for you on request. We pay for each copy made so teachers are asked to copy only that which they are planning to use in the classroom and which will enhance their instructional program.

***Teachers should not send students to the office with requests for copies to be made.**

C. Fire/Emergency Drills

Each classroom has a map by the exit door which shows the route the class should follow in exiting the building in any emergency or fire drill that requires evacuation. Fire drills will be conducted monthly. In case of an emergency or fire drill, the building is to be evacuated as quickly as possible using the route specified, with the children in a single line, moving quietly so they can hear any directions that may need to be given. When all students have left the room and are accounted for, the door and windows should be closed and lights turned off. Teachers shall take their roll book outside with them during a fire drill. Roll will be taken during the drill or actual emergency. Once a fire drill is completed, the

administrator will signal an “all clear”, and students will return to the building. The route and procedure should be explained to students during the first week of school. For other emergency situations, please see procedures in the First Academy Crisis Plan.

D. Illness and Injuries

Parents will be notified when a student becomes ill or injured and/or when it is determined that the student needs to go home. Because first-aid facilities are limited, parents are asked to come promptly when notified. Injured persons should not be moved until the Administrator or medical personnel have examined them. If injuries warrant the calling of an ambulance, call 911 immediately. After calling an ambulance, the parents or designated emergency contacts will be notified. The school requires prompt reporting of all accidents. If a student is injured at school, an accident report must be completed before the teacher leaves the building at the end of the day. It is the responsibility of the person who was supervising the child at the time of the accident to file the report. The report should be signed by the parent, thus indicating their knowledge of the incident.

K. Blood-born Pathogens

When bodily fluids are involved in an accident, gloves should be worn at all times during treatment process (cleaning off and applying band-aids) and during the cleanup process. No wounds should be touched in any manner without gloves being worn. The office must be notified if clean-up of the facilities is needed so that regulations involving blood-born pathogens will be followed. All faculty will receive training in the appropriate methods of handling blood-born pathogens.

L. Certification

Teachers are responsible for all fees associated with certification including application fees, fingerprinting, and background checks. Certification should be initiated immediately upon hiring. All teachers are required to become certified through ACSI and the Florida Department of Education. See the assistant administrator for information.

M. Classroom Visitors

All visitors to our campus, whether to see teachers or students, should sign in at the school office and receive a visitor’s badge. The badge should be returned when the visitor leaves the campus.

N. Cell Phones, Beepers & Phone Calls

Teachers may carry cell phones and beepers, but they should be turned off during school hours. All messages should be left in the school office and messages will be delivered to the teacher by the office.

O. Leaving Campus

When a teacher needs to leave during the day to run an errand, etc., he or she must sign in and out on the chart in the office. Please use this privilege rarely and only during lunch or planning period.

P. Communicable Disease

Students or teachers with a communicable disease may not attend school until they have clearance from a medical doctor to return. Medication may be administered to students by the school secretary after the medication permission form has been completed by the parent and returned to the secretary. All medication (even cough drops) must be sent to school in the original container with specific written directions for the number, amount, and times of dosages. The secretary will keep and administer all medications. (Containers will be retained in the medication cabinet, unless parents request otherwise.) The school will not provide over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, aspirin, cough medicine, or Pepto

Bismol. Teachers should fill in the appropriate administration data in the absence of the secretary. Any student with a communicable disease will be isolated in the sickroom until the parents pick up the child.

Q. Field Trips

First Academy students will participate in field trips that enrich and complement our instructional program. Only those students attending First Academy will be eligible to participate. Siblings are not allowed on field trips. Teachers are required to complete a Field Trip Information Sheet when planning a field trip. This is to be given to Joy **at least two weeks prior to the trip**. Kindergarten and first grade are limited to one out-of-town trip per school year; older classes are limited to two out-of-town trips. A maximum of four field trips per school year is allowed for each class. Parents are to be provided with information concerning field trips well in advance, as many must rearrange patient and client schedules to accompany their children on the field trip. A permission slip will be required for each trip. An ample number of chaperones will also be required. Students attending field trips are required to ride to and from the field trip destination in school vehicles or chartered vehicles. However, parents desiring to pick up their child from the field trip destination are required to sign their child out from the sponsoring teacher. Teachers should inform chaperones that there will be no drinking of alcoholic beverages or the use of any tobacco products on field trips. If the teacher makes a request of a parent to stop certain behaviors and the parent refuses, the administrator should be notified so that the proper action may be taken.

Parental dress should be reflective of the nature of our school.

Parents and students should not be informed about field trips until approval is received from the office.

R. Parties

Parties held during school hours are:

Thanksgiving

Christmas

Valentine's

Easter

End of the Year

Birthday parties in the classroom may be held at the discretion of the teacher. No invitations to parties outside school may be handed out in school unless ALL children in the classroom are invited. The office will provide the addresses of individual students if only certain students are being invited to the party being held off-campus.

S. Guest Speaker, Entertainment, and Non-School Literature

Any of the above must be cleared with the Administrator using the appropriate forms.

T. Purchasing procedures

Anyone who wishes to order or buy any materials must use the following procedure BEFORE materials are ordered, bought, or charged.

1. Get a Purchase Order (PO) from Nancy.

2. Complete it—listing vendor, items, cost, etc.

3. Have Mr. Frescoln sign the PO.

4. Make a copy of the PO.

5. Return one signed copy to Nancy and keep one copy for yourself. Tell Nancy if you are doing the ordering or if you want her to order.

6. If you order using a credit card, you **MUST** give Nancy a printed copy of the order so it can be matched with the charge account bill.

7. When the materials are delivered, they will be delivered to the bookkeeping office, checked in, and then you will be notified that they are here.

These procedures apply to anything that is to be billed to the school and paid for by the school. It also applies if the teacher desires to be reimbursed for any materials they have purchased for their classroom. A signed PO must be obtained before anything is ordered, purchased, or reimbursed.

First Academy-Leesburg does not pay sales tax on purchases. If you purchase something (with a signed purchase order) on your own and pay sales tax, the tax will NOT be reimbursed to you. You need to get a Sales Tax Certificate and present it at the time of purchase so you are not charged tax.

Insert

U. Fund Raising

Teachers may plan fund raisers to generate funds for field trips with advance approval from an administrator. Any funds raised in excess of field trip expenses will be put in the general fund. The teacher should not plan on spending any funds that are left over from field trips. Fund raisers should not be discussed with parents or students until approval has been received from the office.

V. Pledges, Prayer, Praise

Praise reports and prayer for teacher and student concerns should take place each morning before class begins (during homeroom for MS/HS). At this time, the pledges to the American flag, Christian flag, and the Holy Bible should take place. Teachers shall display flags properly (American flag on the left when observed) and memorize the pledges prior to the first day of school. Prayer should also be an integral part of the classroom experience. Students may need to be taught how to pray as many do not come from Christian homes. Prayer will always be conducted prior to leaving for lunch if lunch is not held in the classroom. (End of third period for HS; end of fourth period for MS)

W. Microwave oven

These appliances are for teacher use only. No students are allowed to use any microwaves for any purpose, nor are students allowed to remove items from microwaves. Teachers should never heat food for students as this may cause an event for which the school would be liable. The only exception to this is staff heating lunch for their own children in the office microwave.

X. Suspicious Individuals

Anyone seen on campus who appears to not belong (doesn't have a visitor's badge, is sleeping on the picnic tables, loitering, appears to be watching the students from vehicles, appears to be filming the children or trying to engage them or you in conversation) should be reported to the office immediately. Whenever possible, and if it does not place the teacher in danger, the teacher making the observation should attempt to write down the license plate number of unauthorized persons. This will be particularly helpful in situations in which it is necessary to involve law enforcement.

Y. Reserving facilities

To schedule ANY activity in ANY room on the entire campus outside normal class use, you must fill out a Service-U form and submit to Joy as soon as possible. Requests must be made **at least two days before the event**. Same-day requests will not be approved, so plan ahead.

Z. Student Notes

The passing and/or writing of notes by students is not permitted, and notes should be confiscated. Unusual notes should be sent to the school office with a post-it note stating who the note was confiscated from and who the sender/recipient was. Unusual is defined as anything of a racist, sexist, sexual, or violent nature.

I. Working with Parents

A. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences may be requested by the teacher or parent. A written record of all conferences, dated and signed by the teacher and parent, is kept in the student's cumulative folder. Teachers are urged to be positive in conferences, pointing out to parents the accomplishments of their child. Areas that need improvement should be mentioned in as constructive a way as possible, with suggestions as to how the improvement can be accomplished. When discussing a child with his/her parent(s), do not discuss other children.

Teachers should never insinuate that a child is ADD/ADHD, learning disabled, or gifted. These determinations must be made by a qualified professional. If, in the opinion of a teacher, a student is experiencing difficulty or may be advanced, the teacher should notify an administrator so that the proper testing may be initiated.

B. Contacting Parents

If a teacher has an academic or discipline problem with a student, the parent should be contacted as soon as the problem is identified. The initial contact may be made by phone or email, but if the problem persists, a conference should be scheduled. If the problem still is not solved, an additional conference should be scheduled with the administrator present.

C. Abuse

Teachers suspecting that a child is a victim of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse should notify an administrator immediately. Educators are considered mandatory reporters and as such are required by law to report potentially abusive situations.

If an administrator is not available, the Administrative Pastor of First Baptist Church, Leesburg should be contacted. If the Administrative Pastor is not available, the teacher should contact the Florida Abuse Hotline, 800-962-2873.

D. Gossip

One of the most damaging occurrences in any school is gossip. The Bible teaches that gossip is a thing to be avoided. A gossip betrays confidences (Proverbs 11:13) and separates close friends (Proverbs 16:28). The tongue and mouth are powerful. They can be used improperly for sinful purposes or they can be used to edify, praise, and glorify. May we all seek to follow David who wrote in Psalm 39:1, "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence."

First Academy faculty and staff will be expected to abide by the words found in Ephesians 4:29, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Revised 7/25/2008 4:45pm