

Fortuna Junior Academy

School Handbook

What Parents & Students Should Know

Fortuna Junior Academy realizes that today's children are not always in the traditional home setting, but instead are being raised by grandparents, other family members or legal guardians. The faculty and staff respect this, but in the interest of keeping this document easy to read, the term "parent" or parents" will be used.

FJA recognizes that the moral obligation of training students rests first with the parents. After that the school staff is to broaden the support of this parental influence. Students are expected to act in a way that will show consideration and respect for fellow students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The staff strives to treat each person as an individual and to respect his/her perspectives. Students must take responsibility for personal behavior.

BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

- Students show courtesy, honesty and respect to fellow students, faculty, staff and others at all times.
- Students are to show care and respect for the school and personal property.
- Students are on time to class.
- Students use appropriate language.
- Students discard gum/candy properly before entering the classroom or a school assembly; and always take care of one's own trash.
- Students may not bring caffeinated drinks to school, school events, or on school trips.
- Students may not use cell phones or other electronic devices during school hours without permission.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Proper conduct is expected of all students in the classroom, at assembly programs, social functions and religious services. Please note: Boisterousness, running in the halls or classrooms, or discourteous conduct is always out of order.

All students and guests on campus are expected to be in a planned activity.

Harassment, verbal abuse, physical violence, or threat of violence is unacceptable behavior.

Student shall always respond immediately to any FJA staff request.

Students shall keep hands, feet and all other objects to themselves. Throwing of any object on the campus is forbidden except under supervision during recess, PE class or sports program.

STUDENT APPEARANCE

It is hard to be specific about how students should appear, as clothing is part of one's interpretation of one's self. Students seldom go wrong if they remember to dress age appropriately for Christian youth in a way that is modest and does not attract undue attention.

A good acronym to remember is MICA: Modest, Intact, Clean & Appropriate.

Pants, including jeans, are appropriate, but sweats will be limited to PE times only. "Pajama pants" are not appropriate school attire. Shirts must have sleeves. Shorts/skirts must reach the middle of the knee or below. Hair must be clean, neat and conservative in style, out of the eyes, and of a natural color. No shaved heads. Students not dressed appropriately may have to call home to get suitable clothing.

Girls: All tops must cover the midriff when arms are raised above the head.

Boys: Pants must fit appropriately and not hang below the natural waistline. Unnecessarily large or baggy pants will not be permitted.

Jewelry: No jewelry of any type is to be worn to school or any school function. Only natural colors of nail polish and makeup are acceptable.

Shoes: No bare feet. Socks must be worn if shoes need to be removed. During PE, closed-toed, athletic-type shoes must be worn. They must be a good fit so as not to come off during exercise.

Electronic Devices: Cell phones, iPods, mp3 players, tablets, etc. must be turned in to the teacher at the beginning of each school day. Items not turned in may be confiscated and returned only at a parent/teacher conference.

Water Activities: Swimsuits, when worn, must be modest & appropriate.

Medications: Any medications to be taken at school need to be accompanied by a note from home explaining the directions and duration for taking the medication. It must also have a current prescription label. Teachers can not give aspirin or other pain relievers to students unless they have permission from the parent.

Desks and Lockers: School is a place to study and learn, and teachers assume that students will not bring anything but books and study materials to school. Storage places for necessary materials will be provided. Teachers have the right to check desks and lockers at any time without notice.

Bicycles: If a bike is ridden to school, it needs to be ridden directly to the parking area and left until school is out. After school, the student is to ride directly home instead of around campus.

Field Trips: Approximately 1 field trip per month will be taken by the students and staff.
*See note on Girls and Boys under Student Appearance.

Telephone: School phones are for business only. Phones may be used only by permission of a teacher.

Insurance: The students are covered by a policy of Student Accident Insurance. This insurance provides assistance with medical expenses if a student is hurt at school, on school-sponsored activities, or during school commutes. This insurance is secondary to the family's personal medical coverage which is to cover the first \$500. Please refer to the Student Accident Insurance Brochure for more specific information on this coverage. If an accident occurs be sure to report it to school staff immediately. An insurance form will be needed to take to the doctor.

Grade Sheets: The school year is divided into four quarters, each with approximately nine weeks. At the end of each nine-week period, the student will be given a grade sheet showing the grades that were earned, as well as citizenship, and attendance marks. The student will receive these grades within one week of the end of each grading period and are expected to take them home promptly.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: At the close of the first and third quarter teachers will schedule a time to visit with parents regarding the student's progress.

Closed-Campus Policy: FJA follows the closed-campus policy. This means students may not leave campus during school hours. The caretaker's mobile home is considered off-campus to students during school hours.

Campus Visitors: We cordially welcome visitors to our school. Please come to Room 7 to check-in with the Principal.

Lunches: Students need to eat a good breakfast at home each morning and bring a lunch to school each day. Students may purchase a hot lunch on Wednesdays, or when available.

Transfers: If a student moves or makes a transfer, please let the teacher know so that arrangements can be made to settle the account.

Graduation: The completion of eighth grade is marked by a graduation. A graduation ceremony along with a reception is held in honor of the students.

Transcripts: The Northern California Conference Office of Education serves as registrar for schools. Requests for official transcripts of grades should be made to them at: P.O. Box 23165, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. If a student transfers to another school, that school will request the records from FJA. Every effort will be made to honor that request promptly.

PHYSICAL EXAMS & IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunization: Children must have their immunizations before they can attend school unless they are exempt. Parents must present their child's Immunization Record to school staff prior to admission as proof of immunization or sign the exemption form. All students entering 7th grade will be required to present documentation of Tdap booster and hepatitis B immunization. Children who have not completed all immunizations will be admitted if they are up-to-date, provided they obtain the next vaccines when due.

Physical Exam: Physical exams must be completed within the eighteen-month period prior to school entrance. All seventh graders are required to have a check for scoliosis.

ATTENDANCE

Excused Absences: Students are expected to attend school regularly and on time. There are only four kinds of excused absences:

- If the student is ill
- If there is a death in the family
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments
- Pre-arranged absences
- All other absences are unexcused. Grades may be withheld for school work missed during unexcused absences.

Written Excuses: If a student is absent or tardy, a note needs to be brought from home regarding the incident.

Pre-Arranged Absences: There may be times when the student's family must take a vacation or trip that doesn't coincide with school vacations. Arrangements need to be made in advance and responsibility must be taken to make up missed class work.

Truancy: If a student misses 25% the quarter's school days due to unexcused absences, a truancy warning will be given. If the student misses 30% of the quarter's school days a truancy officer may be called. If the student misses 35% of the quarter's school days the student and parent will be required to meet with the school board.

Regular Days: School starts promptly at 8:15am and dismisses at 3:15pm for grades 1-8. Kindergarten hours are 8:15am-12:15pm.

Fridays: All grades are dismissed every Friday at 12:15pm.

Minimum Days: The school calendar includes some days that are minimum days. A minimum day begins at 8:15am and ends at 12:15pm.

RETENTION OR ACCELERATION

Retention: In general, recognizing that retention is not in the best interest of the student, consideration to retain a student involves counseling with the student and the parents so that a decision regarding placement is reached cooperatively. Every effort will be made between the teacher and the Learning Resource Specialist to adapt work to the student's needs rather than resorting to retention.

- Written parent approval no later than the close of the first semester.
- Recommendation of the teacher.
- Written approval of the Conference.

Acceleration: Although students may not skip grades, it is possible under some circumstances to accelerate. Acceleration means completing two years in one, or three years in two. Criteria for acceleration of a student are based on the following minimal requirements:

- On a standard achievement test battery a student is expected to have a composite score which places him at the 90th percentile or above.
- The student must demonstrate satisfactory evidence of academic, emotional, and social readiness for acceleration to the teacher and to the parents.
- A written request from the teacher and approval from the Office of Education must be on file at the school.

Parents who request acceleration must do so as early as possible in the school year, but no later than the end of the first semester.

A WORD TO PARENTS

Proper communication between home and school is essential. Without it, simple misunderstandings can develop into serious problems. To help prevent this dilemma, the following procedure has been adopted, based on the words of Jesus in Matthew 18.

If there is a question or complaint about a classroom or school situation, speak to the teacher first. If the issue has not been resolved, please contact a member of the School Board.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

A discipline is maintained which strives to be firm, consistent, fair and tempered with love.

The goal of FJA is to create a positive learning environment where study is enhanced. To accomplish this, the primary responsibility rests with the parent and the teacher working together. When a student's behavior does not contribute positively to this goal, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. The teacher will work with the student to solve the problem and will follow up with the parents through a phone call or visit.
2. If the problem continues, the parents will be asked to help and a parent-teacher-student conference will be held to develop an action plan.
3. If the problem continues, the FJA Discipline Committee will take up the matter. This Committee shall consist of the teacher/principal, the Fortuna Seventh-day Adventist Church pastor, and two members of the School Board.
4. The teacher/principal will present a written report of the Discipline Committee's recommendations and findings to the School Board. The School Board is the only entity that can require a student to withdraw from FJA.

Keeping Current: It is the goal of FJA teachers to help all students succeed. This includes adjusting math and reading assignments to the individual student's grade-level placement. It is the responsibility of FJA students to keep current in all assigned schoolwork. Action will be taken if students do not keep current with ability-appropriate work. Visiting School: Parents are welcome at school and are encouraged to visit the classrooms, however, advance arrangements need to be made. If academics need to be discussed, a time should be set that is mutually convenient for both parents and teacher.

Transporting Other Students: Parents are not allowed to pick up any students other than their own without the school having written permission from the other parent. If a parent is not able to pick up their child from school, a phone call must be made to the school, informing the teacher of what has been arranged.

Field Trips & Car Insurance: Transportation is always needed by volunteers who will carpool. FJA requires that drivers have a background check and at least \$100,000/300,000 liability insurance, both on file at the school, before transporting students. The number of students in the vehicle should not exceed the number of working seat belts available. California State Law requires the use of seat belts for all passengers and child safety seats for those under age 8. Children under the age of 8 who are 4'9" or taller may be secured by a safety belt in the back seat without the use of a child safety seat.

Lost & Found: Unclaimed clothing is kept for a short time before being donated to charity. Mark clothing so it can be returned.

Birthdays: To avoid hurt feelings, invitations to birthday parties shall not be passed out at school unless the entire class is invited.

Phone Messages: If a student needs to be reached, calling the school is the best way to do that. Messages are checked often.

After-School Supervision: Supervision will be provided for a maximum of 30 minutes after school. Arrangements need to be made to have students picked up promptly. If something unexpected comes up, the school needs to be notified.

Safe School Program: The safety of FJA students will always be top priority. Safety includes our efforts to have emergency drills each month and to keep our campus free of physical hazards. Safety begins with the full cooperation between students and staff.

Physical safety also includes proper student relationships. Non-violence is a way of life at FJA. Students shall not fear attack or engage in violence on the FJA campus. In case of an accident or injury, parents will be contacted.

STUDENT HARASSMENT

Fortuna Junior Academy is committed to providing a school environment free from sexual harassment for all students. Incidents of harassment should be reported in accordance with these procedures so school authorities may take appropriate action. Students who sexually harass others are subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Employees who engage in sexual harassment are subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Definition: Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances or requests and other conduct of a sexual nature which is offensive. It can be spoken, written, or physical behavior. It includes offensive pictures, graffiti, jokes and gestures.

Sexual harassment also occurs when the offensive behavior or material creates a hostile school environment. If submission to offensive sexual conduct is made a condition of academic status, progress, benefits, honors or activities, it is sexual harassment.

Reporting Procedures: Students who have experienced sexual harassment shall report the incident to school authorities as soon as possible. If the harassment is between students, the student shall report the incident to the classroom teacher or to the principal. If the harassment comes from an adult, the student shall report directly to the principal.

Some practices shall not be permitted at FJA. The Academy does not knowingly receive students who indulge in any of the following practices. Violation of any of these points shall make the student liable for immediate indefinite suspension with a referral to the FJA Discipline Committee.

1. Spreading ideas or displaying attitudes that undermine the philosophy, ideals or objectives of FJA as outlined in the Mission Statement.
2. Using profane language, indulging in lewd conduct or suggestions, or possessing or displaying literature or pictures deemed obscene by the FJA faculty.
3. Failure to participate fully in the academic program of FJA or habitual failure to do class assignments.
4. Excessive unexcused absences or tardiness.
5. Dishonesty including theft of property, willful deception regarding school regulations or cheating on class work or exams.
6. Using narcotics, tobacco, or alcohol in any form or having them in one's possession. This also includes caffeine.
7. Willful destruction of school or personal property.
8. Possession of a weapon on school grounds.
9. Involvement in harassment, verbal abuse, physical violence, or threat of violence.
10. Conspiring to participate in any act that injures, degrades or disgraces Fortuna Junior Academy, an FJA student, an FJA staff member or any other person.
11. Continual disrespect, disobedience, or non-cooperation with faculty members.
Any habitual behavior that continually disrupts the class.

When the student's progress, influence, or conduct is unsatisfactory as a result of these behaviors or attitudes, he or she may be disciplined or asked to withdraw from FJA.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

FJA believes that the use of substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and mind-altering drugs is not in the best interest of its students. Health, social, and religious considerations are factors in FJA's position that their use constitutes unacceptable student behavior.

The school will dismiss or suspend students who are known to be violating this rule. The school will review the circumstances and make what it believes to be the appropriate decision.

All students who are suspended will be placed on probation and must submit to substance abuse evaluation at parents' expense. The student must agree to faithfully carry out the recommendations of the professional evaluator which may include attendance at meetings and counseling sessions. If it is found that the student needs additional counseling or treatment on the advice of the supervising caregiver, she/he must discontinue school enrollment as long as necessary and receive such treatment before being re-admitted to FJA.