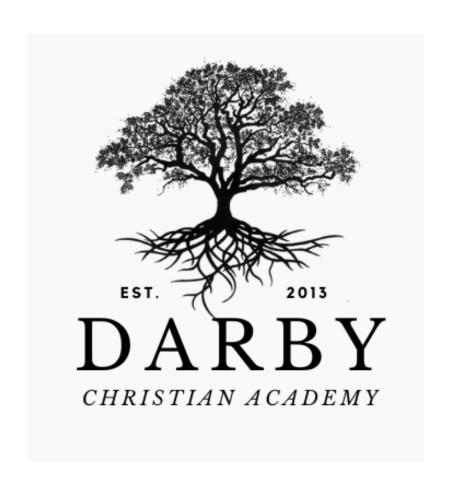


## Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Family Name:	
We have read the contents of the Darby Christian Academ	ıy
Parent/Student Handbook, and agree to support	
and abide by the rules and policies of DCA.	
Father's Signature:	
Mother's Signature:	
Student's Signature:	
Student's Signature:	
Student's Signature:	
Student's Signature:	
Date Signed:	

Thank you for choosing to partner with DCA for your child's education. We look forward to serving you and your family in the 2023-2024 school year!

Please sign and return this page to the school office by the first day of school.



# Family Handbook

2023-2024

## **Registration**

Registration is finalized upon completing the following requirements:

Complete <b>ALL</b> necessary paperwork (New Family Application, Student Application, (one
per student applying), information card, emergency contacts, etc.
Have a <u>family interview</u> with the DCA school board; sign our "Statement of Faith" documents and receive acceptance email from DCA.
Pay annual registration and curriculum fees for each child applying (see Tuition section below). This covers one set of core curriculum per year, individual workbooks, DCA library family membership, and educational supplies/materials used on campus.  Please make checks payable to "Darby Christian Academy".

## **Class Schedule**

Classes are held every Monday and Wednesday from 9:30AM-3:25PM. Students should arrive on campus between 9:15AM-9:25AM and be picked up promptly at 3:25PM.

We meet on campus at **Darby Community Church**, **14745 Bellamy Brothers Blvd**, **Dade City**, **FL 33525** 

Our school calendar (including vacation days/weeks) is posted online at <a href="https://www.darbycommunitychurch.com/dca-calendar">www.darbycommunitychurch.com/dca-calendar</a>

Back to School Orientation & Reception	Wednesday, August 30
First day of school – Homeschool Day	Tuesday, September 5
First day on Campus & Chapel	Wednesday, September 6
Columbus Day (no school)	Monday, October 9
End of First Quarter	Wednesday, November 1
Quarter 1 Report Cards	Monday, November 13
Thanksgiving Break (no school)	Monday-Sunday, November 20-26
DCA Christmas Party	Wednesday, December 20
Christmas Break (no school)	Monday-Sunday, December 25-January 7
MLK Day (no school)	Monday, January 15
End of Second Quarter	Wednesday, January 17
Quarter 2 Report Cards	
Presidents Day (no school)	
End of Third Quarter	Wednesday, March 20
Spring Break	
Quarter 3 Report Cards	Monday, April 8
Standardized Testing	Monday & Wednesday, May 13 & 15
Last Campus Day Ceremony & Reception	Wednesday, May 22
End Fourth Quarter	
Quarter 4 Report Cards (emailed)	

## **Tuition Payments**

If you choose the monthly payment plan option, the first payment is <u>due by August 15<sup>th</sup></u> with all remaining payments <u>due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month</u> through May 2024.

If tuition is not paid by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, an additional late fee charge of \$25 may be charged. Be sure to mark your calendar with tuition due dates as monthly invoices will **not** be distributed. A final statement of account will be distributed before the May 2024 payment to show the final balance due.

If tuition is unpaid by the end of the month your child may be withdrawn from the program; please talk with Ms. Beth if any unforeseen financial difficulties arise. No report cards, transcripts, dual enrollment forms, homeschool evaluation letters, etc. will be distributed if an outstanding balance is overdue.

There will be a \$35.00 service fee charged for any returned checks.

#### **Communication**

Communication between the teacher, parent, and student is a crucial part of making the DCA learning experience a success for all. We strongly encourage you to ask questions and be involved at Darby Christian Academy. Our primary source of communication is through email as DCA staff members are only part-time and most are employed elsewhere and/or have children they are homeschooling on off-campus days as well.

As co-instructor with the teachers at DCA, please communicate as clearly as possible and as often as necessary to facilitate the academic progress of your child. Teachers will check their email on off-campus weekdays in the morning and afternoon and will respond as soon as they are able. Teachers are not required to check/answer texts, emails, or telephone calls on the weekends. If an emergency arises, please contact Beth Melton or Mark Narankevicius at any time.

As a community school, it is important for our families to foster relationships and communicate with one another as well. We strongly encourage you to reach out to other families, especially those in your child's class, in order to ask questions or request forgotten/lost papers, instructions, etc. when needed.

Most questions addressed to DCA teachers can be asked and answered quickly through email, but if you would like to request a conference or an extended telephone conversation, please email our office or your child's teacher to set up an appointment.

<u>Close cooperation and understanding between parents and our staff is essential to providing a safe and wholesome learning environment for all of our children.</u>

This booklet has been supplied in an effort to answer many of your questions. Please contact the program administrator, your child's teacher, or any of our board members if you have any questions or concerns.

## **Student Communication Folders & Homeschool Assignments**

Teachers will **email** the **weekly homeschool assignment sheets** to parents no later than 9PM every Monday. Parents are to **print** out the assignment sheets, read them thoroughly, and go over the daily instructions with their child on homeschool days.

Parents are to review that their child completed each assignment and initial each completed section of the homeschool assignment sheets. This ensures that parents have reviewed their student's daily assignments before they are returned to school. The due date for the Homeschool Lesson Plan assignments is the following Monday, unless otherwise noted by the teacher (i.e. on many Tuesday assignments, you may see a note "bring to class on Wednesday".)

Each student K-8 will have a "Communications Folder" that will be used to transport the weekly homeschool assignments, worksheets, notes from the teacher, etc. between the school and home. One side of the folder is marked "Going Home" and the other side marked "Returning to School". Current lesson plans should always be kept in the folder so teachers can have students easily adjust them if necessary.

## **Parent Involvement**

At Darby Christian Academy *your* involvement in your child's education is very important to us. This means that you will be able to follow and understand what and how your child is being taught, and it also shows your child how important education is to you. **You are your child's main teacher**. We are here to support and encourage you as you educate your child in the Lord and for His glory!

Parents are to use the weekly homeschool lesson plans to teach their child(ren) at home on non-campus days. These lesson plans are not merely to serve as homework assignments, but should be used by parents to teach a lesson/concept through discussion, practice, providing samples, etc. before asking your child to complete an assignment independently. Parents should read all instructions and check your child's work as they are completing assignments to ensure understanding.

Parents are responsible to ensure that all work is completed on time. It is very disruptive to the program for students to come to class unprepared, especially when they are in group classes only two times each week. All lesson plans and school work done at home must be reviewed by the parent. These lessons will correlate with the concepts that will be taught on campus that week. Along with these lesson plans you may also receive a suggested list of extended activities you can do at home with your student(s) to reinforce and expand upon their learning.

We also ask that each of our parents/caregivers volunteer throughout the year (i.e. classroom assistants, preparing crafts and snacks, party planning, field trips, building & grounds maintenance, etc.). God has provided each of us with unique talents and gifts and a command to serve each other. We know that by coming together as the Body of Christ, we will greatly impact our school environment and our children's love for learning.

If at any time you would like to stay in the classroom and observe your student or lend a helping hand, please speak with your child's teacher and you will be welcomed to do so. Your input is always appreciated at Darby Christian Academy. We encourage you to share any and all ideas and feedback that you as parents have to help improve our program.

## **Parent Volunteers & Parent Advisory Council**

All Parent Volunteers who will have regular and direct contact with DCA students on campus during school hours must have a background check. The cost of the background check is @ \$15. Please see Ms. Beth for instructions on how to complete the necessary background check.

All parents are expected to be involved with Darby Christian Academy's Parent Advisory Council. This Council is responsible for planning extra-curricular events, field trips, fundraising opportunities, and more. We ask that one or more parents volunteer to be Coordinators each year to assign/monitor committees, organize plans, and facilitate communication with parents and DCA staff. If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please contact Ms. Beth as soon as possible.

#### **Dress Code**

Our school uniforms are **solid-color** black, khaki, white, blue, or denim pants, skirts, skorts, shorts (modest length), or jeans (no leggings, no skin showing, torn styles, or extremely tight fits) with **DCA uniform shirts**.

If there is a problem with a student's uniform shirt, the parent must provide a written note to be turned in to Ms. Beth at drop off AND the student must be wearing a solid-color polo style shirt in order to attend classes. This should only occur on a very rare basis and a parent meeting may be called if it becomes an ongoing issue.

We do have scheduled "dress down" days throughout the school year for students to wear more casual clothing (with modesty rules always expected).

We highly recommend closed-toed or tennis shoes be worn on campus days (no high heels, wedges, etc.). Keep in mind our school and playground are located in a country setting - ants, insects, sticks, mud, etc. are not uncommon on school grounds.

#### Daily Drop-Off and Pick-Up

The school day begins promptly at 9:30AM. **Students may begin arriving at 9:15AM** and should **be on campus no later than 9:25AM**. Students are to wait in the Fellowship Hall building until dismissal to the Sanctuary for morning devotions at 9:30AM.

At 9:25AM all electronic devices (cell phones, smart watches, etc.) will be collected by the staff on morning arrival duty to be stored in the school office throughout the school day except for a 20-minute period during lunch. The school assumes no responsibility for any electronic device brought onto the campus at any time. Parents are encouraged to keep these electronic devices at home or in their cars upon arrival on campus to ensure protection of these devices.

We begin our day with a school-wide chapel service in the Sanctuary. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to stay for the daily chapel time. We ask students to sit in the pews closest to the front to listen attentively to the teaching.

It is important for parents not to engage teachers in lengthy conversations during the daily drop off time to ensure that classes begin on-time. If you need to have a word with the teacher, please do so quickly by letting them know you would like a few minutes at the end of the school day, or write a note to the teacher with any questions or concerns. **All extended conversations should be conducted after school or via email or telephone.** 

**Dismissal is at 3:25PM**. Students will be dismissed to parents in the Fellowship Hall. To show respect for your child and their teacher, **please be on-time**. If you are going to be late, make arrangements with another family/person listed on your Permission Form, and notify the school of your dismissal change for that day. As classes will be ongoing in the Fellowship Hall, we ask parents not to enter the building until 3:25 PM so as not to disrupt the end of class.

If a parent needs to pick up a student prior to 3:25 PM, we ask that you text or call Ms. Beth (or your child's teacher) notifying them that you are on the way and come to the school office to sign out your child.

#### Breakfast, Snacks, & Lunch

**Breakfast is an important meal, so please provide this for your child at home.** We do not have staff available to serve breakfast. Please <u>DO NOT</u> send breakfast food with your child in the morning.

Students should bring ready-to-eat snacks (K-2 have a morning **and** afternoon recess and snack time) as well as lunches from home each campus day. Please label lunchboxes/bags with student's name. Small thermos containers work well for hot or cold foods. **Students ARE NOT permitted in the kitchen area** at any time.

We do not have staff available to cook and/or heat lunches so be sure that all items are fully prepared at home before arriving at school. If parents would like to have the option of heated lunches, the Parent Advisory Council must develop a parent volunteer schedule to serve in this capacity. Please note, our teachers eat lunch at the same time as students and this is their only break during the school day, therefore, we need to be considerate of this time.

Please be sure your student brings adequate snacks, lunch, and drinks to each campus day (including a refillable, closed-top water bottles).

Every other Wednesday of each month, DCA will host a hot lunch pizza day for \$1.75 per slice of pizza. Drinks should be brought from home. An email will be sent out on the Tuesday preceding the pizza day for you to place your child's order with Ms. Beth by replying to the school email (admin@darbycommuitychurch.com). Orders are requested to be placed by Tuesday night; orders received after 10:00 AM on the Wednesday pizza day may not be processed.

Please remember: In the event a student/staff is allergic to peanuts, we will become a peanut free environment.

## **Lunch & After School Clean Up**

To encourage students to be responsible and good stewards of the school building and grounds, we develop a rotational cleaning system each year for all students to participate in after lunch and directly after school. Students will work in assigned teams of 4 to complete a cleaning checklist after lunch and after school on campus days. If a student is unable to fulfill their duties on an assigned day, it is their responsibility to trade rotations with another student to ensure all items are accomplished each day and each student fulfills their service requirements. DCA staff members will train each group of students in clean-up responsibilities during the first few weeks of school.

Students are also held responsible for caring for their individual classrooms and workspaces, as directed by their teachers.

#### **Textbooks and Curriculum**

All textbooks, teacher manuals, educational materials, etc. that are distributed to students at the beginning of each course are to be returned to DCA upon completion of the course, withdrawal from the program, or at the end of the school year. We ask that families take care of all textbooks/materials that are the property of DCA (noted in front cover of each book), and that no excessive damage occurs.

Students and parents are not to highlight or write in textbooks, teacher manuals, or any materials that remain the property of DCA. Any books not returned or returned in unusable condition, beyond normal wear and tear (i.e. water damage, torn pages, etc.) will be accessed a replacement cost fee for each item. The curriculum/materials fee paid to DCA provides for one set of curriculum per student, per school year. Any books/materials lost or damaged during the school year will need to be replaced as soon as possible at the parent's expense.

Consumable workbooks that are written in by the students remain the property of the student.

## Attendance

Regular attendance on campus days is highly encouraged for students to be well instructed by their teachers and to actively participate in our school program. When taking a vacation, parents should notify the school in advance and try to work ahead or take books on vacation, if possible, in order to make sure that students are caught up when they return to school. If students fall behind in their work due to a vacation/absence, it is the family's responsibility to put in more homeschool hours upon their return to catch up as soon as possible. Any assignments given by their teachers will be expected to be completed and returned promptly when your child returns to school.

#### **Tardiness/Absences**

It is important that your child be at school on-time. **Tardiness occurs when a student is not in Chapel by 9:30AM on campus days.** A child not in class on-time disrupts the scheduled flow of activities and ultimately shows disrespect for others. We ask that you notify DCA any

time a student will be absent from the program. Tuition fees cannot be refunded or credited when a student is absent from the program.

#### **Wellness Procedures**

In adherence to recent events and CDC suggestions, we ask each family to be diligent in monitoring current health situations. If any incident of the COVID19 infection is detected within a household or individual, we ask that you adhere to the current CDC quarantine guidelines.

If an individual has a temperature of 100° or higher, they will be sent home. **Students should be symptom-free from fever and / or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to campus.** 

If a student begins showing excessive symptoms of sneezing, coughing, headaches, nausea, etc. during a school day, they will wait in the school office until the parent is able to pick up.

In addition to these measures, each teacher will instill various times throughout the day for thorough hand-washing, as well as taking students outside for classes when possible, diffusing in classrooms, sanitizing classrooms throughout the school day, and a thorough cleaning at the end of each school day.

## **Illness**

If your child becomes ill while on-campus, we will contact each person(s) listed on your emergency card in the order listed and ask that they be picked up as soon as possible.

We ask that you please refrain from sending your child to school on campus when they are ill. Generally speaking, in cases of normal childhood illnesses, if a sick child has not had a fever for twenty-four hours, it is appropriate to send him/her back to school. In cases of sickness other than the common cold or virus (i.e., chicken pox, lice, etc.), please notify the school so other families can be aware to look for symptoms.

## **Medications**

If a child needs medication administered to them while attending DCA, we must have written instructions (including the dosage and timing) with signed parental consent OR the parent/caregiver may administer the medication to their child at any time. Medicine must be in the original container with the child's name on the container. First-aid kits are available throughout the campus for minor injuries.

Whenever possible, please ask your physician to prescribe medication that can be administered before they arrive or after they leave our program. Administering medication is a <u>very serious responsibility</u> and best left to the parents at home.

## **Health Issues**

Please notify the school office by filling out the sheet at bottom of this document of any **allergies, limitations in activities, or health conditions** of your child.

In the case of unusual health problems, DCA must have a letter releasing the school of responsibility.

#### **Items from Home**

Handheld electronic devices and cell phones are allowed on campus as a privilege, ONLY to be used during Lunch Break or for specific school assignments. If you allow your child to bring a device to school, it must be turned in prior to Chapel service in the morning. If your child is observed texting/talking/playing on an electronic device or cell phone during class, their teacher will confiscate the item and return it at the end of the day to the parent

If a staff member has to confiscate an electronic device/cell phone from an individual student on more than 2 occasions during the school year, the privilege of that student having an electronic device on campus can be revoked and it will be the parent's responsibility to ensure the item is not brought to school on campus days.

Laptop computers brought from home required for students in grades 5 and above are to be **used during class times only**. A storage area will be set up to house the laptops during the school day and students must have a teacher's permission to access these items for class.

Darby Christian Academy is not responsible for loss and/or damage to electronic devices/cell phones/laptops - parents should use discretion in allowing their child(ren) to bring these devices on campus.

#### **Lost Items**

Please label your child's clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc.

Darby Christian Academy/Darby Community Church will not be held responsible for lost or misplaced items. If you are missing an item, please contact the school office to see if a lost item has been turned into our "lost & found" box in the school office.

## Field Trips/Special Activities

Parents will be informed of field trips/special activities in advance through DCA emails, flyers, and/or permission forms sent home. We encourage parents to join us for our special activities. If you do not want your child to attend a special activity, please let us know as soon as possible.

#### **Birthdays**

Birthdays can be celebrated during snack or lunch time if parents wish to send in a special treat for their child's class. Please check with your child's teacher to avoid any food allergies if possible.

## **Holidays**

Holidays will be addressed from a Biblical perspective in the classroom. Additional education and family traditions regarding holidays will be left up to the discretion of the parents.

#### **Emergency Closing**

Darby Christian Academy follows the public emergency broadcasting system for closing procedures. If the program is closed or dismissed early because of weather conditions, you will be notified by school personnel. Listen to the local radio or television station for early closing information.

Please make sure all of your contact information is always up to date.

## **Discipline Policy**

It is the philosophy of Darby Christian Academy to train children in self-discipline by taking a positive approach. Students will be encouraged by our staff and parent helpers to behave appropriately through the use of clear limits and Biblical principles. DCA actively seeks to provide an atmosphere in which both teachers and students practice affirmation of one another, both in language and in action. The basic guide for behavior is to demonstrate love and respect for one another.

#### **Good Conduct Code:**

"Obey your earthly masters with respect." Therefore, we will obey and respect authority. (Ephesians 6:5)

"Consider others better than yourselves." Therefore, we will look to one another's needs and never hurt those around us. (Philippians 2:3)

"He delights in men who are truthful." Therefore, we will always tell the truth. (Proverbs 12:22b)

"You shall not steal." Therefore, we will respect other people's property and reputation. (Exodus 20:15)

"Prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled." Therefore, we will raise our hands/ask permission before we speak in class. (I Peter 1:13)

#### **Student Conduct for Classroom**

Children should be characterized as being other-oriented, that is considering others needs and feelings before their own. The fruits of the spirit - Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control - should all be evident in the child's behavior and attitude.

#### **Disciplinary Guidelines:**

Level 1 - Violations relating to character and poor attitude exhibited by:

- Arguing, teasing, lack of courtesy, complaining, sulking, poor self-control
- Excessive talking or being out of seat without permission
- · Rowdy behavior
- Handling another's property without permission
- Possession of distracting items not required for schoolwork (radios, iPods, toys, etc.)
- Gossiping
- Sloppy or careless work

#### Actions to be taken in response to Level 1 offenses:

Disciplinary action will begin at Step 1 of the sequence below and continue through Step 3 until the violation ceases and does not recur.

- 1. Teacher or other staff member will ask the student to stop the inappropriate behavior, counsel with the student to make sure they understand the moral reason "why" their behavior was a poor choice, and require the student to apologize and/or ask for forgiveness.
- 2. Teacher will inform parents by telephone, email, or personal contact.
- 3. A conference will be requested with the parent to include the teacher, student, and Administrator in attendance.

#### Level 2 - Major Violations

- Direct disobedience refusing to comply with a direct order from school personnel
- Gross disrespect responding to a teacher's or the principal's corrective action with excessive or repeated discourtesy or belligerence
- Cursing, lying, stealing, forgery (i.e., copying another student's work)

#### Actions to be taken in response to Level 2 violations:

Disciplinary action will begin at Step 1 and proceed through Step 4 until the violation ceases and does not recur.

- 1. Teacher will inform parents by telephone, email, or personal contact.
- 2. A conference will be requested with the parent to include the teacher, student, and Administrator in attendance.
- 3. Suspension with parental corrective action.
- 4. Referral to the School Board for one month suspension with home study and parental corrective action or possible expulsion from school.

#### <u>Level 3 - Major violations warranting immediate action</u>

- Vandalism
- Immoral conduct
- Violence toward self or another person

#### Actions to be taken in response to Level 3 violations:

- 1. Suspension with parental corrective action.
- 2. Referral to School Board for one month suspension with home study and parental corrective action or possible expulsion from school.

#### **General Disciplinary Guidelines:**

- 1. The Administration has the right to suspend a student for an offense if the conduct continues despite corrective actions or if a student or parent exhibits gross disrespect for authority during the discipline process.
- 2. Parents are to carefully review this Discipline Policy and discuss it with their children. A parent's signature on the "Handbook Acknowledgement" form is an indication of acceptance by the parent and an agreement that both the students and parents intend to comply with all the regulations of the school.

#### **Dismissal Categories**

#### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is the immediate removal of a student from the school usually due to a serious breach of policy or safety by either the student or the parent. A student that has been expelled has their enrollment terminated and their transcripts and records marked accordingly.

#### Suspension

Suspension is off-campus and results in the student missing a certain number of classes. Consequently, any on-campus work that is due during suspension cannot be made up. Students receive a zero for the days missed due to a suspension.

A student's enrollment is not terminated during a suspension.

#### Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from their enrollment on academic or disciplinary grounds or at the discretion of the Administrator when it is apparent that this school is not a good fit for the student. Dismissal may also occur in cases of extreme financial irresponsibility.

**Academic Dismissal** – A student may be dismissed from the school if, after working with the teacher and Administration, they still receive failing grades in core courses or have an overall GPA below a 2.0. Continual low grades are a major indicator that the academic program is not right for the student.

**Disciplinary Dismissal** – A student may be dismissed from the school as a part of the disciplinary process for offenses which may include, but are not limited to, chronic absences, disobedience or chronic dress code violations.

**Discretionary Dismissal** – A student may be dismissed from the school at the discretion of the Administrator. There are times that it becomes apparent that the student's or the family's needs are not being best served by the DCA program or that the family is not able to adequately support the student in this academic model. This could be due to a number of issues, including but not limited to, insufficient teaching or supervision on homeschooling days, learning disabilities which cannot be accommodated in the classroom, a student's inability to manage his/her own behavior in a group setting or a lack of commitment and/or participation in the school agenda on the part of the parents.

*Financial Dismissal* – A student may also be dismissed from the school in the event of the family's extreme financial irresponsibility. As stated in the Financial Agreement, a student may not continue in classes if tuition payments are behind and no financial agreement has been made between the family and Board of Directors. In the absence of a separate financial agreement that addresses the family's financial crisis, tuition must be paid in full at the end of each quarter in order for students to be allowed to continue and/or receive their report card/testing results.

If at any time you have questions about our discipline policy, please email the school office.

The following pages should be completed and returned to DCA before the first day of school on September  $6^{th}$ , 2023.

## **RELEASES & FORMS**

Persons Authorized to Pick Up Your Child/Children
Please list all individuals, excluding yourself and your spouse, whom you approve to pick up your child.
Please include their name and relationship to your child.

NAME	PHONE NUMBER
<del></del>	
ne, relationship, phone number(s)]	
NAME	PHONE NUMBER
nild/Children's Physician: ne, telephone number, hospital preference	

Health Concerns:
Please list any allergies, limitations, medications, special needs, or chronic conditions in detail, specifying which
children this list is in regards to.
Madigal Dalagge
Medical Release:
I do hereby authorize the staff at Darby Christian Academy to contact the persons named on this
card, and do authorize the named physician or his associates to render such treatment as may be
deemed necessary in an emergency, for the health of (list all children enrolled in DCA)
,
In the count that we would are an arrival and a superior of an third and count he was shad
In the event that parents or guardians or other persons named on this card cannot be reached, Darby Christian Academy staff is hereby authorized to take whatever action is deemed necessary in
their judgment for the health of aforesaid child/children. Any expenses incurred for the above will
be the responsibility of the parent, not the Darby Christian Academy or its staff.
I HAVE READ THIS CARD AND AGREE TO THE STATEMENT AS WRITTEN:
Data
Date
Signature of parent/guardian
Signature of parent/guardian