

HILLSBOROUGH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



Parent/Student Handbook
2026-2027 School Year

Live Courageously • Think Deeply • Love Authentically

Hillsborough Christian Academy

Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027 School Year

Dr. Bryan K. Turner
Head of School

Lower Campus/Main Office
Little Lions (Preschool) – Grade 2
512 US 70
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Upper Campus
Grades 3-12
121 Orange High School Road
Hillsborough, NC 27278

(919) 732-0888 (office)
(919) 732-1566 (fax)
www.hillsboroughchristian.org

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Additional policies and procedures needed for the safe and efficient operation of our school may not be contained in this handbook and are communicated by HCA School Administration throughout the school year.

Welcome from the Head of School

It is with great joy and anticipation that I welcome you to another school year at Hillsborough Christian Academy. As we begin this new chapter together, we fix our eyes on our annual theme, "Christ We Preach," drawn from Colossians 1:28:

"Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." — Colossians 1:28 (NKJV)

These three simple words—Christ We Preach—capture the heartbeat of our mission. In a world filled with competing voices, shifting values, and countless distractions, we believe there is one message that transforms lives: Jesus Christ. He is the center of our faith, the foundation of our teaching, and the hope we desire every student to know personally.

At Hillsborough Christian Academy, our calling extends far beyond academic excellence. We are committed to cultivating a learning environment where every subject points to the Creator, every relationship reflects His love, and every opportunity becomes an invitation to know Christ more deeply. We desire to partner with families in raising young men and women who think biblically, live courageously, love authentically, and faithfully proclaim Christ in their homes, churches, communities, and future vocations.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that proclaiming Christ involves both **teaching** and **discipleship**. It is our privilege to challenge students academically while also encouraging their spiritual growth, helping them develop wisdom, character, and a lifelong commitment to following Jesus. Our prayer is that every graduate leaves Hillsborough Christian Academy equipped not only with knowledge, but with a faith that shapes every area of life.

The Parent/Student Handbook has been prepared to provide guidance and clarity as we journey through the school year together. While it addresses many of our daily policies and procedures, we recognize that questions and unique circumstances will arise. As they do, our commitment is to serve our families with wisdom, grace, integrity, and a spirit of partnership.

Thank you for entrusting your family to the ministry of Hillsborough Christian Academy. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with you in the sacred work of Christian education. May this school year be one in which Christ is exalted in every classroom, every conversation, and every heart, as together we boldly declare:

Christ We Preach.

For the Kingdom,



Dr. Bryan K. Turner
Head of School
Hillsborough Christian Academy
Phone: (919) 732-0888 ext. 1001
Email: bturner@hillsboroughchristian.org

School Leadership

Administrative Team and School Office

The Head of School serves as the Chief Executive and Chief Academic Officer of Hillsborough Christian Academy and is responsible for the school's overall operations, including appointing administrative and instructional faculty and support staff. He/she is also responsible for administering the school budget as approved by the school board. The following are appointed members of the school administrative team.



Dr. Bryan K. Turner
Head of School



Rev. John Gaither
Asst. Head of School
Academics/Operations



Denise Al-Chacar
Asst. Head of School
Admissions and Development

School Board

The school is overseen by a school board consisting of our Head of School, parent representatives, educational experts, Christian businessmen and women, and other local churches. Financial reports are available monthly to the school board. The school board also makes decisions regarding school policy on the advice of the Head of School.

Our school board meets periodically throughout the school year. The primary function of our school board is to set policy by approving the annual budget and reviewing financial statements. ***Communication to the board may be submitted in writing to the Head of School.***

Dr. Bryan Turner, Head of School
Mr. Troy Glasgow, Treasurer
Rev. Greg Long, Secretary

Mr. Rami Al-Chacar
Mr. Tom Hunter
Dr. Lisa Pfefferle

Identification Section

Vision for Education

Hillsborough Christian Academy provides a challenging academic curriculum anchored in the character-building foundations of a Christian worldview. Unlike other academic institutions, Hillsborough Christian Academy offers a safe, nurturing environment and a differentiated learning experience that allows students to discover their passion, maximize their full potential and discover God's ultimate purpose for them.

At Hillsborough Christian, we have four core values that guide us each and every day: **Academic Excellence, Christ-centered, Nurturing, and Community**. We believe that the foundation for academic excellence begins with the Bible being the sole authority for evaluating truth, for determining practices, and as the basis of our faith. We couple the Word of God with a rich and rigorous academic curriculum that challenges our students to become the most outstanding versions of themselves. We teach a Christ-centered understanding of the world within a school environment of academic excellence that will train children for the opportunity to leave an indelible mark on today's society and culture.

We believe that the Holy Spirit must be at the center of the educational journey: partnering with parents, empowering teachers, and developing students. In the Word of God, authority and power is granted to spirit-filled believers in order to produce fruit for the kingdom of God. We believe that when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we experience the tangible manifestation of the Father's heart.

Our faculty and staff work tirelessly to create a nurturing environment where every child is loved, cared for and taught to love others. We help them discover their strengths, pursue their passions and teach them to know and love their creator. It is in this nurturing environment that students learn to take responsibility and grow their weaknesses to strengths.

Our educational community benefits from the many members working together. We are blessed with a thriving Parent/Teacher Fellowship program that works throughout the year engaging in prayer, guidance, and fundraising.

Vision Statement

Hillsborough Christian Academy envisions a thriving community of students, families, and educators united in Christ, committed to academic excellence, grounded in a nurturing environment, and actively engaged in building God's Kingdom—locally and globally—for the glory of God and the good of others.

Mission Statement

Hillsborough Christian Academy exists to provide a Christ-centered education marked by academic excellence, a nurturing environment, and a strong sense of community, equipping students and families to grow in faith and knowledge as they actively participate in building God's Kingdom.

Student Core Values

At HCA, we believe it is important to instill in our student's core values that are both founded in scripture and help them to develop the skills necessary to fulfill the calling that God places on their life. We focus on the development of these three core values every day:

1. Live Courageously – by overcoming challenges in partnership with the Holy Spirit.
2. Think Deeply – by engaging with the Word of God in every situation.
3. Love Authentically – by reflecting Christ's love in every interaction.

Values and Approach to Education

- Teachers maintain a Bible-based worldview that is woven throughout our education programs and instruction.
- HCA maintains small student-teacher ratios to promote individual attention and differentiated instruction.
- HCA utilizes creative learning, hands-on activities, problem-solving scenarios, and balances traditional education with project-based experiences to equip students to develop a love for learning.
- Teachers work closely with students to identify and develop their unique strengths and overcome their weaknesses. This builds faith in students and prepares them to pursue their passions while knowing God's plan for their lives.
- HCA curriculum integrates highly regarded texts and supporting materials as a base for education.
- We partner with parents in the educational process to facilitate best conditions for student success.
- We train children to respect authority, to be willing and active participants in their learning journey, and to honor other people in all their interactions.

Program Structure and Operations

HCA handbooks serve to establish policies and procedures for HCA. Individuals employed by HCA agree with the handbooks in their current edition, along with any changes to the handbook that may occur during the school year. While the handbooks are intended to serve as a reference for our school community, it is impossible to anticipate all the questions or situations that will arise in the operation of the school. The handbook is subject to change with approval, as necessary, by the Head of School. Policy changes approved by the Head of School are effective immediately. School administration will communicate handbook and policy changes in a timely manner.

Philosophy of Education

The educational philosophy of Hillsborough Christian Academy is an extension of our mission statement and Statement of Faith. We believe that the foundation of Christian education is the Bible. “All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Every child is “a heritage...a gift from the Lord” (Psalm 127:3). We believe that the primary responsibility for education and character development lies with the parents. The school will partner with the home to impress God’s commandments and values upon children’s hearts. “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.” (Deut. 6: 5-7)

Our teachers are qualified people who focus on academic excellence. They seek to enhance the development of each student spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically as it says in Luke 2:52. Our teachers live their lives as full-time role models to students and their families. “So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10).

Our curriculum is academically excellent and honors our Christian heritage. It helps prepare students for higher learning and to impact the world for Christ. “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19,20).

We believe that God’s promises are true as Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it”.

Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God. (II Timothy 3:15; II Peter 1:21)
- We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons and expressions: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30)
- We believe in the deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ (John 10:33); His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35); His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 7:26); His miracles (John 2:11); His vicarious and atoning death (I Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9); His resurrection (John 11:25, I Corinthians 15:4); His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19); and His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11)
- We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature; and that people are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God’s grace and through faith alone are we saved. (John 3:16-19; John 5:24; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5)
- We believe in the resurrection of all people both the saved and the lost. That people are either saved unto the resurrection of life, or they that are lost are unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:24-29)
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, I Corinthians 12:12-13, Galatians 3:26-28)
- We believe in the present and indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled with gifts and power to be His witness and to live a godly and victorious life. (Acts 1:8, Acts 2:4, Acts 10:44-46, Matthew 3:11, Romans 8:13-14, I Corinthians 3:16, I Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 4:30, Ephesians 5:18)
- We believe that healing and restoration is provided for all people through the redeeming work of Christ and is the privilege of all believers. (Isaiah 53:5, Mark 16:17-18, John 5:6-14, I Peter 2:24)
- We believe that all Christians are called to a life of holiness and service to the Lord Jesus Christ and that each Christian is part of the Priesthood of all believers. (I Peter 2:5, 9)
- We believe that God instituted marriage and the family, and that His design and mandate is for heterosexual relationships confined to between a natural man and a natural woman within the confines of lawful matrimony. (Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:22, 23)
- We believe in the literal, personal return of Jesus Christ to judge the wicked, to reward the righteous, and bring to fruition His Kingdom upon the earth (Revelation 11:15, Revelation 22:12)

Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Hillsborough Christian Academy's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our board of directors is Hillsborough Christian Academy's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

School Affiliations

Hillsborough Christian Academy is a member school of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). As a member of ACSI, we are part of the world's largest community of Christian educators dedicated to providing a Christ-centered education. Hillsborough Christian Academy was created to serve the broader northern Orange County region, although we now serve a larger area – drawing students from Hillsborough, Mebane, Burlington, Durham, Chapel Hill, and surrounding areas. Additionally, Hillsborough Christian Academy enjoys several fruitful partnerships with other Kingdom-aligned ministries.

General School Information and Policies

School Hours

Little Lions (3 year old program)

The Little Lions program operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Students may be dropped off between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. Arrivals after 9:00 a.m. require prior approval from the school office, except in cases such as medical appointments or emergencies. Students may not be dropped off during scheduled rest time.

Parents are required to escort their child into the classroom and complete the electronic check-in process each day. During morning car rider hours (7:30–8:00 a.m.), please use caution in the parking lot. The two designated Little Lions parking spaces near the office are limited to 10-minute parking. Longer visits should utilize the lower parking lot. The upper lot is reserved for school car rider traffic during arrival and dismissal.

Children may be picked up at any time; however, families are encouraged to avoid pickups during rest time whenever possible. Aftercare is available from 3:00–5:30 p.m. Students remaining after 3:15 p.m. will be enrolled in aftercare and charged the applicable daily rate unless already enrolled in the monthly program. A late pickup fee of \$1.00 per minute applies after 5:30 p.m.

If an emergency requires special drop-off or pickup arrangements, please contact the school office at (919) 732-0888 or office@hillsboroughchristian.org.

School Aged Program (TK-12th grades)

Car rider drop-off begins at 7:30 am. The car rider line ends promptly at 7:55 am. Any student arriving at 7:55 am or later must be walked in by a parent at the office entrance for their building. The tardy bell rings at 8:00 am. Students arriving after 8:00 am or who are not in their seats when the tardy bell rings will be marked tardy. Students will not be permitted in the school building prior to 7:30 a.m.

Car rider dismissal begins at 3:00 pm and concludes at 3:15 p.m. If students are not picked up by 3:15 pm, they will transition to our afterschool program and will be charged the daily drop in rate for our afterschool program. If an emergency arises and you need to make special arrangements for pickup, please call or email the school office [(919) 732-0888 or office@hillsboroughchristian.org]. **Once a student has been dismissed from the building, he/she is not allowed to return to their classroom unless authorized by a member of school administration.**

HCA's campus operates on a one-way traffic pattern. It is expected that all visitors to campus follow the car line procedures provided at the beginning of the school year and follow all instructions of the HCA administrative team.

School Business Office Hours

All school business should be conducted during the regular business hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm or by appointment.

Communication With School Personnel

Communication is a foundational component of the educational philosophy at Hillsborough Christian Academy. With this in mind, we encourage parents to communicate regularly with their child's classroom teacher. Please follow your classroom teacher's preference for communication (ie email, ClassDojo, etc). Additionally, you may leave a message for your child's teacher with our school office (919-732-0888). **Please allow 24 business hours for teachers to respond to communication. School administrators may also be reached via email or phone and will return messages within 48 business hours.** It is not the responsibility of school staff to respond to communication received outside of normal school hours.

If you have an emergent need, please contact our Administrative Coordinator in the office via phone (919-732-0888). The Administrative Coordinator will prioritize emergency messages and ensure they are communicated promptly.

Campus Visitors

All visitors are **required** to sign in at the main office (Lower Campus) and follow all current visitor guidelines. We encourage parents to play an active role in their child's educational journey. Volunteering in the classroom and eating lunch with your child are both great opportunities to be involved on campus. Classroom visits must be scheduled with the classroom teacher. **A current background check must be on file for all school visitors who will be in the proximity of students without a designated administrative escort.** Background checks for volunteers must be completed annually. The charge for the background check is \$25 and will be charged to your child's FACTS or Brightwheel account. An appointment with the Administrative Coordinator is required for the background check process.

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, we have a security system in place throughout the building. All school doors remain locked at all times. Access can be requested via the doorbell/intercom located at the main entrance for each building.

Change of Contact Information

When families move or change contact information during the course of a school year, it is critical that parents update their information in our student information system. This ensures that HCA maintains current contact information in order to communicate and reach families with important school updates as well as in the event of an emergency.

Authorization for Pick Up/Early Pickup Guidelines

The school will release a student only to those persons listed in the Emergency Contacts/Pick Up list in the student information system. **Staff members will ask for identification when they are unfamiliar with a pick-up contact.**

In the event that a relative or friend who is not listed in the Emergency Contacts/Pick Up list needs to pick up a student, parents should provide—if possible—advance, written notification. If an emergency or unexpected need precludes advance notification, an e-mail message or phone call to the office from the parents or legal guardians must precede the arrival of this person. Please notify this person that staff members will ask to see their identification. **Under no circumstances will an HCA staff member release a student to an individual who is not authorized for pick up.**

If only one parent has custody of the student(s) and the other is not authorized to pick up the student(s), the custodial parent **must** provide school administration with a copy of a certified court order outlining details of the custodial agreement. If there is **any change in the legal custody** of a student while enrolled at the school, the parent must notify the school **immediately and provide** the school administration with a certified copy of the current court order confirming the change in custody.

Students signed out during school hours must be signed out at the school office prior to leaving campus. Any student needing an early pickup must be picked up **prior to 2:30 pm**. *HCA staff will not release students for early pickup after 2:30 pm due to the transition beginning for car rider dismissal.*

Early Dismissal of Student Drivers

Students with parent and administrative permission to drive to and from school must secure permission from a custodial parent prior to being dismissed outside of the normal school dismissal schedule. **No student driver will be dismissed without written or verbal permission from both school administration and their parent. Students must sign out with an administrator prior to departing campus.**

Field Trips

The purpose of these guidelines is for the safety of HCA students, HCA staff, and chaperones on field trips. During the school year, teachers will schedule educational and/ or service/ministry-based field trips. Trips will be announced via email by HCA staff **once approved by HCA Administration**. *Little Lions students generally do not participate in off-campus field trips. Any exceptions will be communicated in advance.*

Behavior: HCA encourages teachers to manage students while maximizing the learning opportunity offered by field trips. Students are expected to uphold the values of HCA off campus. Any student not exhibiting the three pillars of HCA (Think Deeply, Live Courageously, and Love Authentically) is subject to removal from a field trip. Removal may occur prior to or during the field trip at the discretion of HCA Administration. **Students will not be allowed to participate in a field trip if they have received two or more level II or III behavior referral (administrative referral) within 45 days of a field trip.** Exceptions to this policy are at the sole discretion of the Head of School.

Permission and Payment: HCA utilizes an electronic permission form that will provide field trip details (destination, date, times, transportation, and cost) **All field trip fees are charged to a student's FACTS Incidental Billing Account and are due within 30 days following the field trip.**

Transportation: Transportation for trips will be provided by utilizing the HCA school bus or other HCA authorized transportation. Due to insurance requirements, only students and staff are approved for travel on HCA vehicles.

Field Trip Chaperones: Chaperones are welcome to sign up to attend field trips. A background check **is required** for any adult volunteer/chaperone who is attending a field trip and will be responsible for supervision of students. Background checks for volunteers must be completed annually. The charge for the background check is \$25 and **will be charged to your child's FACTS account**. An appointment with the Administrative Coordinator is required for the background check process. **Parent chaperones on a field trip should not bring siblings/other children on the trip to maximize learning and ensure that students are adequately supervised.**

Lost and Found Items

Items that are lost or found can be turned in or retrieved at the office. Students are reminded to check the lost and found for any missing items. Students should report all lost items to the office immediately. Lost and found will be held for 10 days before being donated or discarded.

Lunch and Snack

Due to health code implications and current facility constraints, HCA does not provide a hot lunch program.

Students will be asked to bring a healthy home-packed lunch each day, including juice or water (other beverages are not permitted), packaged in a lunch box or container with the student's name on it. Students in TK through 3rd grade may also pack a healthy morning snack. All students should bring a refillable water bottle for use throughout the day. Student lunches should be packed with an ice pack or a heat pack for temperature control. Due to the number of potential reheats in a classroom, reheats should be kept to a 3-minute maximum reheat time in order to facilitate all warm-ups. In grades 5 and below, only HCA Staff and adult volunteers will use microwaves. Upper-grade students (grades 6+) will be allowed to use the microwaves. **Please ensure your upper-grade student understands how to use a microwave safely.**

Families will be offered the opportunity to participate in My Hot Lunchbox. This service is managed by an outside provider – and all orders, payments and questions will be handled directly with My Hot Lunchbox. HCA Administration does not have access to this program. Parents will need to setup their own account with My Hot Lunchbox if they wish to participate in this program. Support for My Hot Lunchbox can be reached at 1 (888) 894-8295 or by emailing info@myhotlunchbox.com.

Little Lions Only: State guidelines require that student lunches in our 3 year old classroom be packed with an icepack/heat pack for temperature control as we are not able to reheat. All lunch boxes, containers, and water bottles must have the child's name on them. Children in the Little Lions program are provided a time in the daily schedule for morning snack. Children remaining for aftercare have a scheduled afternoon snack. Please ensure your child has a nutritious snack for these times.

Special Snacks

Teachers may ask parents to bring a special snack that enhances the classroom theme or for a special activity. All snacks are to be store bought and in their unopened original containers or individually wrapped. **No homemade snacks or foods are allowed.** School administration approval is necessary prior to planning and providing a special snack. When approved, special snacks should occur only during the classroom's designated lunch time. Please note: Students are not allowed to have gum or candy on the HCA campus.

Holiday Celebrations

Holidays are a time when children and classroom teachers can use some parental assistance in planning the celebration. Cultural celebrations and holidays expose and link the children to the cultural and social experiences of all people. Parents are encouraged to share these experiences with their children. Holiday celebrations will be viewed as a tool for fostering knowledge of different cultures, races, and social groups. HCA does not celebrate holidays or events that are not in alignment with God's Word, our Statement of Faith, or the mission/vision/values of our school (i.e., Halloween). Decisions regarding particular instances will be left to the Head of School's discretion to carry out the spirit of this policy.

Christmas and Easter are times for us to celebrate the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We deemphasize the commercial aspects of these holidays.

Parents wishing to invite their student's classmates to celebrations (ie birthday parties, sleepovers, etc) should do so outside of the classroom environment. **Please do not send invitations to school for your child to pass out. For your convenience, contact information for families who have not opted out of the school directory are available in Family Portal.**

School Closure and Unscheduled Early Dismissal

We will make every effort to operate as normal during inclement weather. There may be times, however, when the school will close early, open late, or remain closed due to unsafe conditions. When it becomes necessary to issue a delay or closing decision, parents will receive notification through our ParentAlert system (phone/email/text). ***Students in the Little Lions program will receive notifications through Brightwheel.***

Unscheduled Dismissal Plan for Students

In the event of severe weather, winter weather, or other emergent situation it may become necessary for HCA school administration to dismiss students and staff outside of our regular schedule. The guidelines for an unscheduled early dismissal are below:

1. Parents will be notified via ParentAlert (phone/email/text) and are expected to arrive for early dismissal within 30 minutes of the time of the communication regarding the early release. **If conditions have caused communication services to be unavailable, we will begin dismissal procedures below within 30 minutes of the emergency situation. Notifications will resume as soon as communication services become available again.**
2. Parents should arrive at the school in the formation of a normal carline (*unless notified otherwise*).
3. HCA school administration will begin dismissing students in carline **only** if conditions are deemed safe for dismissal. **No student will be dismissed while an active severe weather warning is in effect.**
4. All students will remain in their shelter in-place locations until notified for dismissal.
5. HCA administration will be responsible for overseeing students to their parent(s) in carlines.
6. HCA administration will remain on campus until all students have safely exited campus.
7. All extracurricular and afterschool activities are canceled until HCA returns to a normal on-campus operating schedule (ie afterschool program, Learning Centers, student clubs and other events).

During an early dismissal due to emergent conditions, we ask that all parents remain in their vehicles and follow all directives given by HCA Administration. This will ensure that we are able to safely dismiss all students. **Please do not attempt to check your child out in the office during this dismissal process.**

Campus Evacuation and Relocation Information

If there is an emergency situation that requires students to evacuate the HCA campus, we will relocate to Hillsborough PH Church located at 117 West Hills Avenue South, Hillsborough, NC 27278. The following policies apply:

1. Students will be transported by school vehicles to the designated off campus location.
2. Parents will be notified of the evacuation and dismissal plans via ParentAlert (phone/email/text) and are expected to arrive within a 30 minute time frame of the transmission of the relocation/early dismissal notice.
3. Parents should arrive and park at the relocation facility in an orderly fashion, remaining in your vehicle. School administration will approach your vehicle and begin the process of dismissing your student. **No students will be dismissed from the building until signed out with HCA School Administration.**
4. **Students will remain in the building with their classroom teacher until walked to the vehicle by school administration.**
5. All following events scheduled for later that day are canceled until HCA returns to a normal on-campus operating schedule.
6. All parents will receive follow up notifications via ParentAlert (phone/email/text) regarding our return to campus following a campus evacuation.

Electronic Device Policy

We recognize that cellular-enabled electronic devices have become a common tool for communication. However, they have also become a major distraction to the learning environment and are vulnerable to theft. We ask that you allow your child to carry cellular-enabled devices **only if absolutely necessary**. Students must receive a permit from school administration in order for their student to carry **any** electronic device on campus.

All electronic devices (phones, smartwatches, etc) must be turned off and stored in student lockers while on campus (including afterschool programs and clubs). Electronic devices may **not** be used to talk, take pictures, play games, record or text during school hours, including recesses.

- 1st infraction - students will have the electronic device confiscated and returned at the end of the day.
- 2nd infraction - students will have the electronic device confiscated and locked up in the office until a parent can come to school to retrieve it.
- 3rd infraction - students will no longer be allowed to bring an electronic device to school until a parent conference with school administration is held.

Students in the Little Lions program may not bring electronic devices to campus.

This policy does not apply to medical devices necessary for maintaining student health (ie insulin pumps, monitors, etc.), calculators required for mathematics and science classes, or school issued devices used appropriately and under faculty supervision. For your convenience, parents can communicate **important messages** to their students at school by calling the school office at (919) 732-0888.

Toys/Games Policy

Students in the Little Lions program may bring a small comfort item (blanket or small stuffed animal) for use during nap time. Lower grade students may bring in items for their show and tell day when given permission by their classroom teacher (arranged with school administration). Teachers will notify parents in advance of show and tell days. Items brought for show and tell must be small enough to fit in a backpack, and be in alignment with both HCA policy and scripture (i.e., no toy weapons, Pokémon/Magic cards, etc). Additionally, please do not send items of significant personal or monetary value. **No other toys/games should be brought on campus to ensure a focus on quality instructional time.**

Tobacco, Alcohol, Firearms and Drugs Policy

Hillsborough Christian Academy prohibits the use of tobacco, alcohol, firearms, and drugs on the premises while children are in our care. The entire policy may be read at the entrance to the building. A copy of the policy may also be requested at any time.

Update Policy

This handbook may be updated at any time by school administration. A current copy of the policies and procedures will be kept online for parent access. Parents will be notified of changes as they are made.

Admissions, Enrollment, and Financial Policies and Procedures

Admissions

Hillsborough Christian Academy currently accepts students entering Transitional Kindergarten through twelfth grade. We also serve 3-year-old students in our Little Lions program. An enrollment opportunity is offered upon completion of application requirements (including agreement with HCA Statement of Faith and operational policies) and classroom availability. Additional application requirements may include readiness and/or achievement tests, a review of the student's previous records, and providing evidence that the parents/guardians share in the goals of the school based upon its philosophy and purpose.

Enrollment

Your child is not officially enrolled until all of the following requirements have been met:

1. Complete the online application process found at www.hillsboroughchristian.org. Scan and upload paper documents to the FACTS or Brighwheel application. Contact the school office for assistance with paper documents.
___ Online Student Application – **if no slot is available, your child's name will be placed on a wait list.**
___ Signed Parent Handbook Agreement (electronic)
___ Birth Certificate
___ Immunization Records/Religious Exemption Notification
___ Student Records (if applicable)

2. Meet the following admission requirements:

For **transitional kindergarten**, students must be 4 years old by October 15 **and** potty trained.

On entering **kindergarten**, the child must be five years old by October 15. All students entering kindergarten must be able to pass a developmental readiness screening. **Note: In order to receive funds, the NC Opportunity Scholarship requires students entering kindergarten to be five years old by August 31st or at least 4 years old by April 16th and approved for Kindergarten according to State guidelines.**

All students entering the first grade must be six years old by October 15. The student's kindergarten records will be reviewed to determine first grade readiness, at which time an achievement test and/or screening administered by school administration may be used to assist in determining final grade placement.

All final grade placements will be made by the Head of School. Students entering all other grades must provide previous records and/or take an achievement test, which will be administered by school administration.

3. Complete Online Enrollment and submit the New Student Enrollment Fee.
4. Complete FACTS Tuition Payment Information and Financial Arrangements.

After all of the previous items have been received, the school will schedule the following:

5. Placement Testing if required: Meeting with school administration and/or completion of testing as recommended.

Little Lions Program Admissions and Enrollment Only

Eligibility for admission to the Little Lions classroom includes:

- Children who are 3 years or older at the time of enrollment are eligible to be enrolled in the Little Lions program at Hillsborough Christian Academy, provided enrollment space exists.
- We prefer children to be potty trained but understand that all children develop at their own pace. We will work with the child and parents on a training plan.
- We enroll children who are at a stage of growth and development that enables them to benefit from the educational program.
- The parent is responsible for submitting all enrollment forms for the child's enrollment.
- We cannot provide service to any child whose needs cannot be met or whose behavior endangers other children.
- Hillsborough Christian Academy is committed to supporting all children and families but realizes there are children who may be better served through the support of other local agencies. Parents will be notified if concerns arise.

Enrollment in the Little Lions program includes the following requirements:

1. Application completed in Brightwheel (link found online at www.hillsboroughchristian.org).
2. Submit all required documents:
 - a. Immunization Records
 - b. Medical Records
 - c. Tuition Agreement
 - d. Discipline Policy Agreement
 - e. Nutrition Opt Out
 - f. Photo Release Form
 - g. Handbook Acknowledgment Form
3. Pay non-refundable Enrollment Fee

Continuous Enrollment and Withdrawal

Hillsborough Christian Academy admits students on a Continuous Enrollment Agreement. There are many advantages to the Continuous Enrollment model. First, a student's seat at HCA continues to be guaranteed for the following school year without the need for a time consuming/costly reenrollment process. Second, this model allows us to better estimate student enrollment for the following school year providing for retention of high-caliber educators.

A copy of the Continuous Enrollment Agreement is signed at enrollment and may also be requested from the school office along with an FAQ describing the process of withdrawing without penalty during the Continuous Enrollment Notification window (announced by school administration annually). Withdrawal outside of this window will incur early withdrawal penalties ranging from \$100 to the tuition for the quarter following withdrawal notification plus the early withdrawal fee (\$200).

In addition to the Continuous Enrollment agreement, parents are required to give the school one month's written notification when voluntarily withdrawing children from the school. The school reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment for the following reasons:

- Violation of the Parent Code of Conduct or Parent/Student Handbook
- Failure to adhere to policies and procedures of the school
- Failure to remain in alignment with the schools stated mission, vision and values
- Delinquency in payment of tuition or other fees

Little Lions Only:

Children are admitted to the Little Lions program with the expectation that they will be enrolled until they age into our Transitional Kindergarten program. School administration will notify parents of important application/enrollment dates for the transition from Little Lions to TK.

We do acknowledge that under certain circumstances parents may need to withdraw their child from the Little Lions program. Parents must provide at least Ninety (90) days signed written notice to the Head of School to withdraw the student from the school. Tuition will be collected during the 90-day notice period, and after the 90-day notice period, parents will no longer be responsible for tuition payments pursuant to this agreement. While we aim to serve every student, Hillsborough Christian Academy reserves the right to remove a student from the program for cause (including, but not limited to behavioral concerns and non-payment). Parent's will be responsible for one month's tuition for students removed from the Little Lion's program for cause (see Termination of Care below).

Termination of Care for Little Lions Students

Hillsborough Christian Academy reserves the right to terminate childcare for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay invoices as they are due
- Failure to complete required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property by a child and/or parent that is not corrected by an improvement plan set by school administration.
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- False information given by parent either verbally or in writing
- Disciplinary reasons as outlined in this document

Tuition & Fees - School-Aged Program

We have partnered with FACTS Management to allow our parents to setup convenient payment plans. You may choose to pay **Annually** (1 payment due July 1, 15 or 31), or on a **12 Month Plan** (Due 1 or 15 July-June). Any parent/guardian whose payment is returned by the bank due to insufficient funds will be charged by FACTS according to their current returned payment fee schedule. Please note – there will be a \$25 late fee for any school payment made after the due date.

While HCA provides a monthly payment option, tuition is an annual charge. This means that tuition must be paid even when your child is absent from school due to illness or vacation. The number of times your child attends school each month will vary; **however, the amount of your tuition payment will not.**

New Student Enrollment fee: A non-refundable fee required for the processing of the student's files and placement of the child.

Tuition Payments: Monthly tuition payments are due July through June. The FACTS Tuition Payment system will bill you once you enroll and select monthly billing on your enrollment form. For any billing variances, please contact the school administration team at billing@hillsboroughchristian.org or (919) 732-0888.

Tuition & Fees - Little Lions Program

We have partnered with Brightwheel to manage annual tuition and fee payments for the Little Lions program. We offer a monthly tuition payment option with payments due on the 1st of each month. All families are required to enroll in Brightwheel's autopay feature using a credit/debit card or ACH bank transfer.

Tuition charges will not change based on days in attendance and will continue to be due for weeks your child may not attend (ie family vacations). Tuition accounts will be charged a \$25 fee for each business day that payment is not current, beginning with Tuesday following the due date. Additionally, a returned payment fee of \$25 will be assessed for any returned payments.

Late pickup fee of \$1 per minute is also applicable for any child picked up after the program closes (5:30pm).

Little Lions Payment and Fee Schedule

All tuition payments are due monthly, regardless of your child's attendance. Hillsborough Christian Academy reserves the right to change these fees with a 60 day notice.

Childcare Fees

Annual tuition for the Little Lions Program is \$11,250 per year for our school day length program. A monthly payment plan is available for families, dividing the annual tuition into 12 monthly payments. The amount a family pays towards annual tuition will not change – even though the number of days per month may.

Aftercare (provided from 3:00 – 5:30) is available for our Little Lions for \$200 per month.

Fees for Families on Subsidy

Families are responsible for the portion of the fee not covered by the subsidy.

Other Fees

- \$25 late payment fee (assessed monthly).
- \$25 returned payment fee (Subject to change, based on the bank charges).
- \$20 daily aftercare fee for families picking up after 3:15 and not enrolled in the aftercare option.
- \$1 per minute after closing time, if the child has not been picked up.

Billing

- Invoices will be delivered monthly via brightwheel and will include the fees due for the following month. Payments are due on the first business day of the month.
- If the bill is unpaid by close of business on the Friday following the due date, a late fee of \$25 will be assessed each day there is an outstanding balance.
- Any late fees will be included on the next invoice, if not paid prior.
- Annual tuition takes into account the days our program is closed (teacher workdays, holidays, and scheduled breaks).
- If the account becomes 10 days overdue, the child's enrollment will be suspended, and the child will not be allowed to attend until the bill is paid.
- Billing will continue during this time.
- If the bill is not paid within 10 days of the suspension, the child will be removed from enrollment and their place could be filled with another child.
- There is no reduction in fees if parents choose to send their children less than the specified number of days.

Late Pick-up Fee

- Failure to pick up your child/children by 3:15 pm will result in the enrolled child being placed in our aftercare program at the daily rate (\$20).
- Failure to pick up a child/children enrolled in the aftercare program (5:30 pm) will result in a charge of \$1 per minute per child.
- Please make every effort to pick up your child at the specified time.
- It is understood that circumstances may come up to prevent getting to the facility on time. If you are unable to pick up your child on time, please notify the school office.
- If you will be more than 15 minutes late, please make arrangements with someone on your pickup list to pick up your child.

Financial Assistance

Hillsborough Christian Academy is committed to making Christian education affordable to families with a desire to “Train up a child in the way he should go...” (Proverbs 22:6) and are aligned with the vision and mission of Kingdom Education. Additionally, we recognize the responsibility given to the HCA School Board and school administration to be good stewards of Kingdom resources, and to effectively manage the school budget and personnel resources. Therefore, the following policies have been adopted regarding financial aid awards and disbursement at Hillsborough Christian Academy.

At HCA, we participate in the NC Opportunity Scholarship Program and ESA+ grant (*outside scholarship*). Additionally, we offer *designated financial aid* and *demonstrated needs-based financial aid*.

Demonstrated Needs-Based Grants

At HCA, our Financial Aid Committee allocates *demonstrated needs-based grants* on a first come, first serve basis, using the following process:

1. All families requesting tuition assistance must complete the Online Financial Aid Assessment through our third-party evaluator, FACTS.
2. Priority will be given to families completing the FACTS Financial Aid application by the priority cut-off date (communicated annually by school administration).
3. All needs based financial aid will be awarded by the HCA Financial Aid committee by May 31st for the following academic year.
4. Families will be notified in the FACTS Grant and Aid system of their award status and amount.
5. Any family applying for needs-based aid after the priority enrollment period may be considered depending on availability of remaining financial aid funds.

Financial Aid Disbursement

The following policies apply to disbursement of financial aid at HCA:

1. All financial aid awards will be calculated and applied ***after*** the application of outside scholarships/grants (ie NC Opportunity Scholarship and ESA+).
 - a. HCA-designated and demonstrated needs-based financial aid will be recalculated for any student receiving outside-based scholarships or grants after the HCA Financial Aid process is completed.
2. A family may only receive ***either designated financial aid or demonstrated needs based financial aid. These may not be stacked for additional tuition relief.***
3. Financial aid awards will be applied to your FACTS tuition payment account.
4. Financial aid awards may not exceed the amount owed for tuition and is not a refundable credit.
5. Families must remain in good academic, behavioral, and financial standing to receive financial aid.
6. **Upon withdrawal from enrollment (voluntary or involuntary), any financial aid awarded will be removed and tuition will become due in full according to the current approved Continuous Enrollment policies. Additionally, any outside scholarship funds will be recalculated based on agreed policies (ie NC General Statutes guiding the NC Opportunity Scholarship and ESA+ programs).**

Academic Policies and Procedures

Curriculum

Hillsborough Christian Academy seeks to utilize the best material for the foundation of our curriculum and coursework. We have selected several curriculum partners to provide material for independent grade levels and courses.

Students are provided a rigorous phonics and grammar foundation in our specially curated curricular programs. Additionally, lower school students are provided a superior handwriting foundation found in Learning Without Tears. We continue a focus on literacy through our upper grades by utilizing a variety of sources of literature (both fiction and non-fiction) including classical and contemporary sources - provided in the biblically founded BJU Press materials.

Our Bible curriculum - from Purposeful Design and BJU Press - provides students with both foundational Biblical literacy skills and deepens their understanding of our creator God and his desire to be in relationship with them!

History and social studies curriculum - from Abeka and BJU Press - follows God's people from creation to current date, focusing on major cultures and events through a Biblical worldview perspective.

Our students benefit from the academically rigorous and biblically integrated curricula provided by BJU Press for mathematics and science. These programs are designed to develop strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills while equipping students to view the world through a distinctly Christian worldview. Through engaging instruction, our teachers are able to meet the individual needs of each student, providing targeted support for those who need additional reinforcement while offering meaningful enrichment opportunities that challenge and extend our advanced learners.

Ultimately, these curricula and methods integrate academic development and character building (to Live Courageously, Think Deeply and to Love Authentically) through a Christ-centered worldview. Students spend time each day in prayer, study, and the memorization of Scripture. Students will also participate in chapel and convocation. Students are expected to demonstrate an appropriate degree of academic success in the classroom in order to be given opportunities to participate in other aspects of school life. HCA also uses additional materials to supplement when needed.

Learning in the Little Lions Classroom

The Little Lions program provides a Christ-centered foundation for lifelong learning through a developmentally appropriate, play-based approach to early childhood education. Our program is intentionally designed to nurture each child's spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth while fostering curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning. Through hands-on experiences, guided discovery, purposeful play, and daily biblical instruction, children develop the foundational skills necessary for future academic success while growing in confidence, character, and their understanding of God's love. As with every program at Hillsborough Christian Academy, we partner closely with families to prepare children not only for kindergarten, but for a lifetime of learning and faithful service to Christ.

Conferences

Mandatory parent/teacher conferences will be held at the end of the first trimester to discuss each student's progress. Attendance/Retention conferences are held at the beginning of the third trimester to discuss excessive absences/tardies and student growth. You may request to schedule a conference with your child's teacher at any time.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten will be as follows:

100-90%	E
89-80%	S
70-79%	I
69-0 %	N

(E-Exemplary, S-Satisfactory, I-Improving, and N-Needs Improvement)

The following grading scale will be used for report cards and on each student's permanent academic record starting in the **first** grade.

100-98%	A+	83-80%	B-	66-64%	D
97-94%	A	79-77%	C+	63-60%	D-
93-90%	A-	76-74%	C	59-0%	F
89-87%	B+	73-70%	C-		
86-84%	B	69-67%	D+		

Hillsborough Christian Academy begins tracking student grade point average (GPA) in the 9th grade year. GPA is weighted on a 4.0 scale for general education coursework. Any honors coursework is weighted on a 5.0 scale, with Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) coursework weighted on a 6.0 scale. GPA is calculated on the student's annual transcript – not the term report card.

*Note: Some required courses (Convocation/Chapel/etc.) may appear on a student's report card/transcript as **P** (pass) or **F** (fail).*

Grade Calculation

Students receive a trimester grade for each course in which they are enrolled. Final course grades are calculated differently for lower and upper grades to reflect the academic expectations of each division.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through Grade 8

For students in TK–8, the final course grade is calculated using the following weighted averages:

Trimester 1: 25% Trimester 2: 35% Trimester 3: 40%

This weighting places greater emphasis on student growth and achievement throughout the school year.

Grades 9–12

High school students are expected to complete both a midterm exam and a comprehensive final exam in each course. Each exam counts as 5% of the student's final course grade. Final grades are calculated using the following weighted averages:

Trimester 1: 25% Midterm Exam: 5% Trimester 2: 30% Trimester 3: 35% Final Exam: 5%

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards will be issued electronically at the end of each academic grading period. Report cards are posted in your Family Portal account. ***Parents are highly encouraged to download the report card and save it as a copy of their child's academic record.***

Parents should login to FACTS Family Portal to see up-to-date grading information for each student. If enabled by parents, FACTS SIS will also email weekly status reports to each parent with current grade information. **Parents must sign in to FACTS in order to enable this feature.** At this time, no paper report cards or progress reports will be issued.

Financial accounts must be current to access student records in the FACTS Family Portal.

Homework

We believe strongly that education is a partnership between school and home. While there are times that homework is beneficial to the student's educational journey – the most important factor for future success is the time spent interacting with the family unit. We highly recommend that parents spend time with their children talking, reading, studying, and praying together. Parents should make a point to find time each day to discuss what their child has learned at school. *The maximum assigned homework time will not exceed 15 minutes (TK/K), 20 minutes (1-2), 30 minutes (3-5). Homework times vary for upper grades students by course. Additional time may be required for unit projects or special assignments.*

Academic Expectations of Parents

At HCA, parents are expected to be actively involved in their student(s)' academic progress. **Parents are expected to play a central part by monitoring their child's work daily, communicating concerns regularly with their child's teacher, and ensuring that their child is becoming responsible for completing his/her assigned work on time.** By partnering with HCA, you are helping to create a culture of excellence for your students' educational success.

Learning Centers

Hillsborough Christian Academy is committed to helping every student achieve academic success. Learning Centers are an extension of the instructional day and provide students with additional opportunities for academic support, intervention, enrichment, and individualized instruction. These sessions allow teachers to reinforce classroom concepts, provide targeted assistance, challenge students to grow academically, and foster greater confidence as learners.

Learning Centers are available to all students and may be attended in one of the following ways:

- **Teacher Requested:** A classroom teacher may request that a student attend a Learning Center to receive additional academic support, complete missing assignments, prepare for assessments, strengthen understanding of classroom concepts, or address areas of academic concern.
- **Student or Parent Initiated:** Any student may voluntarily attend a Learning Center by signing up with their classroom teacher. Students are encouraged to take advantage of Learning Centers whenever they desire additional assistance, enrichment, or dedicated time to work alongside their teacher.

Learning Centers operate according to the following schedule:

- **Transitional Kindergarten–Grade 4:** 3:15 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
- **Grades 5–12:** 3:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.

Students who have committed to attending a Learning Center—whether voluntarily or at the request of a teacher—are expected to attend faithfully. If a student is unable to attend a scheduled Learning Center, a parent or guardian should notify the classroom teacher or school office as soon as possible.

Extracurricular Activities and Academic Eligibility

Hillsborough Christian Academy believes that education extends beyond the classroom. Extracurricular activities and student clubs provide valuable opportunities for students to develop leadership, creativity, teamwork, service, and Christlike character while strengthening relationships within the school community. Participation in these activities is considered a privilege that complements a student's academic and spiritual development.

Unless otherwise communicated, extracurricular activities and clubs operate from **3:15 p.m. until 4:45 p.m.**

Student Transitions

Students remaining on campus for Learning Centers or extracurricular activities should report directly to their designated meeting location immediately following dismissal. Students should **not** report to the Afterschool Program prior to attending Learning Centers or extracurricular activities. The Afterschool Program is responsible only for students enrolled in afterschool care and maintains separate attendance procedures.

Student Dismissal Procedures

At the conclusion of Learning Centers and extracurricular activities, parents should report to the designated office entrance for student dismissal. Faculty members supervising Learning Centers or extracurricular activities will:

- Escort students to the designated dismissal location.
- Supervise students until they have been signed out by a parent or authorized individual.
- Maintain a Learning Center or extracurricular sign-out log.

Students who remain after all participating families have arrived will be escorted to the Afterschool Program and signed into afterschool care. Appropriate afterschool fees will apply.

Academic Eligibility

Academic success is the primary responsibility of every student at Hillsborough Christian Academy. Students participating in extracurricular activities are expected to demonstrate consistent academic effort and achievement while maintaining good standing in all courses. To remain eligible for participation in extracurricular activities, students must maintain a **minimum course average of 70 (C)** in every class. School administration regularly reviews student academic progress throughout the school year.

Academic Probation

Students whose average falls below the required academic standard may be placed on **Academic Probation** rather than being immediately removed from extracurricular participation.

During Academic Probation, students may continue participating in extracurricular activities provided they:

- Attend all required weekly Learning Centers for each course in which their average is below 70.
- Demonstrate consistent academic improvement.
- Maintain regular attendance at assigned Learning Centers.
- Continue to meet the behavioral expectations of Hillsborough Christian Academy.

Learning Centers are available to all students as a voluntary academic support opportunity. However, attendance becomes **mandatory** for students placed on Academic Probation.

Students who fail to attend required Learning Centers without an approved absence, fail to demonstrate academic improvement, or whose grades continue to decline may lose eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities until the academic requirements have been restored.

School administration reserves the right to determine eligibility based upon a student's overall academic progress, attendance, behavior, and commitment to the expectations outlined in this handbook.

Behavioral Expectations

Students participating in Learning Centers, extracurricular activities, and student clubs remain subject to all policies and behavioral expectations outlined in this handbook.

Participation may be suspended or revoked for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Failure to maintain academic eligibility.
- Failure to attend required Learning Centers.
- Repeated or serious disciplinary infractions.
- Poor attendance.
- Conduct inconsistent with the mission, vision, values, or behavioral expectations of Hillsborough Christian Academy.

Students are expected to represent Hillsborough Christian Academy with Christlike character both on and off campus while participating in any school-sponsored activity.

Student Retention

The Head of School may consider retention when a student does not meet the stated academic requirements for promotion to the next grade. Requirements include a student's reading level, regular attendance, and/or satisfactory social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development. Materials assessed for retention include attendance, course grades, benchmark scores, and samples of student work. A conference will be scheduled with parents to discuss the need for retention during the third trimester.

Attendance Policies and Procedures (School Aged Program)

Regular attendance is a critical component for success in school. Once a student arrives on campus, he/she is expected to remain until dismissed or signed out by an authorized party. Students are expected to be in attendance except when ill or when unable to attend because of emergency circumstances, such as a death in the family. **A student is marked absent (excused or unexcused) if they are signed out prior to 11:30 OR signed in after 11:30 am.** The expectation of students is to complete all missing work following any absence (excused or unexcused). Absences will be handled as indicated below:

Excused Absences

In order for an absence to be excused, the parent must notify the school. Parents may call the school office at (919) 732-0888 or email attendance@hillsboroughchristian.org. Following an illness of three days or more, a doctor's note should be sent upon return to the classroom. Schoolwork that is missed for an excused absence will be allowed to be made up (see makeup work). When a student is absent, it will be considered an excused absence for the following reasons (contingent upon the school office receiving the proper documentation):

- Student illness
- Doctor or dentist appointments
- Death in the immediate family and/or close family friends
- Mechanical failure of automobile or accident
- Traffic delays
- Other approved absences (requires approval from school administration)

Please note that an absence is **not automatically excused** because a parent gives written or oral permission for the student to be absent from school. Parents may respectfully disagree regarding the legitimacy of an absence when weighed against the benefits of attendance, however, **the final decision as to whether an absence is considered excused or unexcused rests with the Head of School.**

Unexcused Absences

Any absence for which the school does not receive appropriate notification will be marked unexcused. Students are still expected to complete make-up work when unexcused. This helps in preventing students from missing important concepts in class.

Excessive Absences

Students who miss more than six (6) days in a trimester may be adversely affected by those absences. Because attendance is aligned to academic achievement, the total number of absences from school should not exceed six (6) absences in any trimester or twenty (20) total for the year. The school reserves the right, should a student exceed these limits, to require the parents to submit, in writing, an explanation detailing the absences, doctor's notes, and the justification of each absence. The Head of School is required under NC general statute to report excessive absences to the truancy officer of the LEA.

Prearranged Absences

Parents should schedule optional absences (ie family vacations) during scheduled school breaks and **not** during instructional time. We understand that there are opportunities to pursue education outside of the school environment - and that these opportunities may take place during the school schedule. In these cases, parents will need to notify the school office, in writing, of any prearranged absences. Advanced arrangements will need to be made with the child's teacher for school work that will be missed.

Makeup Work

For excused scheduled absences, arrangements for makeup work must be made in advance with at least an equal number of days advance notice as the number of days of planned absence. This allows the teachers to prepare. The work will be due the first day the student returns to school. For other absences of less than two (2) days the makeup work will be available to the student on the day of their return to school. If a student is absent two (2) days or longer the parent should contact the school office to arrange to pick up makeup work. The work will be collected and available at the end of the day, if possible. Students will have one day to complete missed work for each day they are absent, excluding scheduled absences.

Tardiness

Students who are not in their seat at the 8:00 a.m. tardy bell will be marked tardy. Attendance will be taken for each class in grades 6 and up. Students arriving late to class will be marked tardy. Students who are habitually tardy to school/class may receive disciplinary action from school administration.

Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

Student Illness

Students will be excluded from school for exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| -100.4° temperature or above | -Persistent cough (must have a doctor's note allowing return) |
| -Unrelieved headache | -Sore throat (must have a doctor's note allowing return) |
| -Diarrhea | -Nausea and/or vomiting |
| -Abdominal pain | -Excessive sneezing, running nose, or watery eyes |
| -Unidentified rash | -Head lice (must have documentation of treatment prior to return) |
| -Extreme sleepiness | -Red, inflamed eyes with thick mucus discharge |

It is the responsibility of the parent to arrange pickup of their child within thirty minutes of being called due to illness. If parents do not respond to the student pickup request, we will begin calling the emergency contact list. Students must be fever/symptom-free (without fever or symptom-reducing medication) for a minimum of 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Community-Wide Illness/Pandemic Illness

During an illness affecting a large portion of the HCA community or the community at large, HCA will initiate and follow the guidelines of our Pandemic Health and Safety plan. Parents will be notified when this policy is placed into effect. When the Pandemic Health and Safety Plan is in effect, it will supersede the policies and procedures found in the Parent/Student Handbook.

Responsibilities of HCA Staff

The teacher will be the initial judge of a child's health condition. It is the teacher's responsibility to notify school administration when a student appears unwell. Administration will evaluate and notify parents/guardians as necessary. HCA reserves the right to refuse the attendance of any ill child.

Immunizations/Medical Examination

Current immunization records must be on file at HCA for every student by the thirtieth (30th) day of the school year. Immunization records must be kept up to date. If not, the child will not be allowed to attend. Student health reports should be completed by all students entering kindergarten. A copy of this form is provided by school administration.

Allergies

All allergies to medications and/or other substances must be stated on the emergency and medical forms. North Carolina State Law requires that we have a signed note from your physician stating any food allergies your child may have. Faculty and staff will be notified of documented allergies (food and environmental) for students in their care. In respect to food allergies, parents are welcome to give an alternate food list for afterschool and summer camp snack purposes. Additionally, a parent may send a replacement snack to afterschool/summer camp that they deem as an appropriate substitution.

Accidents

The school will strive to maintain a safe environment free of physical hazards. All faculty are certified in Infant/Child/Adult First Aid/CPR and should be the only ones administering first aid on campus, unless signed out by an authorized person. When a child is injured at the school, the staff will take responsibility to provide appropriate First Aid measures. Any individuals not employed by HCA attempting to intervene in First Aid/CPR procedures will be directed by staff to assist (if necessary) or relocate. Faculty involvement will include but are not limited to: applying ice; washing with antibacterial soap and water; and applying a bandage. Should the injury appear to be more serious, the parent, guardian, or emergency contact person will be called. An incident report will be completed for both minor and more serious accidents and emailed to the parent. In cases of potentially serious injuries, the staff will call 911.

Student Medication Administration

The purpose of this policy is to comply with North Carolina school health guidelines and best practices regarding medication given at school. Medication will only be administered on campus if deemed necessary by the health care provider **and** cannot be reasonably administered outside of school hours. The parent/guardian shall be responsible for providing all medications to be administered, along with the accompanying documentation from the prescriber and pharmacist.

Medications to be administered at school, **both prescription and non-prescription**, must be prescribed and authorized by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or dentist on a Medication Administration Form (available in the school office). For most medications, the HCA Medication Administration Form will be valid for 6 months. Permission for certain creams and ointments may be given for a period of 1 year. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the Medication Administration Form is updated as required.

Parents must have the ordering physician complete the required HCA Medication Administration Form (see Appendix A). The form must also be signed by the student's parent/guardian. The parent/guardian is responsible for providing all required documentation to HCA Administration along with the medication in its original labeled container for review. BEFORE medication is administered, HCA administration will review the form and the parent will receive a medication receipt.

As an alternative, parents may choose to come and administer medications to their child. Parents choosing to administer medications on campus must remain with their student for a minimum of 30 minutes following the medication administration (to ensure no adverse reactions).

Medications must be brought to the HCA main office (at Lower Campus - 512 US 70) by a parent/guardian (not the student) during normal office hours (8 am – 4 pm). Medication will not be accepted from parents during car rider drop-off or pick-up. Each medication must be accompanied by a medication form signed by the prescribing health care provider and the parent. If the dosage is changed, a newly labeled container and an updated medication form must be provided. No medication will be given beyond the expiration date.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that everyday items do not contain prescribed or over-the-counter medication. Examples to inspect include, but are not limited to:

- Lip Balm or Chapstick
- Supplements (Multi-vitamins, Lactaid, etc).
- Allergy Medications
- Cough Drops
- Lotions and Creams
- Sunscreen (should be applied prior to school hours)

All medications will be verified by the office with the parent/guardian on receipt or return. The date, medication name, dosage, quantity, and expiration date will be logged and signed for by both the parent and the office on the medication receipt form.

When treatment has been completed or on the last full-day of the school year, unused medication should be picked-up by the parent/guardian. At the end of the school year, all expired and unclaimed medications will be disposed of by the school office within one week of the last full-day of school.

No student may carry medications or self-medicate except for students with diabetes or students who require rescue medications such as epinephrine auto-injectors (epi-pens) and inhalers for asthma. Completed Medication Administration forms must be on file - with permission from the prescribing physician recommending self-carry status. School administration also must approve the students self-carry status prior to the student carrying medication on campus.

To self-carry, a student must demonstrate proficiency in self-administration of the emergency rescue medication with school administration. A medication administration form and a Student Contract for Self-Carried Medication/Equipment must be on file with the school office. Self-medication privileges may be revoked if the student exhibits a lack of responsible behavior.

Prescription Medications must be provided in a current pharmacy-labeled container. The label should state the student's name, name of medication, dosage, frequency and method of administration, the name of the prescribing physician, and the expiration date. (Parents may want to have the pharmacist label two containers; one for home use and one for school use if the child is to receive the medication at both sites.)

Non-Prescription Medication must be provided in an original labeled container. All medications will be administered according to manufacturer's recommendations on the label unless otherwise indicated by the healthcare provider on the Medication Administration form. The following over-the-counter medications can be stored in the office: Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil), Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), Antacid (Tums or Mylanta) and cough drops/throat lozenges. A Medication Administration form must be completed by the physician and parent in order to be given.

Administration of Medication

Only HCA employees to whom such responsibility has been delegated by school administration will administer medications. The training of staff will include the following:

- The 5 "Rights" of medication administration: Right Child, Right Medication, Right Dosage, Right Time, Right Route
- Safe storage and handling of medication, including medication disposal
- Documentation of medication administration
- Appropriate action for medication error, adverse reaction, or student refusal

Teachers should coordinate with the school office to have a plan for teacher absence and medication administration.

Documentation of Medication Administration

All medication administrations must be documented in the student's electronic health record (FACTS SIS). The documentation must include the date, time, full student name, name and dosage of medication given, and the identity of the person administering the medication.

Medication storage

Medication will be secured in the administrative office area or in a locked medication box. School administration will be responsible for the custody and administration of all medications. Emergency rescue medications for individual students such as epinephrine auto-injectors and inhalers, will be placed in a location deemed appropriate and accessible by school administration.

Off-Campus Trips

The medication administration form is the authorized form used for all on-campus and off-campus activities, including overnight trips. **This form must be completed and submitted to school administration at least two business days in advance of the permission slips due date.** Specific advisors/chaperones on the trip will be identified to administer medications while students are off campus. School administration will provide the appropriate completed medication administration forms to these individuals. No students on an off-campus trip will be allowed to self-carry any medications except in the case of rescue medications (epinephrine auto-injectors, inhalers and diabetic supplies) when meeting the requirements above. For medications normally taken at home outside of school hours, advance planning may be required to ensure the necessary medication forms are completed.

When medications must be taken on overnight trips, the following safety measures should be taken:

- **Send only essential medications on the trip.**
- Send only the required amount of medication in a pharmacy-labeled or over-the-counter-labeled bottle.
- Identified advisors/chaperones accompanying the student will hold the medication and supervise the student taking the medication.

Questions related to this medication policy can be forwarded to HCA's school administration.

Child Abuse Reporting

The Staff of HCA will comply with North Carolina state law and the provisions of the Child Abuse Reporting Act by bringing suspected cases of abuse and neglect to the attention of the Head of School. The Head of School (or his designee) is ultimately responsible for contacting the Orange County Department of Social Services and the Sheriff's Department. It is the responsibility of the Department of Social Services/Sheriff's Department to notify parents of abuse reporting.

Outside Play

Parents need to be aware of weather conditions to ensure that their student(s) are dressed appropriately. Hats, coats, and gloves need to be sent with your children during cold weather to be used during recess times. Students are always expected to adhere to the HCA dress code. HCA classes will follow the temperature guidelines for recess time periods, provided that weather is clear and dry. If ground conditions are saturated, students will remain inside. Wind chill and heat index will be taken into account when evaluating weather conditions. The final decision on outdoor recess will be made by school administration. **If your child is unable to participate in outside recess due to a medical condition, please send a doctor's note.**

Cold Temperatures

Temperature (°F)	Time Limit (in min)
32° or Below	0
32-35°	10
35-39°	15
40°+	20+

Hot Temperatures

Temperature (°F)	Time Limit (in min)
95° or above	None after 11:30 am. No more than 20 min before 11:30 am.
90-94°	20
Below 90°	20+

Emergency Drills

Fire – In case of fire, it is imperative that the building be evacuated quickly and calmly. Fire drills will be held monthly during the school year. Teachers will instruct students on proper procedures during a fire.

Weather/Tornado – When a severe weather or tornado warning is given, the classroom teacher will lead students to a designated area within the building. Teachers will be well versed regarding proper emergency procedures and will dismiss students from the designated area only when an "all clear" signal is given by school administration. Severe weather drills will be conducted periodically during the school year.

Lockdown – We are committed to ensuring the safety of our school community. We practice different lockdown scenarios throughout the year to ensure that our students and staff are safe in a wide array of situations that occur in the world today. Our lockdown procedures were developed in consultation with the Orange County Sheriff's office and resources provided by ACSI.

Dismissal During an Active Emergency Event - When an active watch or warning has been issued where conditions are hazardous, school administration may alter dismissal times. NO student will be dismissed until deemed safe by school administration. Parents will be alerted through the HCA Alert system as soon as decisions are made.

Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

Philosophy of School Discipline

Hillsborough Christian Academy believes that biblical discipline is an act of love that seeks restoration, reconciliation, and the development of Christlike character. A disciplined learning environment is critical to successful learning. Hebrew 12:5b-6 says: “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov’d by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.” Failure to discipline our students when their behavior is wrong would be a disservice to them and their peers. The purpose of discipline is to lovingly correct, restore, and guide students toward Christlike character, personal responsibility, and godly living.

The manner in which a teacher handles a discipline situation will depend on the child and the individual occurrence. The positive discipline technique could involve any of the following:

1. Provide ample activities to keep the child involved (good classroom management).
2. Discussion with the child and giving gentle explanations and reminders.
3. Positive reinforcement and encouragement.
4. The child will be redirected to another activity.
5. Provide a quiet time. (This is a short time where the child is given time in the classroom to collect him/herself until they are ready to be a part of the group activities again.)

Additionally, use of age-appropriate time-out may be used by the classroom teacher.

Discipline NEVER includes any of the following:

- Physical Punishment
- Taking away or threatening to take away snacks, play, recess, a resource class.
- Making a child feel that they are “bad”

Student Recovery Process

The faculty of Hillsborough Christian Academy use the Love and Logic methods for classroom management. This philosophy focuses on building healthy relationships with students while setting firm, loving boundaries that turn problem behaviors around. Love and Logic methods focus specifically on maintaining student focus and engagement and provide opportunities for recovery and redirection. ***In an effort to protect the learning environment of ALL students, students who are unable to participate effectively in the classroom environment are placed in the recovery process outlined below.***

Step 1: Classroom Recovery: Classroom teachers have an area designated for students to recover and return to classroom activities.

Step 2: Cohort Recovery: When students are unable to recover in their classroom, a teacher may place the student in recovery within their cohort (neighboring classrooms).

Step 3: Office Recovery: When students continue to struggle, they may be sent to the office area for recovery.

Step 4: Home Recovery: When a student is consistently unable to recover/return to the learning environment through the steps above, school administration will call home to arrange home recovery.

Please note: Recovery is not a consequence for the student. It is an opportunity for a “reset” with the goal of enabling the student to reflect on their behavior and reengage in the learning environment.

While recovery provides students with an opportunity to return to learning, it does not replace accountability for inappropriate behavior. Depending on the nature, severity, and frequency of the behavior, disciplinary consequences may still be assigned in accordance with the Hillsborough Christian Academy Discipline Policy. Recovery and discipline work together to help students develop self-control, accept responsibility for their actions, and grow in Christlike character.

CHRONIC DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR (Little Lions Program)

We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties in the Little Lions program at Hillsborough Christian Academy, however we are here to serve and protect ALL of our children. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well-being of another child/class may require the following action:

Initial consultation: The parents will be asked to meet for a conference with the child’s Teacher and HCA Administration. The problem will be identified and a course of action established to resolve the situation.

Second consultation: After 2 weeks of no improvement and the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent(s) will again be required to meet with HCA Administration and the child's Teacher. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

If, after 4 weeks and 2 Parent/Teacher/Administrator conferences, the child is unable to participate in group experiences, the discipline problems continue, the child poses a threat to self, staff or other children in the program and it is determined that all possibilities have been exhausted and that the child is incompatible with our program, the child will be dismissed from the HCA Little Lions Program and the parents will need to seek other school/child care arrangements. Dismissal decisions are made by the HCA Administration and are final.

Additionally, HCA Administration reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program outside of the policy above for serious behavioral concerns which impact the safety and security of the program at large.

Additional disciplinary steps (ie suspension) may be taken by HCA Administration if warranted.

Classroom Management and Student Accountability (School Aged Program)

Teachers are expected to maintain a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning for all students. Our Love and Logic approach to discipline separates a student's recovery and return to the classroom from the consequences of their actions.

Teachers are responsible for classroom management, including addressing Level I behavior infractions. In-class consequences that may be assigned by the teacher include, but are not limited to: loss of privileges, loss of recess time, and additional work (i.e. essay on the consequences of the misbehavior). Recurring violations of a teacher's classroom rules will result in an administrative referral.

As part of HCA's school-wide behavior management plan, grades TK-5 utilize a daily tracking form that reflects the student's overall academic, behavioral, and social skills throughout each day. Parents are expected to check and sign off on the report and return it to school daily.

Administrative Referrals will be utilized when a Level II or Level III infraction occurs. An administrative referral is intended for instances in which a more serious infraction has occurred, or when many minor infractions have been occurring with no improvement in the student's behavior.

Level I discipline needs involve minor classroom disruptions that can normally be corrected by the classroom teacher. Parents may be notified by the classroom teacher through a behavior report from FACTS SIS.

Level II discipline needs include repeated misconduct or behaviors requiring administrative involvement. Level II violations will result in an administrative referral, formal behavior report, and parent contact.

Level III discipline needs include major safety violations, illegal acts, severe misconduct, or repeated disregard for school expectations. All Level III violations will result in a formal behavior report, administrative referral, and parent contact.

In addition to disciplinary consequences, Hillsborough Christian Academy may utilize restorative practices to help students understand the impact of their behavior, accept responsibility, repair relationships, and develop Christlike character. Depending on the situation, restorative practices may include reflection activities, written apologies, parent conferences, restitution, behavior contracts, mentoring, conflict resolution, or other measures deemed appropriate by school administration.

The following are the appropriate consequences for violations of the HCA Discipline Policy. This list is not exhaustive. The final assignment of disciplinary consequences is the responsibility of the Head of School or his designee.

Level 1 Infractions

MISBEHAVIOR

- Classroom rule violations
- Disrupting the learning environment
- Eating and drinking in prohibited areas
- Minor hallway and bathroom violations or disturbances
- Disengagement from the instructional process (i.e. drawing, sleeping, etc. while instruction is taking place)
- Throwing objects in a manner that disrupts instruction
- Writing and passing notes in class
- *Any other minor disturbances that prevent order in and out of the classroom*

CONSEQUENCES

- Additional work (ie essay on the consequences of behavior)
- Behavior reflection or restorative conversation
- Loss of privileges (ie loss of recess minutes)
- Parental notification
- Replacement of property
- Restitution
- *Other consequences as deemed appropriate by school administration*

Recurring Level I offenses will result in more severe consequences, which may include suspension.

Level 2 Infractions

MISBEHAVIOR

- Multiple instances of Level I infractions
- Cheating
- Direct disobedience/Insubordination
- Disrespect or damage of property
- Disrespect to staff or students
- Dress code violations
- Failure to complete assigned work after repeated intervention
- Horseplay
- Inappropriate bathroom behavior
- Lying
- Misuse of Technology (*circumventing filters, sharing passwords, using another student's account, etc*)
- Obscenity, profanity, vulgarity
- Physical aggression
- Plagiarism
- Public Displays of Affection (ie holding hands, extended embraces, kissing, etc)
- Recording students or faculty/staff without permission
- Refusal to participate in the educational process
- Slander
- Spitting
- Stealing
- Throwing objects that creates a safety concern (rocks, equipment, etc.)
- Unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Violation of Chromebook/iPad Policies
- Violation of Electronic Device Policies

CONSEQUENCES

- Administrative Referral
- After School Detention
- In School Suspension (1-3 days)
- Loss of privileges (including extracurricular activities such as field trips, athletics and arts programs, events, etc.)
- Out of School Suspension (1-3 days)
- Parent notification or conference
- Removal from the class
- Replacement of property
- Student Probationary Contract
- Written apology or restorative conference (*when appropriate*)

Recurring Level II offenses will result in more severe consequences, which may include expulsion.

Level 3 Infractions

MISBEHAVIOR

- Multiple instances of Level II infractions
- Bullying (See HCA Bullying Policy)
- Communicating Threats (substantiated or unsubstantiated)
- Cyber Harassment/Bullying
- Defacing school property
- Fighting and other excessive physical abuse
- Harassment (see below)
- Possession of any weapon, explosive, or item used or intended to be used as a weapon
- Retaliation against students or faculty/staff
- Sending or distributing any type of messages or notes containing inappropriate content
- Sexual harassment (including, but not limited to sexting, possession of explicit images, inappropriate physical contact, inappropriate sexual comments, indecent exposure)
- Viewing, possessing, or distributing inappropriate material
- Use or possession of tobacco or vape devices
- Use, possession, and/or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia

CONSEQUENCES

- Administrative Referral
- After School Detention
- In School Suspension (3+ days)
- Loss of privileges
- Notification of parents and proper authorities (*ie OCSD*)
- Out of School Suspension (3+ days)
- Parent Conference
- Removal from the class
- Replacement of property
- Restorative Conference (*when safe and appropriate*)
- Student Probationary Contract
- Expulsion from School

Bullying and Harassment Policy

At Hillsborough Christian Academy, we have zero tolerance for bullying of any kind (physical, verbal, psychological, and electronic/cyberbullying). Our school defines bullying as **intentional behavior that is repeated or severe enough to intimidate, threaten, humiliate, or harm another member of the school community**. Today, we recognize that technology has made it convenient for students to engage in many forms of bullying behavior - both on and off campus. It is HCA's stance that ALL bullying - both on and off campus - will be addressed immediately under our discipline policy.

Harassment generally involves a single or isolated incident of inappropriate conduct directed toward another individual, while bullying involves repeated or severe behavior intended to intimidate, humiliate, or harm another person. Both are taken seriously and will result in disciplinary action.

Both harassment and bullying are inconsistent with the biblical command to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) and to treat one another with kindness, compassion, and respect (Ephesians 4:32).

Parent Partnership in the Discipline Process

HCA believes that meaningful discipline occurs through a strong partnership between the school and home. Parents are expected to support the school's disciplinary process, reinforce behavioral expectations at home, and work collaboratively with teachers and administrators to encourage student growth and restoration.

Restoration and Reconciliation

The ultimate goal of discipline at Hillsborough Christian Academy is not punishment, but restoration. Whenever possible, our desire is to help students recognize their wrongdoing, accept responsibility for their actions, seek forgiveness, make restitution when appropriate, and restore broken relationships with God and others. We believe that every disciplinary situation provides an opportunity for spiritual growth, character development, and discipleship.

In keeping with the biblical principles found in Matthew 18:15–17, Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 4:29–32, and Colossians 3:12–15, our faculty and administration seek to address misconduct with both truth and grace. Students are encouraged to respond with humility, repentance, and a willingness to learn from their mistakes. Likewise, our school community is called to extend forgiveness, pursue reconciliation, and support one another in love as we grow together in Christ.

Because meaningful discipleship occurs through the partnership of the home, church, and school, we ask parents to join us in reinforcing biblical principles, supporting disciplinary decisions, and encouraging their child toward restored relationships and Christlike character. Together, we seek not merely to correct behavior, but to cultivate hearts that honor the Lord in every area of life.

Physical Aggression/Assertiveness Policy (Little Lions Program)

Physical Aggression (ie. hitting, biting, pushing etc.) is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, these acts can be harmful to other children and to staff. This policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind.

As a preschool, we understand that biting/pushing, unfortunately, is a part of a preschool setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting/pushing and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten/pushed. If a biting/pushing incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting/pushing and the parent of the child who was bitten/pushed be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

When Physical Aggression Does Occur:

Our team strongly disapproves of aggressive behavior. The teacher's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children.

For the child that was injured:

1. First aid is given to the injury. If necessary, it is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the injury is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified.
3. The "Incident Report" form is filled out to document the incident.

For the child that caused the injury:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child, "We do not bite/push". And ask them to check in with the child
2. who was hurt.
3. The child will discuss with a teacher how the other child may feel and what other ways there are to deal with their frustration.
4. The parents are notified. The "Incident Report" is filled out to document the incident.

Moving forward:

The child will be shadowed to help prevent any aggressive incidents. The child will be observed by the teachers in an effort to determine what is causing the child to exhibit these behaviors (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

When aggression continues:

1. If a child inflicts 2 injuries in a one-week period (5 days of school attendance) in which another child or staff member is injured (i.e. leaving a bruise or other significant markings) a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 2 injuries in a one-week period (5 days of school attendance) in which another child or staff member is injured (i.e. leaving a bruise or other significant markings), the child will be asked to take a one week break from the school.
3. If the child again inflicts 2 injuries in a one-week period (5 days of school attendance) in which another child or staff member is injured (i.e. leaving a bruise or other significant markings), the child will be dismissed from the HCA Little Lions Program and the parents will need to seek other school/child care arrangements. Dismissal decisions are made by the HCA Administration and are final.

If a child, who has been through step 1 and 2 and then goes 3 weeks (15 days of school attendance) without incidents of aggressive behaviors, we will return to step one for future infractions. **If a child injures another child or staff member twice in a 1 hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from preschool for the remainder of the day.**

Dress Code Policy

At Hillsborough Christian Academy, our focus is to allow our students to concentrate on academic, spiritual, and character education that is of the highest quality. Students are not allowed to dress in such a manner that draws attention away from curriculum, faculty, or other students. Additionally, we want our students to be able to play safely during recess times. Hillsborough Christian Academy will continue to place our emphasis on character education and learning.

All students, staff, and visitors are responsible for knowing our dress code policy and are held accountable. As with the other policies in this handbook, students are expected to follow the dress code while on campus as well as in other locations where they represent our school.

The following guidelines are not exhaustive. School Administration is the final authority for the appropriateness of items worn to campus. Students wearing questionable attire will be required to change into clothing meeting dress code requirements.

General Clothing Guidelines

- Outer garments must completely cover underwear at all times. Underwear must not be visible at any time.
- All clothing must be neat and clean.
- Pajamas, pajama pants and all other nightwear are not appropriate for school dress.
- Sheer, see-through, or fishnet material must cover a garment that meets all dress code requirements.
- Leggings may be worn underneath garments that meet all dress code requirements.
- No clothing that exposes midriffs and/or cleavage is acceptable.
- No halter, T-strap, or racerback shirts may be worn.
- Athletic and PE uniforms must meet dress code if they are to be worn during the instructional day.
- Student clothing should not be a distraction to the learning process.
- Swimsuits are not allowed. We do not anticipate swimsuit appropriate activities (including field day). The school administration team will notify parents well in advance should any exceptions arise.
- **We encourage all students to have a spare set of weather-appropriate clothes available in their locker. This is a requirement for students in grades TK-2.**
- Students are not allowed to wear “dress-up attire” such as costumes, capes, accessories etc. Exception to this is made for events approved by school administration (ie school spirit week).

Logos and Words on Clothing

- All clothing must be free from sexually suggestive content.
- All clothing must be free from drug, tobacco, or alcohol content.
- Words or images that demean race, religion, gender, national origin, handicapping condition or intellectual ability are unacceptable.
- Content that suggests, implies, or supports violence is unacceptable.
- Content that could offend, frighten, or intimidate others is unacceptable.

Shirts and Tops

- Upper body garments must be long enough to cover the upper body at all times.
- Shirts and tops may not fall below the knees.
- Shirt straps/sleeves must be at least 2 adult fingers width wide.
- Students who wear vests or athletic jerseys must also wear at least a tank top underneath.
- Any keyhole or open back garment must have a t-shirt underneath.

Pants, Shorts, Skirts, Skorts, and Dresses

- Pants must be properly fitted. Extremely tight or extremely loose-legged pants are not allowed.
- Hems must not drag the ground.
- Shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses must extend below the longest fingertip when the student is standing and their arms are extended down. This includes slits, splits, or wrapped items of clothing. Longer skirts and dresses are permissible as long as they do not drag the ground.
- Shorts must be worn underneath skirts and dresses.
- No holes or slits in pants or skirts may rise above mid-thigh.

Shoes

- Appropriate shoes for daily activities must be worn.
- Athletic shoes are required for PE class and outdoor recess. Students failing to have the appropriate footwear may not be permitted to participate in PE or outdoor recess activities, which may cause their grade to suffer.
- Bedroom shoes or flip-flops may not be worn.

Hats, Hoods, Headwear

- Hats, hoods, bandanas, scarves, handkerchiefs, sweat bands, beanies/toboggans, etc., shall not be worn on the body, including the head and arms, inside the school building at any time.
- Hats, bandannas, scarves, and handkerchiefs may not be visible or worn on any article or clothing, book bags, purses, or on the body.
- Hats may be worn by students before and after dismissal from school/afterschool.
- Occasionally, school administration may grant approval for students to wear hats during the instructional day. These occasions will be announced in advance (ie school spirit week and field day).

Eye Wear

- No one may wear sunglasses inside the school building, unless documentation is submitted to the school office, from a physician or from an ophthalmologist.

Jewelry/Piercings/Body-Art

- Necklaces may be no longer than 36 inches in length and ½ inch in width.
- Pendants must be in compliance with the logos and word requirements.
- Pierced jewelry must be safe and tasteful following all dress code requirements. *Lip piercings, gauges, or any other visible body modifications are not permitted at school.*

Purses/Backpacks

- These items must be in compliance with logo and word requirements.

Dress Code Violations

Students found in violation of dress code policy will be held accountable in the following manner:

First Offense: The student will be given the opportunity to change into clothes that meet school dress code policy. If the student cannot comply with personal clothing, the student will remain with an administrator (*or their designee*) until a parent is contacted to provide a change of clothing.

Second & any additional offense: Any student found in further violation will be referred to administration for insubordinate behavior. Consequences will follow the disciplinary policy in the parent/student handbook.

Parental Responsibilities for Preschool Programs

Parents play a vital role in creating a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for every child in our Little Lions Program. By partnering with Hillsborough Christian Academy and fulfilling the responsibilities outlined below, families help ensure that children are well-prepared for each day of learning, play, and spiritual growth. The following guidelines provide important expectations regarding meals and snacks, rest periods, student records, and appropriate clothing to support the daily operation of our preschool program and the well-being of every child.

Meals and Snacks

- Please do not bring fast food/breakfast foods from home for your child into the facility.
- Hillsborough Christian Academy will not store breakfast items for individual children unless the child has a special dietary need that the parent provides for.
- A snack time is scheduled every morning and afternoon. Please pack a nutritious snack for those times.
- Lunches must be provided by the parents at this time. All lunches must be packed cold however; warm lunches may be brought in stainless steel thermoses that keep foods at 140 degrees or warmer. Parents must heat the food at home before putting it in the insulated container. Please remember that younger children usually eat small portions. All opened and uneaten food must be thrown away at the end of lunch.
- Water will always be available as well throughout the day.
- Juice pouches/boxes that are not 100% fruit juice are not an acceptable substitute for milk or water.
- If your child has a food intolerance or allergy, please send a doctor's order stating that the child has the intolerance/allergy and a list of acceptable drink or snack substitutes.

Naps/Rest Period

- Children will participate in a nap period after lunch each day.
- Children are not required to nap but will be asked to stay quietly on a cot to help their bodies rest. Quiet activities will be provided for them after a period of time.
- Please provide a small pillow, blanket, and a security item (stuffed animal), if needed.
- Each Friday, the child's nap items will be sent home to be washed and returned on Monday. (Cot sheets will be washed by HCA staff)
- Students should not be picked up during the scheduled nap period (*except in emergencies*).

Student Records

- Keep all information (addresses, phone numbers, work phone numbers, immunizations, emergency phone numbers, etc.) current.
- If information is requested for the child's file, and is not received, care may be discontinued.

Clothing

- Dress your child in clothing that is comfortable for a variety of active, and sometimes messy, activities as well as outdoor play. We do go outdoors as often as possible.
- Each child should be able to handle fastenings with minimum of help.
- Accidents happen. In case of a toileting accident, crafting accident or spill, please provide a complete set of clothing that is appropriate for the season (i.e. no shorts for winter weather).
- Mark your child's name clearly on all articles of clothing, diaper bags, backpacks etc.
- If your child is sent home in a change of clothes that belongs to Hillsborough Christian Academy, please wash and return it as soon as possible. Parents may be billed a fee for clothes not returned.
- Flip-flops or shoes without a heel strap may not be worn (Please have a pair of tennis shoes for outdoor play). Also, dress shoes with heels have been known to cause accidents and are often painful by the end of the day so we ask they not be worn.
- Tennis shoes or some other comfortable shoes are preferred for daily activities and playing, both in and out of doors.
- Please have your female child wear leggings/shorts under her dresses.
- Children will be expected to go outside to play (even if just for a short period of time) when the weather permits (School Administration's discretion and the guidelines in this handbook).
- As the weather changes, be sure to send sweaters, jackets, coats, gloves, hats, boots, etc.
- Children without proper clothing for outdoor play (i.e. winter coat, jackets), will not be allowed to participate.
- Sunscreen will be applied if provided by parents. Please ensure your child's container is appropriately marked. Children with allergies, or sensitivities to sunscreen, must bring their own, clearly marked, sunscreen.

Parental Agreement and Code of Conduct

Hillsborough Christian Academy is fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. We recognize that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents and the school community (*Deuteronomy 6*). As a partnership, our parents will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons, we continue to welcome and encourage parents/guardians to participate fully in the life of our school.

The purpose of this agreement is to provide a reminder to all parents and visitors to our school about the expected conduct and policies. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress, and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect.

We expect parents, guardians, caregivers and visitors to:

- Respect the school.
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Demonstrate that **all** members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behavior.
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue.
- Correct your own child's behavior especially when it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behavior or unsafe behavior.
- Approach the school, not other parents, to help resolve any issues of concern.
- Avoid using staff as threats to admonish children's behavior.

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. Romans 13:1-2

In order to support a peaceful and safe school environment the school will not tolerate parents, guardians, caregivers and visitors who exhibit any the following behaviors:

- Disruptive behavior which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the school grounds including sporting events.
- Using loud or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper outside of Christian character.
- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of school staff, visitor, fellow parent or student regardless of whether or not the behavior constitutes a criminal offense.
- Damaging or destroying school/church property.
- Abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written or digital communication to any HCA employee.
- Gossiping with other parents, teachers, staff or guests regarding the school, teachers, processes, policies or otherwise. *This includes discussing information about students who are not your own.*
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students/parents/staff, at the school on Facebook or other social sites. Any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the classroom teacher or school administration, so the matter can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned. (*Matthew 18:15-20*)
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences).
- Smoking, vaping and/or consumption of alcohol or other drugs while on school property.

Should **any** of the above behaviors occur, the school may feel it is necessary to contact the appropriate authorities and remove the offending family from Hillsborough Christian Academy. The Head of School will determine the appropriate action.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

1. Parents will drop off students only during school hours by following the carline/sign in policies in effect. When picking up a student early, parents will follow the appropriate sign out procedures. **Students must always be under the direct supervision of HCA employees or parents while on campus.**
2. A list of people authorized to pick up a child must be provided by the parent at the time of enrollment. HCA employees may request identification of those persons at the time of pickup. Any deviations from this list must be communicated by the parent to the school. The school reserves the right to refuse to release any child to an adult not included on the authorization list or previously identified in writing by the parent.
3. Parents shall provide appropriate food for their own child according to our lunch and snack policies.
4. Parents agree that in the event of an emergency the school has permission to administer first aid or obtain medical treatment as necessary. Parent agrees to assume financial responsibility for any medical expenses incurred due to emergency treatment.
5. Parents shall comply with the regulations of the Department of Health of Orange County, which require each child to have a physical examination and ongoing immunizations as required by the state. Also, parents must comply with any additional health policies of the school.
6. Parents shall refrain from bringing child(ren) to the school in the event that symptoms of illness, infection or fever are present in accordance with procedures in the Handbook. Parents must pick up their child who becomes ill. A signed statement from a physician indicating that the child's infection is no longer contagious may be required for readmission.
7. Parents agree to read the handbook in its entirety and abide by the policies and procedures therein and acknowledge that the handbook is subject to change without prior notification by the Head of School or his/her designee.
8. Parents acknowledge that this Parental Agreement and Code of Conduct will be in effect for as long as their student is enrolled at Hillsborough Christian Academy.

Parent Statement of Acknowledgement

We trust that parents and caregivers will assist our school with the implementation of these policies, and we thank you for your continuing support of Hillsborough Christian Academy. This Parental Agreement and Code of Conduct will be in effect for as long as my children listed below or others to be enrolled attend Hillsborough Christian Academy. I understand that should my marital status change, it is my responsibility to have a corrected Parental Agreement and Code of Conduct Statement signed, updated, and sent to Hillsborough Christian Academy.

I realize that the Christian school is an extension of me, the parent, and I pledge my prayerful support to the school administration and faculty. I will make every effort to work with the school personnel to ensure the best possible learning experience for my child.

Parents will sign electronically during the application/enrollment process and annually prior to the beginning of the school year.



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