



**Foundations
First Christian**

Community Handbook

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Welcome Letters from Executive Director and Board President

Dear Foundations First Christian Community,

In Foundations First Christian Inc., we want to restore the central, dominant role of the family in a child's education and dispel the common misconception that homeschooling means you have to go it alone.

The concept of education should be broadly understood as any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, abilities or character of an individual wherever it occurs. It should not be limited to what occurs within the four walls of a school building between the hours of 8 to 3. Ideally, many things play a role in the training up/education of an individual with the family at the center playing the dominant role.

We are a Christian Learning Community, serving God and partnering with each other to provide a comprehensive and balanced education that leads students to:

1. know God and His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, the only Foundation of all sound knowledge and learning;
2. gain the character and skills they need to thrive and have a close walk with God and a positive influence on the community

A question we are often asked is: Are you a school or a homeschooling coop? We are neither, but we have elements of both. Like a conventional school we have on-campus classes, we hire teachers, we follow a curriculum. But our on-campus classes are 3 days per week, our teachers include both paid teachers and parents, and parents have a voice in many aspects of the learning, especially, the projects and assignments that are completed on the 2 off-campus learning days each week, which we call Satellite Days. Since we want to serve the needs of as many families as possible, we also offer the option for children to do Satellite Days on campus.

Like homeschooling, our parents play a major role in teaching and learning. But unlike homeschooling, our parents do not have to go it alone or do it all themselves. Our community provides structure, a biblically-based curriculum, much of the teaching, support, encouragement, and friendship.

Since we are something between a traditional school and a homeschooling coop, we prefer to call ourselves a Learning Community, which education academics often call a Hybrid School.

In our Learning Community we like to say that we enroll families, not just students. Our innovative membership model allows families to be A, B or C Members, depending on their ability and interest in participating in the day-to-day activities of our distinctively Christian Learning Community.

This Community Handbook describes our current policies, practices, standards and values that pertain to all members of our community, including students, families, compensated staff and leadership. While some sections are applicable to specific segments of our community, we have chosen to have a single handbook to emphasize our shared goals of transparency, consistency, good communication and excellence within our Homeschool Hybrid Learning Community.

Jeff Snyder, Executive Director

Welcome to Foundations First Christian. On behalf of the Board, I would like to welcome you back or welcome you for the first time to our growing community, and hopefully give you a little glimpse into the heartbeat of FFC and why we opened our doors in 2021.

FFC exists as an alternative to traditional education in the form of both public and “private” schools. FFC is not a school but a uniquely different learning community.

At FFC, we profoundly and deeply believe that parents are the primary influencers in the life of their children. Furthermore, we believe that the Bible is a roadmap for how we are to live the fullest and most abundant lives that God has sovereignly ordained before the beginning of time.

It is important for every family considering FFC as a place to partner in the whole-life learning of your child(ren), that you understand we are an unapologetically Christian community based on the teachings of Jesus Christ as expressed in the Bible. In addition to our faith in God, we believe a personal relationship with Jesus transforms how we ought to live.

We believe that God has created each and every life with intrinsic value, and for a great and mighty eternal purpose. We believe that each individual has been given their own unique gifts, talents and abilities, and a one-sized approach does not address the uniqueness of each child. We believe as their parents, you are privileged with the responsibility of unpacking these wonderful attributes and stewarding them wisely for the years that God has entrusted your children to your care. We also know that aspects of this can be overwhelming and daunting; and although our desire as parents is to do this well, we often need people to jump into the trenches with us and help! In God’s economy, He has actually designed things to work better when we lock arms and help each other. We take seriously our call to come alongside member families in partnership when you join our community in whatever capacity is appropriate to meet the needs of the students individually and as a whole.

Regardless of where you are on your spiritual journey, we’d love to have as part of our growing community anyone who supports our Mission and values. Our hope and prayer is that as you join us you will find a place that demonstrates joy, love, peace and compassion. And that you can be confident that while we are not a perfect place, we are a growing place. We humbly ask for your patience and grace as we learn and grow.

We are a place that desperately wants your family to thrive, and to that end we are committed to weaving a Biblical worldview into all that is taught at FFC and to modeling what we believe the Bible teaches, as best we can.

If you have questions about some of the things that have been communicated in this letter or in this Handbook, please feel free to reach out to us as we’d love to begin or continue our journey together.

With abundant gratitude,

Dori Parker, President of the Board

Foundations First Christian, Inc. Board of Directors:

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Mission and Vision

Our **Mission** is to partner with parents to provide a comprehensive and balanced education that leads students to know God and His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, the only Foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.

Our **Vision** is to be a major influence on the direction of education in the 21st century by inspiring a world of learning communities (aka hybrid home schools) where parents and teachers work closely together.

Philosophy of Partnership

At Foundations First, we want to honor and respect the role God has given parents as a child's first and most important teacher. We want to restore the central, dominant role of the family in a child's education and work with parents in partnership to provide their children with a vibrant, God-centered education.

Teaching our children is the most important job we will ever have. In Deuteronomy 6:5-9, parents are told to use a multitude of ways to teach their children to love God with all their heart, all their soul, all their mind and all their might. The priority and primacy of this responsibility is shown by the fact that it was the first thing God instructed after He issued what Jesus called the Greatest Commandment, which is for we ourselves to love God. (Deut. 6:5-7; Mark 12:30)

Core values

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Parents, especially fathers, have the responsibility before God to provide their children with a godly understanding of the world in which they are growing up. (Ephesians 6:4)

Education is the passing on and acquisition of knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, morals, identity, discipline and wisdom, and we believe the Bible gives parents the primary responsibility. But there is merit in parents joining with other parents and professionals as members of a learning community to accomplish this.

Foundations First Christian exists to help parents in this most important role by facilitating a Hybrid Homeschool Learning Community built on the Foundation of Jesus Christ and providing structure, tools and expertise within the perimeters of our philosophy of education.

Our learning community is not a school. Learning occurs not just on-campus, but more importantly at home. We are not tied to a single location, methodology, curriculum or timetable. Our emphasis is on the family's role in the education of their children with FFC providing support and structure.

Genuine learning is an act of the will; it cannot be effectively coerced. The best learning happens when the learner is ready and motivated to learn. Therefore, teaching should be **student-centered, not subject-centered**. It should meet a student at their point of need and be invitational. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Service is a core value in our learning community as we work collaboratively to provide an accessible Christ-centered education and fulfill our mission. Board and leaders **serve prayerfully** as they guide and direct, staff and teachers **serve sacrificially** in their calling to teach; students **learn to serve** their families and the larger community; and families commit to offering their time and expertise in **tiered service**, as they are able.

Statement of Faith and Practice

All children will receive an education in harmony with the Statement of Faith and Practice, with the Christian Bible as an integral part of the curriculum and all subjects presented from a Christian perspective.

While FFC does not require families seeking to enroll students to personally embrace the Statement of Faith and Practice, all families are expected to sign a statement agreeing to support and agree to their students being taught from the principles described in the Statement of Faith and Practice as a condition of enrollment.

Teachers, Teacher Associates and all others representing FFC and leading students at FFC are the heart and soul of FFC. They are responsible for the daily implementation of FFC's mission to provide a comprehensive and balanced education that leads students to know God and His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, the only Foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. It is therefore a requirement that all individuals in roles leading students or in positions facing the public embrace the Statement of Faith and Practice listed below, and seek to faithfully live by its principles as a part of the Christian community.

- We believe the **Scriptures**, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of man and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith, life and conduct.
- We believe in **one God**, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe **Jesus Christ**, without any change in His eternal deity, became man through conception by the Holy Spirit and virgin birth and that He died on the cross, a perfect and complete sacrifice, in our stead and for our sins according to the Scriptures. He rose bodily from the dead and ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.
- We believe that the ministry of the **Holy Spirit** is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and, during this age, to convict of sin and regenerate the sinner upon believing in Christ, at the time of regeneration baptizing the believer into the one body, of which Christ is the head, and to indwell, guide, instruct, fill and empower the believer for godly living and service.
- We believe that **man** was directly created by God in His own image, but fell into sin. The entire human race is, therefore, lost and only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and regeneration of the Holy Spirit, can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
- We believe that the atoning death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground of justification and **salvation** for all who believe, and that only those who receive Jesus Christ by personal faith are born of the Holy Spirit and by Him are sealed to the day of redemption.
- We believe in the personal, imminent **return** of our Lord Jesus Christ and that the hope of His appearing has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
- We believe in the bodily **resurrection** of all the dead, of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, and of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting and conscious punishment.
- We believe that the **Church** is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is the head.
- We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are **ordinances** to be observed by the Church during this present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.

- We believe that all the saved should **live** in such a manner as will honor and glorify and not bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord, and that it is commanded by God to remain separate from false doctrines and sinful pleasures, practices and associations.
- We believe every human being is created in the image of God and therefore has intrinsic **value**. We affirm the inherent value of the unborn child, persons with disabilities, the elderly and those who are incapacitated.
- We believe God has ordained and created **marriage** to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. We define marriage as the legal, permanent, exclusive, comprehensive and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman. We believe that sexual acts outside marriage are prohibited as sinful.
- We believe that God created mankind in His image: **male (man) and female (woman)**, sexually different, but with equal personal dignity. We believe individuals should affirm their biological gender as given from God and should refrain from denying or disagreeing with their biological gender by attempting to physically or cosmetically change their gender, or become the opposite gender.

Philosophy of Education (WATER)

1. A genuine education is a growth process involving the **Whole-Person**: mind, body, spirit and soul. “Jesus grew in wisdom (mind/mental), stature (body/physical) and in favor with God (spirit/spiritual) and man (soul/social-emotional).” (Luke 2:52)
2. A genuine education is **All-Truth**. The starting point for all knowledge is “the fear (i.e., knowledge of, respect for) of the Lord.” (Proverbs 1:7). The most important book that was ever written, the Bible, and the most important person who ever walked the earth, Jesus Christ, must be at the center of a true education. (II Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 1:15-17)
3. A genuine education is **Transformational**. The goal of education is not simply acquiring content-based knowledge, the goal of education is a changed life (beliefs and conduct), which comes through the transformation of the mind. (Romans 12:2)
4. A genuine education is **Experiential**. It involves “doing”, acting on our beliefs, putting our knowledge into practice. (Psalm 34:8; Luke 10:1-20)
5. A genuine education is **Relational**. The student-teacher relationship is fundamental and crucial, because students become like those who teach them. (Luke 6:40). Therefore, modeling and mentoring are essential components of teaching (Phil. 4:9), and following is an essential component of learning. (Matt. 4:19).

Spiritual emphasis and prayer

As a Christian Learning Community, the leadership of Foundations First Christian recognizes that focused prayer is indispensable in pursuing our Mission to provide a comprehensive and balanced education that leads students to:

- Know God and His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, the only Foundation of all sound knowledge and learning;

- Gain the character and skills they need to thrive and have a close walk with God and a positive influence on the community

The Board of Directors is committed to regular prayer for Foundations as well as the members God brings through its doors. Times of prayer, worship and Bible study are emphasized in the On-Campus schedule and encouraged for families during Satellite Days.

We are all part of God's Creation and each academic subject speaks of His invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature (Romans 1:20). The lead teachers at every level at FFC recognize this truth, apply it to their own lives and seek to demonstrate it as a role model and by incorporating it into lessons on a daily basis. To further ensure the clear and undiluted expression of the biblical worldview, it is a requirement that all adults in roles leading students or in positions facing the public, whether paid staff, volunteers or Parent Helpers, embrace FFC's Statement of Faith and Practice and seek to faithfully live by its principles as a part of the Christian community.

Chapel, Bible Class, and other offerings provide additional opportunities for students to learn about, experience and respond to God's love and provision for them.

Membership

Members of the Foundations First Christian learning community consist of Leadership (Board of Directors which includes the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Executive Director and Directors), Compensated Staff, Families and Students.

Except for the Board of Directors, members are non-voting. Membership standards, policies and procedures of the Board of Directors can be found in the FFC By-Laws contained in the Appendix of this document.

The education we provide is distinctly and unwaveringly Christian. We strive for it to be a **Whole-person, All-truth, Transformational, Experiential and Relational** education. All members of FFC together form the heart and soul of Foundations First Christian, and are expected to embrace and honor its principles, including the Statement of Faith and Practice, and all policies and procedures.

Foundations First Christian is operated on the basis of biblical principles and living faith, open to Members of all colors, races, nationalities, and religions who agree with our Mission, Core Values, and Philosophy of Education. Although FFC is not affiliated with any specific church or denomination, it is a religious educational organization, committed to providing a comprehensive and balanced education founded in God's Word as expressed in the Statement of Faith and Practice, that leads students to know God through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ.

All FFC Members are expected to read this Handbook and support its policies and procedures, including the understanding that **all children will receive an education in harmony with the Statement of Faith and Practice, with the Christian Bible as an integral part of the school curriculum and all subjects presented from a Christian perspective.**

Members are asked to review the Community Handbook (this document) annually and to refer to it with questions about practices, policies and procedures. Families are also required to review and sign several important documents on an annual basis to help safeguard student safety and wellbeing. Links to the important documents that are required to be reviewed and signed will be provided. **Members are asked to return any required documents to the Admissions Administrator or email to admissions@foundationsfirstchristian.org no**

later than the end of the first week of classes.

Service Commitment

Membership in the Foundations First Christian (FFC) hybrid learning community includes a commitment to participating in the work of the community. That participation involves a combination of service and dues. Service is a core value of our community and allows us to keep our dues low. Normally, one parent/guardian will provide this service, but occasionally both parents or another family member may share this responsibility. Families that participate in our Foundations First Christian hybrid learning community also pay annual dues to offset the cost of books, facilities rental, utilities, liability insurance, administration and instruction.

We recognize that not all homeschooling families have the ability to meet the service commitments required. Therefore, we also offer families ways to become members of our learning community by buying out their service commitment. This is done through a tiered membership structure (described below) which may include some flexibility based on a family's individual needs and circumstances and the FFC learning community's needs.

Minimum membership qualifications are required for those seeking to fill a role in leadership, working with children, or representing FFC to the public. These include the following:

1. Must agree with and seek to live by FFC's Statement of Faith
2. Must have a personal and growing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord as evidenced by personal prayer, study of the scriptures and application to daily living
3. Active involvement with a local church whose beliefs and teachings are in agreement with FFC's Statement of Faith and Practice is strongly encouraged
4. Must be committed to furthering FFC's mission and faith-based philosophy of education
5. Must complete an Application (see Appendix)
6. Must be interviewed by the Executive Director or designate and at least one Board member, pass a security screening and reference check before beginning service
7. Must review and sign the relevant documents.

Certain roles have additional requirements, which are referenced elsewhere in this Handbook.

As a private institution and for the safety and protection of its membership, FFC reserves the right to deny or revoke membership or service assignment to any applicant for any reasons whether disclosed or undisclosed to the applicant.

Membership A

Membership A involves full-day service, or its equivalent, on all on-campus days (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday), 8:10-3:10 (20 hours/week). A Members generally work closely with students and therefore are expected to meet the spiritual and lifestyle requirements listed above. Along with their regular service hours, A Members are encouraged to attend staff meetings generally held Monday afternoons.

Families desiring A Memberships are responsible to submit an application along with a resumé if available. Upon review of the application, FFC leadership will schedule a meeting to discuss the application, including availability, interests, experience, affirmations of faith and potential areas of service. Acceptance is subject to the candidate's ability to meet A Membership requirements, pass a background check and fill current needs of FFC. If accepted, a service agreement is completed, documented and signed.

Dues for Membership A are indicated in the chart in the Dues section below, but may occasionally vary based on the responsibility the parent(s) assume. Dues for Membership A extend to each student in the family.

Families that are consistently unable to fulfill the above service requirement may be asked to change to a different Membership tier with subsequent adjustment in dues.

Membership B

Membership B involves half days of service or the equivalent during the three days the student(s) are on campus. Parents generally serve one of two shifts: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 8:10-11:40 or Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 11:40-3:10 for a total of 10 hours a week, or its equivalent. B Members leading children or serving in a public-facing role are required to meet the qualifications listed above. B Members are encouraged to attend the weekly staff meetings held Monday afternoons.

Families desiring B Memberships follow the same procedure described above for A members. Acceptance is subject to ability to meet the requirements and provide service meeting the needs of FFC.

Dues for Membership B are indicated in the chart in the Dues section below, but may occasionally vary based on the responsibility the parent(s) assume. Dues for Membership B extend to each student in the family.

Families that are not consistently unable to fulfill the above service requirement may be asked to change to a different Membership tier with subsequent adjustment in dues.

Membership C

Membership C is for families who are looking to enroll their students on a “drop-off” basis and are unable to make a service commitment.

No matter whether A, B or C, all who are accepted into FFC are valued Members of our Learning Community and are encouraged to be involved in its Mission.

Nature of Service

FFC Members participate in all areas of the FFC’s work. Parents help in our classrooms or may help with administration, bookkeeping, nursing, IT, child care, etc. To date, this approach has allowed us to keep the community running with many classes having a low student-to-adult ratio in on-campus classes.

For the safety and security of students and members, anyone serving on campus must complete an application, comply with FFC standards and pass a background check.

Members serving in FFC are not employees and give their service as part of their membership agreement. They understand that the service they offer benefits the entire community to help reduce the cost of classes and activities at FFC for all members. Since the FFC members are not employees, they may terminate their service at any time for any reason with the understanding that this will affect their member designation and level of dues. That said, the successful operation of the learning community is dependent on the reliability of members to their service commitments.

Expectations and Standards of Behavior for those Serving on Campus

Following Christ and being an exemplary role model is the most important aspect of service at FFC. Below are the standards of behavior expected of all adults serving on campus in whatever capacity and which we seek to model

for the students. **Infractions of these standards may lead to consequences up to and including severance of employment and/or cancellation of Membership.**

1. Make student safety your number one priority, including but not limited to:
 - a. Never leave students unsupervised.
 - b. Be aware of special circumstances such as allergies, medical issues and restrictions on the children in your care.
 - c. Use special care when moving about the campus to ensure that all students are accounted for.
 - d. Familiarize yourself with emergency policies and procedures and participate in drills
2. Be a Christ-like role model in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity (I Timothy 4:12)
3. Strive to live under the power of the Holy Spirit and demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)
4. Use the principles described in Matthew 18 to resolve differences, by going first to one another in a spirit of love and reconciliation and avoiding discussing issues with others not directly involved, which can lead to gossip and misunderstandings.
5. Stay informed and follow FFC practices and procedures by reading the Community Handbook, relevant Policies and Procedures, emails and other informational notices.
6. Maintain strict confidentiality of anything you learn in Foundations about a student's learning, behavior, family situation, finances, etc. Refrain from sharing or discussing others' personal information without their express consent. Do not publish pictures of students on social media without permission from their parents.
7. Make every effort to participate in the annual orientation and scheduled staff meetings
8. Arrive and leave on time; inform appropriate personnel if you must arrive late, need to leave early or will miss a day of service.
9. It is important to know who is on our campus at all times. Log in and out upon arrival and departure. If you are on campus but unable to do this in person, call or text the office to ask to have it done for you.
10. Wear an FFC-provided identification tag while on campus.
11. Be where you are scheduled to be and do not enter classes without permission of the teacher or enter spaces you are not scheduled to be in, including spaces not previously requested by FFC and approved by South Ridge Community Church.
12. Do not bring or use illegal substances, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco on campus or to any FFC-sponsored event.
13. Refrain from using your cell phone while on duty except for emergencies or purposes related to your duties, such as contacting the office for help or taking photos of a class activity or student project.
14. Dress modestly and in clean clothes.
15. Don't promote or solicit outside business, ministry or interests without permission from FFC leadership.
16. Let your speech reflect respect for the Lord and others. Examples of inappropriate language include but are not limited to profanity including soft swear words, vulgar language, sexually explicit speech, dirty jokes, language that abuses, insults or denigrates another person whether they are present or not, disrespectful teasing, name calling, flirting, gossiping, etc.

17. Exercise wise care in interactions with students by reviewing FFC Abuse Prevention Program and following the Guidelines provided there.
18. Avoid being alone with a student. If necessary, choose a place that is open to observation by others.
19. Use the upstairs bathrooms while students are in the building
20. Do not loiter in the building if you are not there for an FFC learning community purpose.
21. Do not bring weapons on campus unless you are a fully licensed law enforcement professional.
22. Alert our learning community leadership whenever you see violations of the above standards of behavior.

Board of Directors

Foundations First Christian is led by an all-volunteer Board of Directors, who are the only voting members of Foundations First Christian, Inc. The Board ideally has between five and nine members who serve three-year terms. Board members serve no more than two consecutive terms without stepping down for at least a year, except in some emergency situations where it would not be prudent to step down. The Executive Director is a voting member of the Board of Directors and has no restrictions on length of service on the Board.

Potential Board members may be recommended by current Board members through personal knowledge of the candidate, recommendation by a third party, or a potential candidate expressing interest. Individuals being considered as a Board member should be persons of good character and reputation, who have acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who regularly attend a Christian Bible teaching church and who meet the Qualifications listed in the FFC Board Qualifications and Questionnaire (see Appendix).

Prospective Board members complete an application, undergo an interview process, and must be unanimously approved by the current Board. While Board members may also be A, B or C parent members, service on the Board is not counted towards A and B member service commitments.

For more information on Board policies and procedures, see the documents *FFC Bylaws* and *Process for Board Member Selection*, included in the Appendix.

Foundations First Christian Board-Led TEAMS

The FFC Board and Leadership have identified several areas of support and service needed to accomplish FFC's mission and vision. Below are examples of teams that may be engaged in support of FFC's mission. Members with skills and interests in these areas should contact the team leaders for more information about service opportunities. Additional standing or ad hoc teams may be added as needed.

1. The **Parent Engagement & Action Team** exists to facilitate ongoing support of FFC students, staff, and parents. Activities may include event support, fundraising, staff/teacher encouragement, special occasion recognition and ongoing equipping of our parents and families.
2. The **Health and Safety Team** is charged with the development and implementation of policies and procedures related to the overall well-being of all our members while on campus, including, but not limited to: evacuations, lock-downs, and staying current with all health and safety-related issues.

Members of the Health and Safety Team may be called upon to assist in responding to situations affecting the health and wellbeing of the learning community.

3. The **Finance Team** is responsible for the oversight of all FFC financial activities, including preparation and monitoring of the annual budget. The Finance Team also sponsors the Financial Assistance Team which reviews and makes recommendations on applications for financial assistance. See below for more information on this topic.
4. The **Fundraising Team** plans, oversees and implements fundraising to support FFCs Mission and Vision.
5. The **Financial Assistance Team** reviews applications for financial assistance and awards grants as appropriate.

Class Mother Program

The Class Mother Program is part of the Parent Engagement and Action Team. The role of a Class Mother is to act as a valuable liaison between parents and class teachers. Some of the requested tasks may be:

- to organize classroom events based on the teacher's requests (such as class parties, field trips, etc.)
- to help families create connections within the classroom and the FFC community
- to help organize the class parents to meet the needs within the classroom if needed (such as in recognizing a birth or death in a family, organizing help with meals when needed in times of sicknesses, organizing help with transportation for a class family in need, etc.)
- to provide an extra set of hands pertaining to additional FFC events when necessary
- to help find willing participants who can help in other areas of our FFC community

Requirements for those serving as Class Mothers are the same as those serving in other capacities on campus:

1. Must agree with and seek to live by FFC's Statement of Faith
2. Must have a personal and growing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord as evidenced by personal prayer, study of the scriptures and application to daily living
3. Active involvement with a local church whose beliefs and teachings are in agreement with FFC's Statement of Faith and Practice is strongly encouraged
4. Must be committed to furthering FFC's mission and faith-based philosophy of education
5. Must complete an Application (see Appendix)
6. Must be interviewed by the Executive Director or designate and at least one Board member, pass a security screening and reference check before beginning service
7. Must review and sign the Membership Summary and associated documents.

Admissions Procedure

Families seeking membership in the Learning Community are encouraged to make an appointment to visit FFC and learn about this unique program that enrolls families, not just students, to ensure it is a good fit for

themselves and their students. Admission to FFC includes the responsibilities inherent in being a Member of our learning community, partnering in the education of children. Potential membership will be assessed by families and FFC administration during the following process steps, that are managed by FFC's Admissions Administrator Dawn Mihalik (email: admissions@foundationsfirstchristian.org).

Prospective Members should complete the following steps:

1. Register for access to the online enrollment form at the FFC website: <https://foundationsfirstchristian.org/>
2. Complete and submit the online enrollment form.
3. Pay an application fee of \$40.
4. If applying for A or B membership, complete the Service Application form
5. Meet with the Executive Director or designee and Admissions Administrator in-person or via a phone call.
6. If applying for A or B membership, meet with the Executive Director and/or Assistant Executive Director and a member of the Board of Directors to assess potential service commitment (may be at the same time as enrollment interview described above).
7. Receive written or verbal acceptance and complete and sign the Membership Summary and other required forms.
8. Pay a non-refundable registration fee of \$200 per student.

Preschool students must be 3 years old by September 1 and fully potty trained. Kindergarten students must be 5 years old by September 1.

Foundations First Christian does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, birth biological sex, or nationality.

As a religious organization professing faith in Jesus Christ and seeking to follow His instructions as conveyed in the Bible, it is the intention of FFC Leadership to welcome as many members and students as possible to our community. However, this learning community might not be a good fit for every student or every family. Members not serving in specific roles described above are not required to believe in the Statement of Faith and Practice, but must agree to support FFC's intent and practice to teach a Biblically-based worldview throughout all programs and classes in accordance with the Statement of Faith and Practice. **Members and/or students whose life choices, behaviors or communications may cause conflict with FFC's mission, danger to other members, or disruption to students and classes, may be denied membership or have their membership revoked.**

As a private institution and for the safety and protection of its membership, FFC reserves the right to deny or revoke membership or service assignment to any applicant for any reasons whether disclosed or undisclosed to the applicant.

Special Accommodations for Health, Safety and Well-being

At times special accommodations are needed to safeguard a student's safety, health and well-being. Adults serving on campus may also be in need of special care. It is the desire of FFC leadership to provide for special needs and circumstances whenever possible. Conditions potentially requiring special attention include but are not limited to:

1. Health conditions that might require attention while the student or adult is on campus or at an FFC-sponsored event
 - a. Allergies to food and other substances
 - b. Required medications, such as dosages to be administered during the day
 - c. Emergency medications, such as epipen, inhaler
 - d. Other potential serious health episodes, such as seizures, etc.
2. Conditions requiring special accommodations, such as
 - a. Learning differences, IEP, history of learning issues
 - b. Emotional, psychological or physical differences requiring accommodations or special awareness
 - c. Previous school or social experiences warranting special attention
3. Restrictions on interactions, such as
 - a. People disallowed from contact
 - b. Court orders
 - c. Publishing of photographs
 - d. Distribution of personal information (phone numbers, addresses, etc.)

During the Admissions process, parents should bring any special circumstances to the attention of the Admissions Administrator and discuss it during the enrollment interview. During the interview, the parents and administration will partner to determine:

- Whether FFC can properly accommodate the needs of the student
- How FFC can best accommodate student needs
- Who should be informed of student needs

Prior to the first day of class, those people involved in the student's care and/or protection will meet with administration and, if possible, the parents to discuss best ways to accommodate student needs and how to maintain confidentiality. Agreed-upon plans are documented and kept in the confidential student file.

See also the sections on Health and Safety and Communications

Membership Dues

Membership Dues are calculated based on the number of days students are on campus (96) and the Membership level. The chart below shows the dues and fees for each student for 2026-27. Dues and fees are subject to change and may vary somewhat from member to member based on their service and other factors. *Members are asked not to share or discuss with others their specific dues arrangement.*

Registration fees are nonrefundable.

Dues & Fees for 2026-27 Academic Year (96 on-campus days)

Full Time

Fee Description	A Member	B Member	C Member
Annual Dues	\$ 2,132	\$ 4,264	\$ 6,768
10 Monthly Payments (Aug-May)	\$ 214	\$ 427	\$ 677
Satellite Days (per day)	\$ 1,344	\$ 1,483	\$ 1,670
Dual Enrollment Extra Charge per course (if offered)	\$ 52	\$ 103	\$ 155

***In the event that an A or B Member is serving on campus on Satellite days in addition to regular A or B service, dues will be further reduced.**

A La Carte Course Dues

A La Carte Courses	A Member	B Member	C Member
FFC Semester Electives (1 period per week)	\$ 52	\$ 103	\$ 248
FFC Semester Electives (2 periods per week)	\$ 104	\$ 206	\$ 496
Humanities (per semester) (7 periods per week)	\$ 360	\$ 721	\$ 1,730
Math (per semester) (3 periods per week)	\$ 155	\$ 309	\$ 742
Science (per semester) (3 periods per week)	\$ 155	\$ 309	\$ 742
Bible/Chapel/Worldview (3 periods per week)	\$ 155	\$ 309	\$ 742

Other Fees

Description	Due	Fee
Application Fee: nonrefundable for new students to cover placement assessments	At time of application	\$ 40
Early Re-enrollment fee: nonrefundable for returning students with no outstanding balance due	February 1 – 28	\$ 150
Regular re-enrollment fee: nonrefundable for returning students with no outstanding balance due	March 1 on, due at time of completed re-enrollment	\$ 200
Enrollment Fee: nonrefundable for new students	At time of acceptance	\$ 200
Books and materials fee, per student, grades 1-12	1-July	\$ 250
Activities fees for participation in certain extra-curricular activities	At time of sign-up for activity	varies

Optional Spring Extension may be offered at additional cost.

Dues Payment

We understand that commitment to a Christian education for your child(ren) requires a financial investment that may be burdensome. Our desire is to work with families to keep FFC accessible to anyone who values membership, while at the same time safeguarding the continued viability of our unique community.

Dues may be paid on an annual basis on or before August 5th, or in 10 monthly installments due the 5th of each month beginning in August. Dues may be paid by mailing or delivering a check to the FFC office at 9 Pittstown Road, Clinton, NJ 08809, or online through the Gradelink Student Information System online payment module where members may access their account and make secure online payments through Gradelink's partner PaySimple. Payments may be made by using credit or debit cards or ACH transfer from a bank account. FFC charges families a 3.5% convenience fee to offset charges to FFC for the use of credit cards. There is no charge for the use of an ACH bank transfer.

Billing statements are available on the first of the month on the Billing page of the parents' Gradelink account. Invoices will not be sent out unless requested. Dues should be paid by the 5th of each month and are considered overdue if payment is not received by the 15th of the month at which time a late fee of \$15 per student will be assessed to overdue accounts.

Dues may be paid through Gradelink, in person or by mail. **To reduce the administrative burden both for members and staff, members are urged to set up an automatic payment plan in Gradelink that will allow them to pay on time** via credit card or by bank direct deposit (ACH). See the section on Gradelink for more information about how to use the online payment service. .

Past due accounts may be assessed late fees or incur other consequences. Members experiencing financial difficulties should contact the FFC office to request a review for special arrangements or Financial Assistance. *See the Appendix for FFC's **Payment of Dues Policy**.*

Financial Hardship Assistance Program

The Foundations First Christian Financial Hardship Assistance program is designed to help parents or guardians who genuinely desire a Christian education for their child(ren), but are unable to meet the dues / service tiers because of financial or other challenges. Each member family should contribute toward the cost of their children's education to the level that they are able, and by prayerfully seeking God's help in meeting this obligation through their contributions as well as their efforts to receive support from others – such as family, church, etc.

FFC strives to not have finances become a roadblock to membership, and is intentionally structured to keep membership dues as low as possible. The FFC Financial Hardship Assistance Program is designed to help members who have made appropriate efforts to obtain help as mentioned in the first paragraph above. These members must meet the guidelines and requirements of the program, and must be approved for a specific amount of assistance by the FFC Financial Assistance Committee (FAC).

Members who request financial assistance must do the following;

1. Complete the Financial Hardship Assistance Application form (a copy is included in the Handbook Appendix), including the Family (monthly) Budget form and Family Assets form.
 - (The forms mentioned above can be obtained from the FFC office or email request at admissions@foundationsfirstchristian.org)
2. Submit a copy of their most recent IRS 1040 Tax Form and other documents (as requested by the FAC) to the FFC office.
 - **NOTE:** The documents above should be submitted to the office in an envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL" and addressed: Attention: The FFC Financial Assistance Committee"

All records will be kept confidential

3. If the members are approved for financial assistance, they must agree to pay all remaining dues as well as required FFC fees such as registration fees, book fees, activity fees, etc.

All new applicants will be interviewed by at least one member of the Financial Assistance Committee (FAC). Additional interviews may be requested by any member of the Committee. The Committee will determine the amount of financial assistance to be provided.

Financial assistance is provided on a one-year basis. All returning applicants must submit a new Application for Financial Hardship Assistance each year, and provide an updated Family (monthly) Budget and Family Assets and latest IRS 1040 Tax Form. The FAC will decide whether or not a new interview is needed.

The FAC will advise each applicant in writing of the amount of assistance to be provided as well as the amount of the annual and monthly dues payment.

Academic Information

Academic Year

The learning year begins in September with 96 on-campus days, generally ending in Mid to late May. An additional optional “Spring Extension” month may be available at extra charge. This model allows for more time for families to travel and spend time together. Creative, project-based, interdisciplinary assignments may be provided to keep students engaged over the summer.

Class /Grade Assignment

Wherever appropriate, Foundations First Christian uses a multi-age classroom approach to some classes, especially including electives. There are many good pedagogical reasons for grouping students of several ages together, including helping to avoid stereotyping, increasing peer learning and leadership opportunities, reducing competition and bullying, and facilitating friendships across age groups.

As the child’s primary teacher, parents are often well-equipped to help in determining the class placement that will provide the best social and academic enrichment and support for their child. Before enrollment or during the first week of class, students may be given diagnostic tests to estimate their reading and math levels. After initially placing students in groups, teachers will quickly develop an understanding of a student’s level and will be able to select appropriate level material and adapt their teaching to a student’s needs.

When possible, **project-based learning** is employed as a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world projects. Along with content knowledge, this method enhances the opportunity for students to develop and practice critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication skills in an engaging way.

In middle and upper grade levels, wherever practical, a **team-teaching approach** to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and Humanities (Language Arts and Social Studies) provides opportunities for project-based learning as well as the integration of subject matter across disciplines and grade levels to increase interest, understanding and application.

Curriculum and Materials

The curriculum and materials used at Foundations First Christian are carefully screened and selected by a team of teachers and administration. Some of the criteria used in curriculum selection include:

1. Consideration that the materials effectively address the key concepts and skills needed for each level and stage of development.
2. Evaluation of the organizational structure and logical sequence of the materials
3. Compatibility with a Biblical worldview as well as avoidance of inappropriate material. Opportunities for integration of Biblical concepts including creation, the nature of God, nature of man, sin, grace and spiritual growth topics related to character
4. Whether the materials lend themselves to project-based learning and facilitates student-parent home-

based learning

All curriculum and materials are available for families to examine upon request.

Electives Program for Middle and Secondary Classes

FFC's popular Electives program allows students to choose electives that align with their interests and further their love of learning. These classes also allow our teachers and parent members to share additional passions and knowledge with our community.

Electives are available for Secondary Students. Students in other grades may at times also be able to participate in specific electives. An elective is held for a 40-minute period between one and three times a week for an 18-week semester. Specific courses vary by semester but fall generally into two categories: Enrichment Electives are generally held once a week and require no preparation or work outside the class. Master Class Electives are held two to three times a week, may require prerequisites, and generally involve assignments to be completed outside of class. Elective choices include subjects within the larger areas of Physical Education, The Arts, Language studies, STEM, Worldview, Life Skills, Outdoor Education, and more. Some electives will be limited to select or have additional requirements such as commitment to scheduled activities, equipment purchase or other fees. Students in consultation with their parents will select their preference of desired electives and final assignments will be made by the administration. Electives are also available to students not participating in the full FFC program on a space-available basis. A la carte students must go through the enrollment process and pay a non-refundable annual enrollment fee of \$50 to cover administrative costs.

Parent members and interested others are encouraged to propose elective offerings in their areas of expertise and interest and may have opportunities to lead or participate in future elective offerings. All adults leading or assisting in electives must go through an application and screening process.

Satellite Days

Off-campus Satellite Days (Wednesdays and Fridays) are important elements in the students' education and are intended for students to practice what they are learning in the classroom as well as gain enhanced learning, facilitated by parents or other family members. Guidelines and specific assignments will be provided by class teachers, who are also available for consultation regarding Satellite Day work. Examples include: doing class assignments, reading, exploring subjects of personal special interest, taking additional classes, playing sports, building things, making art, doing projects or simple home science experiments, etc.

Teachers will let students and families know their preferred method of assigning Satellite Day work. Normally, teachers use Gradelink, FFC's Student Information System to communicate assignments. Most teachers use the Teacher Pages, found in the Gradelink Communications tab, to describe Satellite Day assignments and projects. See the section on Gradelink for more information.

The length of the Satellite Day learning will vary with the ages of the students and their maturity level. Below is a rough guide:

6-8 years old = 1.5-2 hrs./day

8-10 years old = 2.5 hrs./day

10-12 years old = 3-4 hrs./day

12-14 years old = 4-5 hrs./day

14-16 years old = 5-6 hrs./day

Satellite Day learning at home ideally begins at a regular time with prayer and a discussion/overview of how that day's time is going to be spent. A good idea is to read something from the Bible to establish perspective and tone for the time.

The role of parents on Satellite Days varies with the age of the child.

During the dedicated learning time, younger students may do a variety of things such as work on smaller projects, read, complete assignments, build things, do art, play strategy games, practice a skill, or watch a relevant documentary.

Older students may have projects related to real life problems, assigned topics or areas of personal interest. Projects may involve conducting primary and secondary research, gathering, compiling and analysis of data, or preparing written and oral presentations. Students will sometimes work individually and sometimes will need to collaborate in groups or involve parents. A goal is for students to learn to assume responsibility for their own learning.

It is good to conclude the satellite classroom time with the students reflecting on how it went and asking themselves the question: Did I do my best today? Then, thanking God for the day. Students will be provided with a journal or workbook to record learning goals, assignments and activities.

Class teachers will provide assignments and suggested activities as well as guidance about setting goals and recording activities using various tools. Teachers will be available for consultation at set times during Satellite Days, which the teachers will explain during orientation.

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend Parent Orientation and any additional meetings offered to receive guidance and suggestions about how best to facilitate student learning. Frequent communications between parents and teachers using means and times convenient to both parties is highly encouraged.

On-Campus Satellite Day and Other Special Days

Foundations offers an optional Wednesday on-campus Satellite Day for families needing additional support, at an additional charge. On campus Satellite Days will generally follow the pattern described above in the mornings, then lunch, followed by sports, games, enrichment learning or additional work on projects, all in proportion to student interest and stamina. Foundations families may enroll their students from Kindergarten and older in the Wednesday On-campus Satellite Day on a month-to-month basis if space is available.

Additional performing arts, individual/small group tutoring and other special enrichment programs may be available from time to time.

See also the section on Community Club and Field Trips.

AfterCare

FFC offers Aftercare on a fee basis as a service to families, with the understanding that this service may be discontinued in the case of insufficient demand or inability to proper staff. Parents are not required to pre-register their children but are encouraged to pre-register to help FFC plan for adequate staffing and to receive discounted fees. Students who are not picked up after class in a timely manner will be placed in aftercare.

Student Evaluation

Students are evaluated at the close of each academic term and progress reports provided to parents. Classes are held on a Semester schedule, with report cards issued quarterly. Younger students will receive documentation of progress appropriate to their age and expectations. Report cards will include feedback both on how students are doing academically and their character development.

Because Foundations is not a school, report cards are not official records of student learning and performance and do not include credits for secondary classes. An exception is the Dual Enrollment University Program, if offered, where high school students receive credit from accredited universities. See the following section on record-keeping for more information.

The Gradelink Student Information System provides real-time input to students and families regarding assignments and grades that can be viewed throughout the year. Report cards will be posted to Gradelink where they are available for families to download. Only the current report card is available on the Gradelink parent portal. Transcripts of previous work are also available in Gradelink. Should families need a report that is no longer available, please contact the office. **Access to Gradelink may be frozen for families with delinquent financial obligations.**

Record Keeping / Reporting

Membership, student and staff records are kept in a secure method in the office and online using the Gradelink Student Information System. Parents may access their financial records, student classroom assignments, evaluations and progress reports either through the parent portal on Gradelink or by request.

Files may not be removed from the building.

Please note that Foundations First Christian is not a school, and is not required to keep formal transcripts, grade reports or attendance records. As homeschooling parents, it is the responsibility of the family to ensure appropriate recordkeeping. Since our records are not official transcripts, they will not be provided to schools or other institutions to which the student may be transferring.

See further information below from the New Jersey Department of Education:

New Jersey, under the compulsory education law (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25) has permitted children to receive "equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school." N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 requires that "every parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of a child between six and 16 to ensure that such child regularly attends the public schools of the district or a day school in which there is given instruction equivalent to that provided in the public schools for children of similar grades and attainments or to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school."

Foundations First Christian, Inc. is a hybrid homeschool learning community and not a school. Therefore, it is primarily the responsibility of the parents to keep records demonstrating that their child(ren) is/are receiving equivalent instruction. FFC will provide assistance in the form of regular report cards prepared by the class instructor, as described above. See the FFC calendar for the dates that progress reports will be sent home.

For more information on homeschooling requirements in the state of New Jersey, see the New Jersey Department of Education website.

https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/nontraditional/faq_homeschool.shtml

Another excellent resource for homeschooling families is the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA).

<https://hsllda.org/legal/new-jersey>

The HSLDA recommends parents keep the following records for their homeschooled children:

- Attendance records
- Information on the textbooks and workbooks your student used
- Samples of your student's schoolwork
- Correspondence with public school officials
- Portfolios and test results
- Any other documents showing that your child is receiving an appropriate education in compliance with the law

FFC provides attendance records, grades on assignments and term grades via the Gradelink portal. FFC will provide information on curriculum materials, lesson plans, projects and other information upon request to the teacher. All records are unofficial as FFC is a service provided to homeschooling families, and not a school.

Extra-curricular Activities

FFC provides extra-curricular offerings from time to time which may require additional fees and permissions. Families will be informed of such plans in advance and may be urged to participate as volunteers.

Examples are musical productions, cabarets, field trips, Community Club activities, volunteer opportunities, clubs, tutoring, etc.

Families with ideas, skills or contacts that would be appropriate for enrichment or extra-curricular offerings are urged to communicate with the FFC office via phone or email or speak to your child's teacher(s).

Community Club

At FFC, we believe in a holistic learning experience and our goal is to provide FFC students with opportunities to grow and flourish while learning about our community and providing help to people around us when opportunities arise.

To that end, a significant extra-curricular activity offered at FFC to students in upper grades (6-9) is the Community Club, which meets approximately once a month on non-core days. Club Days may be a whole day experience or part of a day depending on the nature of the event. Families can participate in all or any of the Club days, and some additional costs may be charged for admissions or materials as they may apply.

The purpose of this club is to provide outside opportunities to help our students become well-rounded individuals, teach empathy as they learn about the world around them, and provide fun events to bring fellowship and unity. Examples include:

Community wide events (Grow-a-row, acknowledging the work of our fire, departments, police departments, etc.)

Meeting the needs of others whenever possible

Writing notes of thankfulness to the FFC staff and others

Helping with FFC events such as food preparations when needed

Field trips that connect with classroom learning

Recreational and educational offerings

In choosing events, Community Club leaders and Board Member Sara Menzak look for personal development opportunities and workshops to help students gain understanding through learning about their identity, their areas of giftedness, and personal potential. We also focus on the presence of Jesus Christ in students' lives and the transformations that this relationship can provide.

As with all extra-curricular and enrichment offerings, FFC counts on the assistance of parents and other family members in identifying opportunities, teaching skills, assisting and chaperoning.

Trips

In the event of field trips and offsite Community Club events, signed permission slips will be required and volunteer drivers and chaperones may be solicited. Drivers must be background checked, have a current valid drivers' license, registration and proof of insurance.

Health, Safety and Security

FFC commits to keeping the health, safety and security of all involved in the community as a primary objective. Health, Safety and Security includes many things that are important to the learning community, not all of which can be addressed within the scope of this Handbook. Some elements that are impacted while on campus or at FFC-sponsored events include:

1. Student and staff health, relevant medical issues and physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing while on campus
2. Safeguarding physical safety on campus and at FFC-sponsored events
3. Safeguarding confidential information, including financial data, family issues, health issues, photographs, or other information FFC is required or requested to keep secure
4. Preventing abuse, including physical and sexual abuse, harassment, bullying
5. Instructing students in the safe use of technology and providing oversight during its use
6. Dealing with issues in a prompt, confidential, sensitive manner
7. Documenting steps taken to prevent, identify, investigate and respond to potential infractions

This Handbook will address each issue in part, but FFC depends on the prayerful watch-care, sensitivity and dedication of the entire learning community to create and maintain the loving, safe, supportive environment and culture expected of a ministry dedicated to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Illnesses and Special Medical and Safety Information

If a child, adolescent or adult is sick or is known to be exposed to a contagious illness, that individual should remain home.

FFC seeks to provide professional nursing coverage on site whenever possible but does not guarantee such coverage.

Members should notify and keep FFC administration and teachers updated regarding special health and safety concerns for enrolled students or adults serving on campus. The forms listed below are available in the Appendix and online and should be completed and/or acknowledged during the enrollment process and updated when conditions change. See also the section on Gradelink.

FFC Administration will make every effort to keep updated and inform only those who need to know specific confidential information in order to keep students and adults safe, healthy and maximize their experience at FFC. It is helpful for parents to discuss their expectations for information sharing with the Administration and keep in contact should conditions change.

All adults serving on campus should read and be familiar the FFC Information Security Policy and use wise and godly consideration about how to handle sensitive information, including the importance of avoiding openly or casually sharing or discussing with others sensitive information about students/staff/families.

See the Appendix for the Activity and Technology Permission Form, FFC Sick Policy, Abuse and Harassment Prevention, Information Security Policy.

Emergency Communications

In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted via telephone or text using the information currently on file. Parents provide this information in two places: The Gradelink Student Information System and the annual Activity Permission Form. **Please make sure this information is up to date!**

In the event of an early closure, cancellation of classes, or other unforeseen circumstances, a blast text and/or phone message will be sent through Gradelink's SmartSend service, which uses the contact information on file within Gradelink to very quickly send messages.

Safety Standards

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis 1: 27

Foundations First Christian Inc. strives to build a learning community where each person is recognized and treated as a bearer of the Image of God and beloved in His sight. It is hoped that members will treat each other as they would want to be treated, keeping in mind that each person's health and wellbeing is of inestimable value yet subject to hurt, whether by accident, carelessness or intent.

The following policies and guidelines are meant to assist in enhancing protections and preventing potentially harmful situations.

All members who will be assisting with students associated with FFC must:

Complete an Application, be interviewed and pass a reference and background check. Forms are provided in the Appendix

Be familiar with FFC policies and procedures, sign and comply with required forms, including but not limited to Information Security, Abuse Prevention, Expectations and Standards of Behavior

Report violations to FFC Administration and, if applicable, to appropriate legal authorities

Prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children in their care

FFC is blessed to have several trained professionals in law enforcement and health fields serving on the Board, the Health and Safety Team, and as on-campus Parent Helpers.

Foundations First Christian's Health and Safety Team is tasked with regularly reviewing FFC building and safety policies and procedures and making recommendations based on best known practices. Training is provided as needed.

Building Access

We value the safety of the children who are on our campus, and it is our desire to do as much as is reasonably possible to ensure their protection. We take this responsibility very seriously.

After students have entered the building in the morning, the doors are locked. Parents are able to enter the building for child drop-off and pick-up at standard times and by "buzzing" the Community Office at other times. Building security equipment includes the following:

1. Double doors with keypad access and security cameras at the FFC entrance leading to the downstairs classrooms.
2. Double doors with keypad access in the hallway leading to the upstairs rooms.
3. Monitor and remote entrance control in the FFC office.
4. Security cameras in place throughout the campus.

Teachers, staff and certain parent helpers are issued key fobs and door codes as required. This code is not to be shared with others, nor should others be able to look as the code is being entered into the keypad. Doors must not be propped open unless temporarily while an adult is present to monitor access. **Care should be taken to not let another adult enter behind you unless that person is a known member of FFC.**

Sign-In / Sign-Out and Identification

It is important that the FFC administration is aware at all times of who is on campus. Every member (including compensated staff members), volunteer and visitor **must sign in and out** at the office (or other location when indicated) and **wear the provided identification badge** while on campus. Visitor badges should be returned to the office when signing out. If on campus but unable to come to the office to sign in, please call or text to ask someone to sign in for you.

Drop off / Pickup

Arrival

The speed limit in the parking lot is 10 miles per hour

The main doors to the church/FFC open at 8:10 AM and are open until 8:15 AM at which time they will be locked. Parents are asked to arrive with their children by 8:05 AM, 5 minutes before doors open. Note: The office entrance to the left is not open for access during this time except for staff with entry fobs.

Parents should park in the parking lot facing the main entrance and walk their small children to the main entrance (the large glass doors). Older children may walk by themselves from the parking lot at the discretion of the parents. Parents should watch to ensure children enter the building safely.

- Preschool Parents: Enter through the main church entrance and walk their children to their class.

Staff Preschool Parents can drop their children off in their classroom at 8:10 am

- All other students may walk straight down to their classrooms from the main entrance.
- At 8:16 AM the main doors will be locked and students will no longer be granted entry there.

In the case of late arrival (after 8:15 AM), parents should bring the student(s) to the smaller door under the canopy to the left of the main doors. This is a secured door and access must be requested by ringing the FFC video bell at the outer door (the lower bell) and again at the inner door at the bottom of the stairs. Parents must accompany the student to the office and sign him/her in before the student may join class.

Departure

At the end of the learning day (3:00 PM for Primary and 3:05 PM for Secondary), parents are asked to line their cars up at the perimeter of the parking lot in preparation to pull to the front of the main church entrance. Families will be given two laminated name cards with student names to be placed in the front passenger windshield so as to be visible to FFC spotters upon arrival.

Those managing dismissal will note the names of approaching cars, and summon students using walkie-talkies. Students should be alert for their names to be called and quickly walk to their cars, accompanied by an adult supervisor. Parents or the adult supervisor should ensure that students are properly secured in the car before departing.

Extreme care should be taken when pulling forward in the line and exiting the property, being cautious for students and adults who may be walking in the driveway. Only pull around another vehicle when directed to do so.

A list of people authorized to pick up students should be completed with enrollment and updated annually and any time information changes. Please alert the administration of any restrictions (i.e., restraining orders).

- **PreK-4th Grade Parents:** Dismissal starts at 3:00. Students will wait in the foyer until their parents arrive
- **5th-12th Grade:** Dismissal starts at 3:05.

Parents are strongly urged to be on time for arrival and departure. Students who are not picked up promptly will be placed in the aftercare group and the families will be billed the cost of aftercare.

The safety of our children is our top priority. Please observe the following guidelines meant to safeguard our children:

- The speed limit in the parking lot is 10 miles per hour.
- Please make sure that a staff member is on duty before you leave your child.
- Please drive only on the asphalt sections of the parking lot. Do not bring your car onto the paver walkway between the parking lot and the building.

If you wish to fellowship with other parents or if you need to conduct business inside, please park in the back parking spaces, always facing the school. This position allows you to pull forward when leaving. This helps those supervising to see the children and keep them safe. **NO BACKING OUT AT ANY TIME**. Please do not park in the first row facing the building.

Personal Security

For the protection of children and adults, we need to know where a student is at all times. Attendance is

taken at the beginning of the day and reported in Gradelink.

Teachers should ensure that they have a copy of each day's attendance, which is carried with the class throughout the day. **In each class, teachers should check attendance to make sure all students are accounted for.**

Walkie-talkies will be issued to teachers and teacher associates for use while they and their students are out of the building or in the activity center.

Teachers should consistently monitor students' use of the bathrooms.

In no case should a child and adult be alone together in a private setting, including bathrooms. In situations where children require assistance in bathroom use or clothes changing, teachers and teacher associates should plan and oversee processes whereby adequate supervision is provided to prevent the opportunity for or potential accusation of inappropriate behavior.

One-on-one conferences or tutoring sessions should be pre-scheduled whenever possible, and held in a location that is known to the administration and open to view.

Foundations First Christian is blessed to have the participation on the Health and Safety Team of several law enforcement, health care and safety professionals who regularly assess FFC's facility and procedures and advise improvements. There is a frequent presence on campus of members who are fully trained and equipped for dealing with a variety of health and safety issues and emergencies.

Accidents / Health Emergencies

All enrolled students with a regular presence on campus must complete health forms, including notification of allergies and other medical special needs prior to the first day of class. Contact information for whom should be notified in the case of an emergency should also be provided as well as insurance and medical professionals. Families are also asked for emergency contacts, a list of people who are authorized to pick up students, and whether there are any court orders or other restrictions that FFC needs to be aware of. This information will be shared as needed with staff and parent helpers who are tasked with overseeing student health and safety.

Parents provide this information through the online enrollment form in Gradelink and updated in Gradelink.

It is the responsibility of the parents / guardians to ensure that the information available to FFC is accurate and up to date. Should conditions change throughout the academic year, please update the Gradelink records and notify the Office Administrator, Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director to ensure the change is noted.

FFC seeks to have a nurse on campus on a regular basis. Many teachers and staff are trained in first aid. Students with serious allergic conditions are flagged in student roster reports provided to teachers that accompany classes throughout the day.

If an injury occurs while a student is on campus, parents will be notified and an incident report form will be completed and made available to parents.

Information Security

Foundations First Christian commits to treating sensitive information with respect and care to keep it

private and secure. Sensitive Information includes financial, personal, family, health and other information about students, families, staff and volunteers and requires adequate safeguards in place to protect the safety, privacy, and well-being of those who entrust FFC with sensitive information. It is also necessary to ensure compliance with various regulations, along with guarding the future of FFC.

Foundations First Christian commits to respecting the privacy of all its Members and to protecting any data from outside parties. It is the responsibility of everyone in the learning community to recognize and respect confidentiality in all its aspects, guarding against careless speech or careless handling of information. FFC has an Information Security Policy which is required to be reviewed and signed by employees and others handling sensitive information and is available in the Appendix.

Incident Report

FFC uses an Incident Report form for documenting incidents of misconduct, injury, bullying, vandalism, illness, accidents, dangerous situations, etc., that occur in FFC on-campus and off-campus classes and activities.

The purpose of an Incident Report Form is to document the exact details of a harmful, damaging, adverse or undesirable event or happening while the details are fresh in the minds of the people involved and those who witnessed or were affected by the incident. The information reported may be useful to medical professionals in their treatment of injuries or illness, or to FFC leadership in sourcing culpability, resolving conflicts, dealing with liability issues, mitigating risks, correcting safety hazards.

The teacher or other supervising adult responsible who witnessed the incident or to whom the incident was first reported is responsible to complete the Incident Report immediately after the incident, or as soon as possible after the incident, while it is fresh in the mind of the person reporting it and those who witnessed or were part of it. The teacher should then alert the Executive Director to the incident and provide a copy of the report.

The Executive Director or a designee will investigate the incident and record applicable information on the incident report. The Executive Director and teacher should jointly follow up to ensure that all appropriate communication and follow-up actions are taken in a timely manner. The report is signed and kept in the student file.

Drills and Emergency Procedures

Foundations First Christian conducts regular safety drills. Training of staff and volunteers is provided as part of orientation. Procedures for drill and emergency evacuations are as follows and are also provided as a separate document in the Appendix.

Foundations First Christian Safety Protocol includes all members, volunteers and staff 18 years and older completing and passing a Background Check and Reference Check.

IN A TRUE EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 911 FIRST

Emergency Evacuation

Exit maps are posted in each room. Review the primary and secondary exit routes for the room that you are in.

- Keep attendance
- Whenever possible, all evacuations should be to the lawn area to the right of the driveway entrance.

- Make sure everyone is accounted for as we would never want to leave someone behind or go back for someone not at Foundations that day.
- Check bathrooms

Threat Outside the Facility (LOCKOUT)

- If there is a threat outside of the facility, call 911 immediately.
- All exterior doors should always be locked and secured.
- Put building on “Lockdown” using proper FOB
- Lock and secure your room/locations as much as possible.
- This is at your discretion – depending why Foundations is being placed on LOCKOUT
- Do not leave the secured area - stay put until you have been given the all clear.

Threat inside Facility: (LOCKDOWN)

If there is a threat inside the facility, if possible call 911.

Protocol – Run, Hide, Fight

1. RUN - If you know where the threat is and there is a way to get out of the facility and away from the building safely staying as a group, this would be the first option.
2. HIDE - If you are not sure where the threat is, or you do not have the “manpower” to mobilize your kids - lock all doors, cover windows if possible and disperse throughout your room. (Do not unlock or leave room for any reason. When it is “all clear” and safe to leave, the proper authorities will be able to get you out.)
3. FIGHT - If the threat enters your room, throw anything and everything at the threat. The purpose is to take the intruder off-guard or obstruct, disarm, or disable. Use whatever is within your means: fire extinguishers, books, chairs, etc.

General First Aid, Sudden Illness or Medical Emergency:

1. In the case of a medical emergency, call 911 immediately.
2. If the nurse is on campus, she should be notified – supplies are kept in the nurse’s office.
3. The address and specific location in the building should be given and be as specific as possible. When calling use the Church’s Name and address and also make sure someone in the church office has been notified of the emergency

South Ridge Community Church

7 Pittstown Road

Clinton, NJ 08809

Church phone: 908-735-5252

4. Stay on the phone with 911
5. There is a defibrillator in the main foyer and in the AC mounted on the walls.
6. Provide the patient with privacy and allow for a clear path to be established so medical help can get through.

7. Relocate other classmates.
8. In any case, an Incident Report should be made and put on file in the office. Forms are available in the office.

Safety Rules for Students

- There will be *NO* talking during a fire drill.
- There will be *NO* running in the hallways.
- Students should inform a teacher or the office of a problem with another student. There is to be **ABSOLUTELY NO FIGHTING** – No pushing, pulling, tackling, biting, hitting or kicking other students.
- Students will observe the safety of others by not throwing objects, such as stones, wood chips, food, rubber bands, etc.
- Students will not bring anything on campus that will cause harm to other students, including alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, matches, lighters, knives, firecrackers. Students are not allowed to bring electronic devices or any other potentially distracting items without prior permission from the teacher and/or administration.

Abuse Prevention: Anti-Harassment, Bullying and Abuse Policies

In a Christian community such as Foundations First Christian, Members, students and visitors are expected to treat each other in such a way as to bring honor to the name of Jesus, as described in part in the previous sections.

The leadership of Foundations First Christian has a no tolerance policy for bullying, harassment or abuse, with disciplinary consequences up to and including dismissal. Abuse, harassment and bullying of students or adults or by students or adults are serious concerns and are addressed by preventative as well as corrective measures. Instruction, observation, counseling, corrective discipline including dismissal, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used as appropriate. Teachers and other adults observing signs of abuse, harassment or bullying should promptly report their concerns to the Executive Director.

FFC's policies concerning harassment, bullying and abuse are contained in the appendix of this document. **All members are required to review and sign the policy on an annual basis.**

Playground

Outside recreation is an important part of education, and students will have access to the playground on a supervised basis. The following are rules for use of the playground.

1. During outside recreation, students must be appropriately dressed for the weather.
2. Students are supervised at all times, and students must stay in designated areas.
3. During outdoor recess, no student may enter the gym without teacher permission.
4. On days when there are wet grounds, students may play on the blacktop if it is ice-free.
5. Pushing, shoving, or tackling is not permitted.
6. Throwing stones, wood chips, or sticks is not permitted.
7. Students are not allowed on the hill behind the playground.
8. Students are not to sit on or jump over the fence at the edge of the playground.
9. Only PreSchool through 2nd grade students are allowed to use the smaller slides.
10. The Gaga Pit is recommended for students in 4th grade and up.

Communications

On the night before He died to save humanity, Jesus told his followers:

“A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35

One of the most obvious ways Christ followers can obey this command is in demonstrating love in how we communicate with each other and with those around us. Our desire is that our Christian learning community be a place where all our communications, in words and actions, are honoring to Him and to one another, showing that we have:

“...the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:5b-6

Emergency Communications

Please make sure that the office has your current address and phone number, in case we need to reach you at any time. Group emergency messages are sent through the Gradelink SmartSend function, which uses the text and email addresses listed there. Please make sure they are kept up to date.

Phone numbers and addresses are given out only with permission by the individual.

Most communication is accomplished through email and/or text. Make it a priority to check your email and messages daily. Teachers and staff will be provided with a Foundations First email address which should be used for all learning community matters. The FFC office email is office@foundationsfirstchristian.org.

In the event of facility closure, early dismissal or other unforeseen circumstances, a text and phone message will go out through the SmartSend function of Gradelink, which uses the phone numbers listed in your Gradelink account.

If we need to reach you, we will call or send a text message to the cell phone number listed. Remember that if your information changes, the office needs to be notified to make sure you receive important communications.

Parent-Teacher-Administration-Board Communications

As a Christian learning community, FFC places high value on the understanding that parents are their child(s) first and most important educators, as is reflected in our core values, and recognizes the privilege and responsibility of partnering with families in the nurturing and education of their children.

Because this partnership can only thrive if parents and teachers are in regular communication, both formal and informal communications are encouraged.

1. Parent orientation sessions are scheduled at the beginning of the academic year
2. Parent-teacher individually scheduled conferences will be held at least once a year.
3. Satellite Day parent information and training sessions will be held as needed, at least once a year.
4. Opportunities for formal and informal times of fellowship and communication are scheduled throughout the year, including meet-and-greet gatherings, Board listening sessions, and All-community informational gatherings.
5. An annual survey will be administered in the spring and used to enhance programming and other

improvements

The above list represents scheduled communication opportunities. However, the community FFC is striving to build and nurture depends on transparency and frequent informal communications between community members. Parents with questions or concerns about their students' class and Satellite Day work are encouraged to first contact the teacher(s). Teachers are available for consultation during Satellite Days at scheduled times. Parents and students are encouraged to reach out to have questions answered or assistance provided.

Any questions or concerns that are not adequately addressed may be brought to the attention of the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, or, if that is insufficient, to any Board member.

Teachers are encouraged to use several means to keep in touch with parents as they partner in the education of their students. Various techniques may lend themselves to be more or less effective in fostering learning and communication, and individual teachers may choose different methods that work best for the levels, subject matter, and students they are leading.

Besides email, phone and face to face communications, teachers will use the tools described in the following sections to facilitate communications.

Personal Assignment Interactive Log (PAIL) and Other Journaling Tools

The Personal Assignment Interactive Log (PAIL) and other journaling tools are employed to help in communications and guidance regarding goal-setting, record-keeping and Satellite Day assignments and activities. PAIL books or other tools are issued to students by the teachers choosing to use them at the beginning of the academic year and are used throughout the year as instructed. These tools are useful in fostering meaningful communications, helping students achieve independent study skills, and keeping academic records.

Parents receive orientation and training in the use of the journaling tools and managing Satellite Days. Periodically throughout the year they have opportunities to interact with teachers and other parents about use of these tools and how to make Satellite Day learning more effective.

Gradelink Student Information System

Foundations First Christian uses the Gradelink Student Information System to help students and parents stay informed about learning community activities as well as individual student classes, assignments, grades and progress reports. Gradelink also serves as a secure information hub containing important student information and family billing statements. Enrollment and re-enrollment is managed through Gradelink, which allows parents to easily update critical information such as medical alerts, changes of address, emails, phone numbers, etc.

Parents and students each have their own account with separate log-in credentials. Parent accounts have full access to student accounts as well their parent accounts.

Members can access their Gradelink accounts using the online portal at www.gradelink.com or by downloading the mobile app. New parents will be sent an email with log-in instructions for themselves and their students. The email will also have a link where members can download the app for use on phones and devices. **Note that online payments cannot be made from the mobile app, but only from the main online portal.**

FFC's Gradelink School ID is 3261

The link below will take you to a video with instructions about how to navigate the Gradelink family interface:

<https://youtu.be/IBC7nWwQR4E>

Gradelink Features

- Members may access the following features:
- Satellite Day assignments and projects (see Teacher pages in Communications tab)
- FFC Community news
- Class news (if included by teacher)
- Student schedule (if available)
- Email addresses for teachers
- FFC Calendar
- Class calendars, including assignments and due dates (if utilized by teacher)
- Current Grade in each class for the current and previous terms
- Descriptions, Grades, and Teacher Comments for graded assignments
- Descriptions and Due Dates for upcoming assignments
- Assignment handouts or documents (attachments)
- Email Alerts you can configure for grades and attendance
- Attendance Information
- Transcript Information, if applicable
- A place to log service hours to fulfill A and B Member commitments
- Billing Information, including downloadable statements
- Links for paying dues and fees online (See the section on Dues for instructions on using this feature)
- A tab for re-enrolling students for the next academic year (open from February through August)

External Communications

As Members of Foundations First Christian, Inc., it should be each person's priority to protect the reputation of Jesus Christ, Foundations First Christian, and one another in all activities, both personally and professionally. This includes during both internal and, especially external communications in person, writing or through social media.

Use of cell phones is not allowed in the classroom when students are present, unless there is an emergency or it is briefly needed for relevant FFC internal communication.

Students are not allowed to have or use cell phones during the academic day, unless in an emergency when permitted by staff. After the academic day, students may use cell phones to make contact with parents for pick up. Phones may not be used for any other purpose while on campus. See the Appendix for the detailed policy on cell phones and smart watches.

Promotion or solicitation for outside business, ministry or social interests on FFC premises or using FFC contact lists is prohibited.

The internet and email are tools that are required to complete many tasks at Foundations First Christian, Inc. When FFC Members are using the internet and email, they should act with integrity, in exactly the same way as they would act in other forms of communication. This applies particularly to harassment, discrimination, confidentiality, information security, and misuse of resources. All communications must be consistent with our standards of ethical conduct and behavior at FFC and copyright laws should always be respected.

Members are not permitted to use FFC computers in connection with any offensive, sexually explicit, or

disruptive messages/images. A Technology Use Policy with more detail is under development and will be included in the Appendix

Social Media Communications

Foundations First Christian has official Facebook and Instagram pages, maintained by staff and overseen by the Board-led Branding and Communications Team. Care is taken that no pictures are published of students whose parent have requested that their images remain private. Members and friends are encouraged to view, like and share postings on these sites.

Besides FFC's official social media presence, references to Foundations First Christian in public and private forums such as Facebook and other social media, should be approached with care, using the same principles of Godly communications you would in face-to-face communications. Personal online communications that could potentially be interpreted as coming from Foundations First Christian should include this or a similar statement in a prominent location: ***"The posts on this site are personal opinions. They are not read or approved by Foundations First Christian, Inc. before posting and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of FFC"***. Ask permission before reporting on conversations or meetings that are meant to be private or for internal use only. Do not disclose any information, pictures, or videos that are confidential or proprietary to FFC. Do not post pictures of any FFC students unless you have permission from their parents.

You should always assume that what you write will be read by your boss, your co-workers, volunteers and families, church members, your parents, your children, your spouse, and the attorney for a person who may not like you. Ask yourself if you are comfortable with all these people reading what you plan to post.

Community members are urged to alert the Admissions Administrator if any inappropriate postings are found.

Media Coverage

If a member of the media contacts you about a Foundations First-related subject or requests FFC information of any kind, contact the Executive Director or President of the Board on how to respond.

Guidelines for Behavior and Issue Resolution

Issue Resolution

We seek to follow the Lord's principles as expressed in Matthew 18:15 when dealing with issues, including complaints and disagreements, seeking first to resolve differences by going to one another in a spirit of love and reconciliation. Parents with questions should generally go to the teacher first. If this is insufficient to resolve the issue, it can be raised to the administration and, ultimately, the Board of Directors, if necessary.

Members should avoid discussing with others not directly involved issues regarding other students, other parents, or inappropriate concerns. This behavior can lead to gossip and misunderstandings which often have painful results and which Scripture clearly denounces.

Guidelines for Behavior

"Show proper respect to everyone; Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor those in authority." 1 Peter 2:17.

Students are important contributors to the culture of the Christian community FFC seeks to build and maintain on their behalf. In a thriving, supportive community, members of all ages treat others as they would want to be treated - fairly and with kindness - recognizing that all people are made in God's Image and Likeness and are precious to Him. There are many ways this kindness is demonstrated, such as:

- Supporting, encouraging and defending one another by taking care to include others in games, teams, and social relationships with a goal to build friendships without excluding or hurting others. Students should report harmful behavior to a teacher, whether it is directed at themselves or someone else.
- Showing respect for others while on campus, while being mindful that, even while off campus, Members of FFC represent our learning community and our Lord, Jesus Christ.
- Demonstrating appreciation for one's educational opportunities through integrity in behavior, both to others and oneself, by refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, and other forms of dishonesty.
- Recognizing that the classroom belongs to all students and disruptive behavior is damaging to the learning environment and the well-being of fellow students. Examples of disruptive behavior include: speaking out instead of raising a hand, making unnecessary noises, getting out of his/her seat without permission, bothering a neighbor, name calling and teasing or invading the privacy or property of others.
- Honoring God and each other by avoiding profane language or "trash talk" or gossip. Verbal abuse of any adult or student is unacceptable. Verbal abuse is defined as derogatory language used while speaking to or when referring to a student or staff member.
- Showing respect for the learning community and the church by being quiet in the hallways, respecting and caring for the property of others.
- Honoring God's design for holy sexuality by abstaining from all inappropriate conduct, including suggestive language, offensive gestures, intimate physical contact and other behavior of a sexual nature.
- Students and adults are to use the bathroom consistent with their biological sex, with the exception of preschool children under direct adult supervision. Adults are encouraged to use the bathrooms on the upper floor, leaving the downstairs bathrooms for students.

Disciplinary Procedures

The procedure for addressing disciplinary issues is aimed at helping students understand their inestimable value as Image-bearers of the living God, dearly loved by their Savior. As partners in the Whole-person education and well-being of the students in our charge, FFC Leadership is committed to acting at the appropriate level with students and families to prayerfully provide information, advice, intervention, referrals or other actions as needed. The steps outlined below are general guidelines and may be suspended or changed to adapt to the situation at hand. Serious cases representing threats to the safety and wellbeing of the student or others may result in immediate action being taken to isolate the student and notify the parents to pick him/her up immediately.

1. Students displaying inappropriate or disruptive behavior will first be counseled by their teacher and, if unresponsive, may be sent to the office for a time-out period and/or conversation with the Executive Director or his representative.

2. Lunchtime detention or other on-campus assignments may be employed if warranted.
3. Discipline reports will be sent home for willful misbehavior, negative attitude, or a pattern of inappropriate behavior. A notation will be made in the student's Gradelink record.
4. Repeated or serious misconduct will result in a conference, which may include the student, teacher, parents and administration in order to create a plan of action to improve the unsatisfactory behavior.
5. Continued serious misconduct or lack of response by the student and/or parents may result in suspension, conditions placed on continued participation, or expulsion. In the case of expulsion for unsatisfactory behavior, dues paid in advance will not be refunded

Adults who violate policies or demonstrate behavior that is incompatible with FFC's Expectations and Standards (see Appendix) may also be subject to consequences up to and including dismissal from employment, dismissal from service, or dismissal from membership.

FFC Charter for Success

Foundations First values a close and growing partnership with our members. We want all students to succeed in all areas of their lives, grow spiritually, mentally, socially and physically, and reach their full potential. Achieving this goal requires all parties to fulfill their responsibilities and commitments. The following Charter for Success is available as a separate document in the Appendix to be completed during the enrollment process.

Foundation's Responsibilities and Commitments

We will:

- facilitate a safe, loving and disciplined Christian environment
- nurture your child to be a successful learner
- encourage our teachers to get to know your child's needs
- provide your child with the opportunities to develop as a whole-person
- report to you regularly regarding your child's progress
- support and create accountability for successful Satellite Day learning
- be ready to meet with you whenever it is mutually convenient
- contact you whenever we feel it is necessary

Parental / Guardian Responsibilities and Commitments

We will:

- be a good role model in all areas of speech, behavior and character
- make sure our child arrives punctually for on-campus classes or activities
- provide a suitable study environment and supervise or facilitate Satellite Day work
- review student assignments, check and sign the Student Diary on Satellite Days
- communicate with our child about his/her overall progress regularly
- communicate with my child's teacher or the Executive Director whenever we are concerned about our child's progress or are encountering any problem
- come to all Parent-Teacher conferences

- teach my child to respect others and their property

Student Responsibilities and Commitments

I will:

- attend classes punctually and come prepared with my notebooks, pencils or pens and textbooks
- adopt a positive attitude and show respect to my parents, teachers and fellow students
- be a good steward and take good care of the facilities, furniture and equipment we are using
- dress neatly and modestly, demonstrating respect for God and others
- do my best at all times in my classes, on my assignments and on Satellite Day work
- turn in all projects and assignments on time, do all required reading and class preparation
- seek help from my parents and teachers when having difficulty with assignments or other problems
- follow all the FFC rules and teacher instructions including not using a cell phone for any reason between 8:30-3:00 without specific permission from a teacher
- accept sanctions if I should break FFC rules or disobey teacher instructions
- accompany my parents/guardian to FFC meetings when required
- make sure my parents receive all notices and communications sent from the FFC

Employees

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now," Philippians 1:3-5

FFC's employees are the heartbeat of the Foundations First Christian learning community, through whom the Mission is accomplished. Because of the vital role of FFC's employees, more is expected of them. This section of the Handbook pertains specifically to Employees of FFC. However, employees must read and be familiar with all prior sections of the Handbook as most of the information contained there also pertains to them.

Although all Members of FFC are expected to embrace and honor FFC's Statement of Faith and Practice and all policies and procedures, Compensated Staff Members generally hold positions of greatest visibility as well as influence on students. Their importance in accomplishing the Mission and Vision of Foundations First Christian is recognized and greatly valued, and for these reasons they are held to more rigorous standards and expectations, including but not limited to the following requirements:

1. Must have personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord
2. Must whole-heartedly accept and agree to uphold FFC's Statement of Faith and Practice
3. Must have active involvement in a local church whose beliefs are in agreement with FFC's Statement of Faith and Practice
4. Must have a growing faith in Christ as evidenced by personal prayer and study of the scriptures
5. Must be committed to furthering FFC's mission and faith-based philosophy of education.

See the Appendix for more detailed job descriptions for Teacher and Teacher Associate.

Application Process

Potential employees should submit an application and resume to the Executive Director, Associate Executive Director or Admissions Administrator. Upon review of the application appropriate candidates will be contacted to schedule an interview. If an offer of employment is made, it is contingent on review of references, the successful completion of a background check and completion of an I-9 form providing evidence of eligibility to work in the United States.

Employment for all Compensated Staff Members is at will and can be severed for any reason by either party with 30 days' notice. Dismissal for cause does not require prior notice.

Contracts

Employment contracts begin July 1 and end June 30 of each academic year. Renewal of contracts and compensation plans for compensated staff are ideally issued by May 1 of the year prior to the academic year. Specific compensation plans based on level of responsibility, hours and nature of work, and experience for Compensated Members are issued on an individual basis by the Executive Director and are subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

Compensated staff are Membership C members and are entitled to a 15% discount on C member dues.

Schedule

Expected hours on campus are from 8:00AM-3:15 PM Monday, Tuesday and Thursday plus additional time

off-campus as needed to meet the responsibilities described above. Contracts are based on the expectation that Teachers and, to a lesser extent Teacher Associates, will also spend time as needed over the summer and during non-campus days in planning, preparation, grading and other activities needed for effective teaching.

Parent-teacher conferences, Town Hall meetings, and information nights may also occur during the learning year.

Safety and Oversight

FFC employees take the lead on efforts to safeguard physical, emotional and spiritual health of the students in their care, as well as families, colleagues and others they interact with on a regular basis. To accomplish this, Teachers, Teacher Associates and Administrators are all responsible for the following:

1. Awareness of any needs in the students in their care requiring special attention, such as allergies, physical, social or emotional needs. At the same time, awareness of and respect for the need for protecting privacy and maintaining confidentiality.
2. Direct supervision of the students in their care. Students should never be unsupervised, especially when leaving the building for lunch, recess or classes.
3. Taking attendance at every interval after students have moved or regrouped
4. Making sure attendance lists accompany students as they move about the campus to ensure every student's whereabouts is known, especially in case of an emergency
5. Supervising emergency drills and incidents
6. Taking advantage of training provided in CPR and emergency management
7. Addressing and reporting incidents promptly and completing an Incident Report Form
8. Addressing disciplinary issues in a firm but sympathetic manner, using biblical principles as well as FFC behavior and disciplinary guidelines
9. Bringing issues to the awareness of leadership as needed

Staff and Team Meetings

Employees are expected to attend regular staff meetings and participate in planning and executing community-wide events such as project fair, field day, fundraising, etc. Teachers are encouraged to work together in teams to plan and implement projects and initiatives that foster multi-discipline, multi-age learning, cooperation, spiritual and character growth. Teachers are encouraged to participate in choosing curriculum and other resources, sharing ideas and resources and building a cooperative, unified, God-honoring learning community that accomplishes the FFC Mission to *partner with parents to provide a comprehensive and balanced education that leads students to know God and His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, the only Foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.*

Communications

FFC is a unique learning community that depends on close interactions between parents and teachers. Teachers are best equipped to take the lead in building partnerships and fostering good relationships with families.

In particular, teachers are responsible to communicate expectations, assignments and student progress or challenges on a regular basis. Regular and systematic use of the Gradelink tool for communicating assignments and grades is vital in accomplishing this responsibility, but it is not sufficient. Teachers are encouraged to initiate and respond to personal interactions with students, parents and guardians to support student learning and development. This includes being alert for opportunities to encourage and pray for the physical, emotional and spiritual growth of students and their families.

Employees are asked to be aware that they represent FFC both internally and externally and that their behavior both on and off campus reflects on the entire organization as well as our Lord Jesus Christ to Whom they ultimately answer. This involves refraining from the temptation to gossip, share private information, spread rumors or speak unkindly about others. Leaders, staff and families are encouraged to pray for and support one another and do all they can to build and maintain a positive, caring organizational culture.

Payroll

Teachers and Teacher Associates are professional educators and are paid a salary as agreed between the Staff Member and the Executive Director and approved by the Board of Directors on an annual basis. Administrative staff are paid on an hourly wage basis.

Foundations First uses Quickbooks and its partner Workforce to administer pay. Pay periods are every two weeks with pay remitted via electronic transfer into the staff member's bank account by Thursday of the week following the close of the pay period. Compensated hourly staff submit a timesheet to the Office Administrator via email or other means by the Monday immediately after the conclusion of the pay period.

Staff are responsible to set up their withholding and other information by using the link sent to them at the beginning of their employment at FFC. Withholding for required tax purposes are managed directly and tax forms are issued by Workforce.

FFC Leadership recognizes the sacrificial nature of employment at FFC for those who could be compensated at a much higher level in other educational settings. Each year the Board seeks to balance compensation levels alongside the need to exercise fiscal responsibility and keep an FFC education accessible and affordable to families of various financial means. It is with great appreciation for the dedication of compensated members that we re-assess this balance each year.

Professional Development and Evaluation

Foundations First Christian strives to be a community that seeks to reflect the love of Christ through continuous improvement in professional skills and Godly character. As a learning community, Members are encouraged to share resources on spiritual growth, educational philosophy and practices and Biblical worldview.

Meetings and In-service workshops are conducted throughout the academic year. Teachers and Teacher Associates are also encouraged to pursue professional development on their own through workshops, online courses, videos, books and other means.

Teachers and Teacher Associates will receive an initial review after three months and all Compensated Members will undergo an annual review. These reviews will be development-based, addressing both performance and spiritual life, with a focus on how FFC leadership can encourage, pray for and advise Compensated Members. FFC leadership invites and will provide informal feedback on an ongoing basis for Compensated Staff Members as well as A and B Parent Helper Members serving in on-campus roles, with a focus on organizational, as well as professional and personal growth in and for the Learning Community. All Members are encouraged to share

information with and pray regularly for one another in a manner that enhances teamwork and community spirit, while maintaining confidentiality and avoiding gossip.

Absences

In the event a member is expected on campus and becomes ill, please call or text 908-892-0099 as early as possible, or by 9:00 pm the night before or between 6:30 and 7:00 am the day of your service, to provide adequate time to get a substitute. Or email: office@foundationsfirstchristian.org if the absence is known in advance.

Hourly compensated Employees accrue 1 hour of earned sick leave for every 30 hours worked, up to a maximum of 40 hours of leave per benefit year. The benefit year runs from July 1st through June 30th.

When an employee is unable to work their normally scheduled hours in order to care for their own, or a family member's, physical or mental health or injury, they are eligible to request payment for those hours from their accrued sick leave balance. This request should be made to the Executive Director by the end of the week that the absence occurs.

Unpaid Leaves

An unpaid leave of absence generally may be granted for reasons of employee illness, education, or family needs. Foundations First Christian complies with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and the New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA). Notice of this and other employment regulations are posted for community view at any time during regular hours.

Financial Oversight

All Members are expected to use Foundations First assets in ways that honor FFC's Mission, Core Values and strategic goals. Financial oversight is provided by the Financial Team of the Board of Directors, co-chaired by the Treasurer and Executive Director. More information about financial policies and procedures can be found in the By-laws in the Appendix of this document.

Staff and Parent Helpers are reimbursed for approved expenses incurred through purchasing materials and supplies needed for the effective accomplishment of their objectives. Expenses up to a total \$100 a year do not require prior approval. Any expenses over this amount should be approved by the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director before purchase. To be reimbursed, complete a reimbursement form and submit it and relevant purchase receipts to the Office Administrator for approval by the Executive Director.

Facility Use

FFC is blessed to enjoy a positive relationship with its landlord, South Ridge Community Church (SRCC). In order to be good ministry partners and stewards of what the Lord has provided, employees are expected to exercise care and good stewardship in the use and maintenance of the building, grounds, equipment and supplies.

Most of the rooms are shared space actively used by the church, primarily on weekends but also throughout the week. The use of all facilities is governed by an annual Facilities Agreement signed by SRCC and FFC which stipulates the conditions under which rooms, storage and equipment on the lower floor may be used.

Upper floor: Except for arrival and dismissal, and Tuesday Chapel, all space on the upstairs main floor is

off-limits to FFC staff, parent helpers and students unless expressly permitted for special purposes. At all times, students must be directly supervised. Adults are permitted and expected to use the upstairs rest rooms.

Requests to SRCC: Requests for needed repairs, or to reserve spaces such as the Worship Center, Ridgeview Conference Room, Activity Center, or downstairs rooms outside of normal class hours must be made through appropriate channels. Staff and parent helpers should avoid directly contacting SRCC staff but should instead make requests through FFC leadership and administrative staff.

Information Security and Confidentiality

"A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret." Proverbs 11:13)

It is the policy of Foundations First Christian to honor God by safeguarding our students', families', and staff's personal information with a level of privacy and confidentiality that protects them from damage or danger resulting from the misuse or disclosure of their personal information.

In the course of your work in FFC, you may have access to student, family, or staff confidential information (oral, written, electronic) not available to the public at large including, but not limited to: student records, grades, incident report forms, disciplinary records, medical/ psychological records, IEPs, 504s, court orders/restraining orders, private family matters, private parent-teacher meetings and conferences, financial aid information, individual membership A & B terms & conditions of service, individual staff salaries, staff contracts terms & conditions.

Rights to access, request, or know confidential information is restricted by one's need to know the information to perform responsibilities at FFC. Any information shared with employees must be held in strictest confidence and used only for work purposes and for the benefit of the student, family or staff.

Care must be taken to safeguard sensitive verbal, written or electronic information from unauthorized disclosure. Employees are required to read, sign and comply with FFC's Policy on Information Safety, Security and Confidentiality, which can be found in the Appendix.

Misusing or disclosing confidential information to others who do not need to know the information for FFC work responsibilities is a serious breach of duty and will result in disciplinary action up to and including possible termination of FFC membership or employment.

Closing Remarks

And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.' Mark 9:36-37

By God's grace, our FFC learning community has been invited to receive many such children in Jesus' name. The guidelines, rules and regulations described in this Handbook are meant to be reminders and helps in conscientiously undertaking our task to **"partner with parents to provide a comprehensive and balanced education that leads students to know God and His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, the only Foundation of all sound knowledge and learning."** No Handbook can adequately cover or describe the dedication, diligence, patience, understanding and prayer required to faithfully undertake this responsibility. As a community, we depend on each other - and especially on the Lord - to guide, warn, admonish, teach and, ultimately, reward us

for our efforts. May He bless you abundantly!

Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation. Joel 1:3

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5

Appendix: Forms, Policies and Procedures

Annual Permission Form

Abuse, Bullying, Harassment Prevention Policy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Board of Directors Selection Process and Application

By-Laws

Charter for Success

Cell Phone and Smart Watch Policy

Emergency and Safety Protocol

Hardship Assistance Program Family Information Form

Hardship Assistance Application Form

Incident Report Form

Information Security Policy

Job Description - Teacher

Job Description - Teacher Associate

Payment of Dues Policy

Service Application

Sick Policy / Release Form

Statement of Faith and Practice
