

ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

School Handbook



Rooted in Jesus. Ready for Life.

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Adventist Christian Academy

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Section 1 – Philosophy of Adventist Education

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes God as the Ultimate Source of existence and truth. In the beginning, God created humanity in His perfect image, but sin later marred this perfection. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God’s character and purpose can be understood through nature, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. Adventist education is based on distinctive characteristics derived from the Bible and inspired writings of Ellen G. White. These characteristics emphasize the redemptive aim of true education: to restore human beings to the image of their Maker

While God presents His infinitely loving and wise character as the ultimate norm for human conduct, human motives, thinking, and behavior have fallen short of God’s ideal Adventist education, which in its broadest sense is a means of returning human beings to their original relationship with God.

Adventist education aims to cultivate a strong faith in God and instill a deep respect for the inherent value and dignity of all human beings. It strives to develop character traits that reflect the nature of the Creator, fostering individuals who are independent and critical thinkers rather than mere imitators of others’ ideas. Additionally, Adventist education promotes a spirit of altruistic service rather than selfish ambition and encourages each individual to realize their full potential. Finally, it embraces and promotes that which is true, good, and beautiful in all aspects of life.

Education of this kind imparts far more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person-physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Homes, schools, and churches work together in collaboration with divine agencies to prepare learners for responsible citizenship in this world and in the world to come.

GOALS FOR CURRICULUM IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SCHOOLS

Each student should:

- Acceptance of God Surrender one’s whole life to God, develop a relationship with Jesus Christ, and allow the Holy Spirit to work in one’s life.
- Commitment to the Church Desire to know, live and share the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- Interpersonal Relationships Develop a sense of self-worth, along with an understanding of the responsibilities of family membership, and the ability to respond with sensitivity to the needs of others.
- Responsible Citizenship Develop an understanding of cultural and historical heritages, affirm a belief in the dignity and worth of others, and accept responsibilities of family membership and have the ability to respond with sensitivity to the needs of others.
- Healthy Balanced Living Accept personal responsibility for achieving and maintaining optimum physical, mental, and spiritual health.
- Intellectual Development Adopt a systematic, logical, and biblically based approach to decision-making and problem-solving when applied to a developing body of knowledge.

- Communication Skills Recognize the importance of effective communication and develop the requisite skills.
- Personal Management Function responsibly in the everyday world using Christian principles of stewardship and personal management.
- Aesthetic Appreciation Develop an appreciation of the beauty in God’s creation and human expression, while also nurturing individual ability in the fine arts.

Section 2 – Academic Program

HISTORY AND ACCREDITATION

Since the 1930’s, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has operated a school in Panama City, which is now known as the Adventist Christian Academy (ACA). The school is part of a network of over 5,500 schools that make up the world’s largest Protestant church-related educational network. ACA is committed to meeting the highest standards of education and is accredited by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities, as well as the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA). Through its adherence to these requirements, provisions, and standards, ACA provides its students with a top-quality educational experience.

ACADEMICS

Adventist Christian Academy offers an academic program that is reviewed by the Office of Education, North American Division of the General conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects including math, English, reading, science, social studies, spelling, phonics, writing, and bible students, and includes a comprehensive kindergarten program. To enhance the learning experience, the program features textbooks, workbooks, manipulatives, and technology components. Our science program is designed to be hand-on, with experiments that promote active learning, and we provide computer technology and internet services to reinforce learning. Our PE program focuses on a variety of sports and games, and promotes teamwork, sportsmanship, and physical fitness. The learning process is tailored to each student, offering flexibility, individualization, peer tutoring, independence and a spiritual dimension through community service and outreach programs. To enrich the academic program, we offer field trips, art and science fairs, quest speakers, and school programs.

GRADE REPORTS

The school year is divided into four nine-week periods. At the end of each period, a grade card indicating the progress of the student will be sent home with the student, mailed to the parent or given at the parent-teacher conference. Final grades are recorded on the student’s permanent record. Final report cards and transcripts are mailed pending financial clearance.

GRADING SYSTEM

ACA uses a grading system to accurately measure student achievement in relation to the course objectives and standards. Report cards also include feedback on learning skills, behavior, attitude, participation, and effort, thus, providing a comprehensive assessment of each student's progress.

Kindergarten grades are developmental in focus. Students receive Independent, Progressing, and Needs More Time to indicate the child's mastery of course objectives and skills.

I **Independently** achieves objectives and performs skills

P **Progressing** toward achieving objectives and skills

NT **Needs** more **time** to develop

In 1st and 2nd grades, a letter grade of Excellent, Satisfactory, or Needs to Improve is used to indicate the child's performance. The same letter notations are also applicable in other grade levels for certain non-core classes.

E The student consistently demonstrates advanced proficiency of grade-level expectations

S The student is meeting grade level expectations

N The student's growth rate is not meeting grade level expectations

Following is a list and definition of the letter grades used in grades 3 through 8.

A
A- Excels in understanding content and applying concepts

B+
B Masters most content and skills

B-
C+
C Demonstrates basic understanding of the concepts and skills

C-
D+
D Understanding of concepts and skills is limited and incomplete

D-
F Shows an unacceptable level of understanding and/or effort

P Pass

F Fail

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Students with two or more D's or students with one or more F's will be considered to be on academic probation for at least four and one-half weeks.

INCOMPLETE AND FAILURE

When a student is unable to complete the requirements of a course due to legitimate reasons, such as illness or other approved emergencies, a grade of “incomplete” may be given. In that case, once the incomplete has been satisfactorily completed, full credit will be given for the coursework.

The “incomplete” should be removed within two weeks after the end of the grading period. Failure to do this will result in the recording of an “F” for that period.

An “F” grade may be received for excessive absences. (See Absence Policy)

Section 3 – School Policies

Adventist Christian Academy provides a biblically-based Christian education for families in our area. Admission is based on available space and all other requirements outlined in this handbook.

Non-Discrimination Policy, Students 1602

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and all its church schools admit students of any race to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students, and makes no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, country of origin or gender in administration of education policies, application for admission, scholarship or loan programs, and extracurricular programs.

ADMISSION

Children entering the following grade(s) are required to be the listed age on or before September 1 of the current school year:

- Kindergarten, five (5) years old
- First grade, six (6) years old

Prior to a child being admitted, parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit:

1. An application for each child
2. Verification of child’s birth date (copy of birth certificate)
3. Certificate from a licensed physician or the Public Health Department of a physical examination dated within one year for first-time students. The physical exam of a first-time student entering the 6th grade must include the results of a Scoliosis screening (required by state law)
4. Certificate of Immunization Form (DH 680) from a licensed physician or the County Health Department documenting that *all current* immunization requirements have been met. (If DH Form 680 is not provided, DH Form 681 must be provided.)
5. Previous school records: parents will be requested to sign a consent form for obtaining school records from their child’s previous school (new students only)
6. Completion of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy Consent Form
7. Completion of Medical Consent to Treat Statement

8. Completion of Code of Conduct Statement
9. Completion of a Financial Agreement Form accepted/approved by the School Board (if applicable).
10. Achievement/placement tests may be given as a key for the admittance and placement of each new student. The pupil must give evidence in these tests of ability to handle the work of the grade to which he or she is seeking admittance.

Adventist Christian Academy is not equipped to serve children requiring *special education*. Therefore, parents must submit full disclosure of all diagnostic/medical/psycho-educational reports to the principal before registration to determine if the student’s education needs can be met. If accepted, the parent must regularly submit progress reports to the Head Teacher from outside-of-school services provided for the student to help in his or her education.

It is ACA school policy that all students must be potty trained and able to take themselves to the bathroom. At no time is a teacher to help with any bathroom-related issues. If an accident happens, the parent/guardian will be called and asked to bring clean clothes and assist the student.

The registration and admission process must be completed before the student will be admitted to class.

All student applications will be reviewed and approved individually for admission by the School Board.

Only those who are in fully follow the standards of Adventist Christian education and pledge to abide willingly by all its regulations and uphold the principles upon which the school is operated will be accepted. All students will maintain reverence during religious exercises and will observe school regulations.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition and Expenses

Tuition:

GRADES	ANNUAL TUITION	10 MONTH PAYMENT
VPK	\$5,000	\$500
K - 3	\$7,600	\$760.00
4 - 8	\$7,000	\$700.00

Monthly Tuition is paid August 2026 – May 2027

FEES / Additional Expenses (non-refundable)

DESCRIPTION	GRADES	AMOUNT
Registration Fee	K – 8 th	\$300.00
Technology Fee	K – 8 th	\$300.00
School Shirt	K – 8 th	\$ 20.00
Transportation Fee	K – 8 th	\$ 45.00

Financial Programs/Scholarships:

- The Florida Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship is available to children of families who qualify. *For information or to determine eligibility, please visit the Step Up for Students website at www.stepupforstudents.org.* Other scholarships are identified on this website.
- To inquire about other financial assistance that might be available, please call 850-769-3405 or **850-252-2788** school cell phone.

INSURANCE

In the event of an accident, parents will be notified immediately. The school will provide information and insurance forms on the secondary accident insurance carried on all students. These forms must be completed and returned to the Gulf States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, along with the doctor's statement and associated costs. This insurance helps ensure that students are covered in case of an accident or injury that occurs during school hours or during a school-sponsored activity.

COMPUTER/INTERNET USAGE

Adventist Christian Academy offers students access to the Internet. The parent/guardian and student must sign the Computer Network and Internet Acceptable Use Policy Consent Form before the student will be allowed access to the network. Access is a privilege—not a right. Teachers may review any and all student files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that students are using the system responsibly. All users assume responsibility—personal, legal, financial, and otherwise—for their actions while using the computer network and while accessing Internet content over the school network.

Students will adhere to Christian principles and will:

1. Be responsible and courteous in all communication
2. Be responsible with all computer hardware and software
3. Keep their passwords to themselves
4. Respect the confidentiality of folders, work, and files of others
5. Learn about and observe copyright laws
6. Comply with the Internet Acceptable Use Policy
7. Not attempt to access or alter unauthorized areas of any computer system.

Any activity not complying with these rules may result in losing access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

DIGITAL MEDIA POLICY

Sites like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and others cannot be accessed on school computers. These sites are prohibited on school grounds, as well.

CELL PHONE POLICY

Students may bring their cell phones and smart watches to school, but all electronic devices will be collected in the morning and returned at the end of the day. Students may use their phones during school hours only if they need to contact a parent or guardian in an emergency.

SCHOOL VISITORS

For the protection of our students, any person, other than an employee or student, entering the premises must obtain permission from the principal or his/her designee before proceeding. We suggest calling the school or your child's teacher before visiting.

DISPENSING MEDICATION

Prescribed Medicine

During the regular school day, any student who is required to take medicine prescribed by a physician may be assisted if the teacher receives the medication in its original container along with the appropriate form completed by the physician and signed by the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians are asked to contact the teacher prior to sending prescribed medication to the school.

Non-prescribed Medicine

When a non-prescribed (over-the-counter) medicine is brought to school, it must be given to the teacher with a note from the parent/guardian with specific directions for dispensing.

ALL MEDICATION (prescribed and over-the-counter) BROUGHT TO SCHOOL MUST BE GIVEN TO THE TEACHER IMMEDIATELY UPON ARRIVAL.

STUDENT DIET

The diet of a student has a significance influence on learning. Parents need to provide a balanced breakfast and nutritional lunch. ACA does not have a hot lunch program, and students are not allowed to cook meals. Students can warm up their lunches in the microwave.

We respectfully request that snacks and/or lunches conform to Adventist dietary principles (no pork or other biblically labeled "unclean" meats). Caffeinated beverages also are not to be brought to school.

DRESS CODE

STANDARD of DRESS/UNIFORMS

The aim of the Standard of Dress is to promote modesty, neatness, safety, and a distinctively positive school image. It is intended to encourage concentration on learning, address health and safety considerations, minimize clothing costs, create school unity, promote equality, and lessen social pressures.

APPEARANCE

Students will present a modest, clean, and neat appearance at all times. All clothing is to be appropriately sized, worn correctly, and appropriate for the weather and/or occasion. Pants/shorts/skirts should be worn at the waist, shirts are to be buttoned and tucked in, and closed-toe shoes are to be tied/fastened and worn at all

times. Clothing should be clean and in good repair (not excessively faded/worn, no rips/holes, no noticeable stains).

The standard school uniform for ACA

Shirts:

Students must wear solid-colored shirts, in the styles listed below, which may be, in any shade of blue or white. Shirts are required to be buttoned and tucked in for all students in grades 3 – 8.

- Polo shirts (long or short-sleeved) with collars
- Buttoned Oxford shirts
- Turtleneck pullovers

Bottoms:

- Uniform-style pants, skirts, skorts, jumpers, or shorts in khaki or navy are acceptable.
- Blue jean pants, skirts, skorts, or modest-length shorts may also be worn. (Skinny jeans, leggings, or jeans that are frayed, torn, or overly ornamented are NOT allowed.)

Belt:

A belt is to be worn when pants/shorts have belt loops.

Shoes:

Appropriate footwear should be worn at all times; tennis shoes with socks are preferred. Shoelaces must remain tied. Shoes must have closed toes. Sandals and flip-flops are not allowed.

Modesty Requirements:

All wardrobe selections must adhere to basic rules of modesty, including:

- Avoid tight-fitting or low-waist clothing
- Skirts, skorts, or shorts must approach the knee to be acceptable
- Clothes should not reveal the midriff or expose undergarments
- Tank tops or sleeveless tops are not appropriate for boys or girls
- Shorts must be worn under skirts and jumpers

Prohibited Items:

- Hats, caps, or sunglasses are not to be worn in the classroom
- Visible jewelry (including rings, earrings, bracelets, and necklaces) is not permitted
- Avoid unnatural hair or nail colors and extreme styles

Consequences for Violation of Uniform Code:

Any staff member may cite a student for being in violation of the uniform code. The consequences are as follows:

- First offense – student will be cited with notice to parent/guardian
- Second offense – parent/guardian will be required to bring the student proper school attire
- Third offense – parent/guardian will be required to remove the student from the school which will result in an *unexcused* absence

Repeated offenses are grounds for student suspension or expulsion.

Section 4 – Attendance & Tardy Policies

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are:

Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Friday 8:00 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Children should not be on the school grounds more than 15 minutes before school starts and must be picked up within 15 minutes after school ends. The Gulf States Conference Office of Education and the local School Board expect teachers to use time after school to prepare for the next school day. Teachers cannot provide after-school care during their preparation time. If aftercare is needed, parents can inquire about it to their child's teacher.

ABSENCES

The attendance record is a legal document. Teachers are required to request an explanation for any absence. All pupils enrolled in this school are expected to attend school punctually and regularly. For each case of absence or tardiness, a pupil will be required to bring a written excuse from his/her parent/guardian on his/her return to school. If a written explanation is not received within one week, the absence will be considered unexcused.

Valid excuses for non-attendance may include only:

- Verified illness of the student
- Medical, dental, or optometric services
- Quarantine
- Bereavement

It is not advisable for parents/guardians to take their student out of school for vacation or for other reasons that can be avoided. It is recommended that medical appointments be scheduled after school or during school holidays. Absences are generally harmful to student progress and may be reflected in his/her grades. If your child will be absent, please contact his/her teacher prior to 8 a.m.

A pupil who is absent as many as seven days out of the nine-week period may forfeit his/her grades for the period unless it is evident to the teacher that the student's work has been satisfactorily made up.

Excessive absences and tardiness—whether excused or unexcused—jeopardize a student's ability to meet *policy requirements* for attendance and academic success for promotion to the next grade.

An excused absence gives the student an opportunity to make up any missed work, quizzes, or test. It also provides an extension to turn in homework or other assignments. With unexcused absences students are not permitted to make up any missed quizzes, tests or assignments. In hardship cases, parents may bring a note requesting that their child be allowed to make up schoolwork due to unexcused absence. Schoolwork may be made up for excused absences with no grade penalty. Students will be given one day (from the day of return) for each day of absence to make up work. In order to receive an excused absence, students should bring a note from home explaining the absence. In the case of illness lasting three or more days or a doctor's appointment, a doctor's note is required. All notes should be turned in to the teacher no later than 48 hours after the student returns to school.

PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES

To receive an excused absence for an essential family trip, the parent must request permission to be absent in writing and submit it to administration a minimum of five school days prior to the absence. Planned absences should be kept to a minimum. If the parent does not give advance notice, the absence may be counted as unexcused. Missed work will be outlined on the return of the student. Time to make up missed work will be provided to the student to the equivalent number of days as the absences. It is the responsibility of the parent and the student to master missed content and deliver back work.

TARDY POLICY

Worship begins promptly at 8 a.m. Worship sets the spiritual tone for the day. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure their child is punctual. Students who are persistent in being tardy will be referred to the Head Teacher.

All excuses for absences or tardiness should be in written form from the parent/guardian. A student arriving after 10 a.m. will be considered absent for the morning session. Arrival after 1:30 p.m. constitutes an absence for the afternoon session. A student taking early dismissal from the class program before 1:30 p.m. will be recorded as absent for the afternoon session.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Students are encouraged to have good attendance with minimal tardiness and absences. Students with no absences, tardiness, or early dismissal days (excused or unexcused) will be recognized.

STUDENT PICKUP

For the protection of your child, please let the Head Teacher know who is authorized to pick up your child from school. If any unusual situation arises and someone different is authorized to pick up a student, the principal must have prior notice either by note or phone. If a student has written permission to leave school unescorted, the school will not be responsible for that student after their leaving the school premises. Please adhere to our student drop-off and pick-up policy given at registration.

EARLY STUDENT PICK-UP

If a student must leave school early, a written note stating the reason is to be brought from the parent/guardian and given to the teacher before school begins. This is a courtesy that allows the teacher to plan their day. The school attendance register is marked appropriately according to the time when the student leaves. Please note early pick up could affect the child's attendance record.

ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS

Every effort is made by the school to prevent accidents. However, should an accident occur or should a student become ill, the school will notify the parent/guardian and render first aid whenever possible. Should a serious accident or illness occur, the 911 emergency system will be used and an attempt will be made to reach the parent/guardian.

CLOSED CAMPUS

Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises except by permission of a parent or legal guardian.

HAZARDOUS WEATHER CONDITIONS

When Bay County Public Schools are closed because of weather conditions, Adventist Christian Academy also will be closed unless parents are notified otherwise.

Section 5 – School Rules and Discipline Policies

STUDENT CONDUCT

School is a place for learning. Students are expected to behave in a way that allows themselves and others to learn. The goals of this discipline policy are as follows:

1. Create a positive learning/teaching environment;
2. Encourage responsible behavior;
3. Lead each student to become a self-governing individual;
4. Maintain respect for staff, peers, and self;
5. Instill a desire for Christian behavior;
6. Reflect the principles of ACA;
7. Ensure the safety of staff and students; and
8. Abide by the student conduct of code and school policies at all school-related activities.

GENERAL SCHOOL RULES

In order to preserve a unified school spirit, students will be expected to uphold and abide by the religious principles and moral ideals exemplified in the life of Christ. School standards will apply at school as well as during activities outside the school program area.

Students should be representatives wherever they are. Religious beliefs of members of other faiths are considered and respected.

Violation of the following rules may result in disciplinary action:

1. Use of alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs in any of their forms is injurious to one's health and will not be tolerated. Teachers will adhere to the policy in administering needed medications.
2. Explicit discussion--whether it is implied, verbal or written--will not be allowed.
3. Inappropriate displays of immoral or violent material will not be allowed.
4. Immoral literature, profane language, and behavior will not be allowed.
5. Gambling will not be permitted.
6. Cheating and theft destroy the rights of students and will not be tolerated.
7. Distracting items such as radios, TVs, toys, tape recorders, records, CDs, magazines, etc., should not be brought to school unless arrangements have been made with the teacher. Cell phones are to be turned in to the teacher at the beginning of each day.
8. The use, handling, or possession of firearms, firecrackers, or any other types of explosives will not be allowed at school functions. Potentially dangerous items such as matches and knives should not be brought to school except when authorized for special projects by the teacher.
9. Tampering with the fire-fighting equipment or the school alarm system is prohibited. Engaging in any type of willful destruction or vandalism of school property is not permitted. Any damage or breakage will be charged to the parents/guardians of the offender.
10. Fighting or physical aggression toward another student or a teacher will not be tolerated.
11. Not following digital media and internet policies.

VIOLENT BEHAVIOR, POSSESSION OF WEAPONS, and BULLYING

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE

It is the policy of the Board of Education that violence in any form will not be tolerated in our school.

Violence is defined: Any act of physical aggression toward any person that may be of concern for that individual's safety, health, or welfare. This includes the school building and school grounds. For purposes of this policy, "Violent Act" shall mean any intentional act by a student involving force or the threatened use of force, or any deliberate act by a student that supports or assists the use or the threatened use of force: 1. Against any other person or group of persons with the intent to injure, intimidate, harass, physically intimidate, or otherwise harm when the act occurs on school premises, during school hours, or at school events. 2. to prevent, inhibit, or otherwise interfere with the conduct or operation of any educational or school-sponsored program, activity, or event. If an incident involving a violent act occurs, the Building Principal may use discretion to assign penalties, such as detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, parent notification and/or parent conference. If a violent act occurs in which there is serious injury inflicted or force used, or if a student refuses to take redirection from the teacher/principal, the student will be suspended for five days and referred to the School Board for a disciplinary hearing.

DANGEROUS WEAPONS POLICY

The possession of a weapon in school buildings is prohibited. Dangerous weapons include the following: any firearm (including water guns, imitations, and look-alikes), BB guns, pellet guns, pistols, revolvers, shotguns, rifles, disguised guns, dart guns, dagger, knives, swords, metal knuckles, razors, sling shots, box cutters, stun guns, laser pointing devices, pepper sprays or other noxious sprays, or any other material or dangerous weapon that can cause physical injury or death. If a child brings any of these to school, parents will be notified immediately, and an appropriate punishment will be given. This includes expulsion.

BULLYING POLICY

Bullying in any form on or while using school property, in a school vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event is strictly prohibited. **Bullying means:** Any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act or threat that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, know or should know will have the effect of:

- Harming a student, parent, or staff member, whether physically or mentally;
- Damaging a student's, parents, or staff member's property;
- Placing a student, parent, or staff member in reasonable fear or harm; or
- Placing a student, parent, or staff member in reasonable fear of damage to the students, parent's or staff member's property.

Bullying also includes cyberbullying. "Cyberbullying" means bullying by use of any electronic communication device through means including, but not limited to, email, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, cell phones, online games, and websites.

Adventist Christian Academy Statement on Human Sexuality and Identity

Adventist Christian Academy is a grade K-8 educational institution owned and operated by the Gulf States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which is a part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. As such, we adhere to the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its interpretation and understanding of the Scriptures. Therefore, we strive to conduct educational ministry within the world, maintaining our commitment to God as our Creator and Savior, fulfilling the gospel commission of sharing Jesus Christ and His love with the world. With this as our foundation, we offer the following:

1. As a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution, we neither condone nor promote any behavior outside of the Adventist biblical beliefs. Adventist Christian Academy's policy on human sexuality and identity is based on the *North American Division Statement on Human Sexuality*. This statement is based on the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of scripture.
2. Our teachings on human sexuality and identity throughout the curriculum are aligned with Seventh-day Adventist biblical beliefs.

As a part of our commitment to Seventh-day Adventist education, we have adopted the following guidelines to assist our students, parents, staff, and all other stakeholders:

1. Physical contact between students that would normally be viewed as overly affectionate in nature is not allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, displays of affection, handholding, tickling, wrestling, and massaging.
2. School staff retain the right to counsel or discipline individuals who exhibit inappropriate conduct or irresponsible behavior in their social interactions.
3. We adhere strictly to Adventist biblically based principles in all aspects, including sexual behavior. As a result, while enrolled at Adventist Christian Academy, students are expected to refrain from promoting or advocating for any lifestyle that contradicts our Seventh-day Adventist biblical beliefs. We do not condone any sexual practice or behavior contrary to our biblical belief system, and we require our students to demonstrate a similar commitment to these principles.
4. In the context of school application and enrollment, students must disclose their birth gender. This information is utilized to determine several pertinent aspects, including but not limited to, restroom usage, sports team selections, uniform and clothing choices, pronouns and other gender-related matters as outlined in the student handbook. It is important to note, therefore, that students must provide accurate information to ensure appropriate school accommodation.

Adventist Christian Academy is called to love all people. In this sin-filled world, our goal is to create an environment where everyone loves and respects each other.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you have a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Colossians 3:12-14 (Approved by GSC Board of Education: September 24, 2024; Edited March 4, 2025.)

DISCIPLINE

The purpose of discipline is to train the child for self-government, which includes obedience, self-reliance, and self-control. Our school is founded on the proposition that we “help the child to see that parents and teachers are representatives of God, and that, as they act in harmony with Him, their laws in the home and the school are also His. As the child is to render obedience to parents and teachers, so they, in turn, are to render obedience to God.” (*Education*, p. 287)

It is the intent of the school to encourage confidence and to strengthen the sense of honor in our students, but if they choose not to comply with our discipline policies, action must be taken. “It should be made plain that the government of God knows no compromise with evil. Neither in the home nor in the school should disobedience be tolerated” (*Education*, p. 290). Therefore, we believe no student may violate the rights of others to a Christian education. Student behavior unacceptable to school standards will be subject to disciplinary action that may include one or more of the following:

ASSERTIVE AND PREVENTIVE DISCIPLINE:

- Establishing Classroom Rules
- Enforcing Classroom Rules Consistently and Fairly
- Establishing Consequences for Not Following Rules

Discipline Notice to Student and Parent Conferencing:

- When the teacher determines that the offense is not a willful and flagrant violation

When proper conduct of the student is not achieved after counseling with parents and student, disciplinary action thought appropriate by the school administration may be administered. This may include in-school detention, after-school detention, suspension, or expulsion.

Suspension and Expulsion

1. Suspensions are in order for repeated offenses when other procedures have not been effective.
2. The Head Teacher, teacher or School Board chairman may suspend a pupil for a period not to exceed three days. Any additional time must be an action of the School Board.
3. All suspensions shall be referred to the School Board for immediate action to determine the definite length of the suspension.
4. The parents and the pupil may be asked to appear before the School Board to discuss the problem and the student's future conduct in the school.
5. The School Board has the authorization to expel. This authorization is used only when other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct. Teachers are not authorized to expel.
6. Students may be dismissed from school by their choice of undesirable attitude, conduct and/or language. ***An unwholesome attitude is more dangerous than an evil act.***

Students who demonstrate by their behavior their lack of interest in Christian philosophy of love for each other cannot remain at school. All students are expected to maintain a good positive attitude that includes a sincere respect for rules, reverence, total participation, and goodwill towards others. We strive to instill our Master teacher's rule: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke 6:31)

Our philosophy and belief are that our students are younger members of the Lord's family and heirs to the city of God. Our goal for each student is "to honor Christ, to become like Him, to work for Him," in doing so, that "is life's highest ambition and its greatest joy." (*Education*, p. 297)

SECTION 6 – SCHOOL REGULATIONS

PLAYGROUND

A staff member or designated adult will supervise students while on the playground area. Students on the playground are to follow faculty instructions. No rough play that may lead to injury is permitted. Hardballs are not permitted due to insurance policies.

SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are to promptly report any damage done to school property to prevent possible further damage, injury, or liability. School property includes but is not limited to desks, books, laptops, school buildings, restrooms, and the school owns. Any student who defaces, damages, or destroys school property shall be at risk of suspension or expulsion, according to the nature of the offense. Parents shall be responsible for replacement costs. The school is not responsible for personal property in the school building or anywhere else on the premises.

SCHOOL-SPONSORED OUTINGS/TRIPS

Students participating in school-sponsored activities or outings represent the school and the Adventist Church. They should conduct themselves by following school and church standards and policies. Dress and conduct should be exemplary. The School Board must approve all school outings.

FIELD TRIPS

Written permission, signed by the student's parent/guardian, is required for all off-campus activities. Telephone permission will not be accepted except in extreme cases.

While on school field trips, all drivers and passengers must to adhere to Florida's seat belt laws and have the appropriate insurance.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

OUTDOOR SCHOOL

Every Spring (see school calendar), students in grades 6 and 7 (grade is subject to change) are invited to attend Outdoor School at Camp Alamisco. It is a four-day event. Outdoor School is an outstanding opportunity for students to experience many special facets of learning. Camp Alamisco is the Gulf States Conference camp and is located on beautiful Lake Martin in Dadeville, Alabama.

TESTING

Each year, grades 2-8 are required to take the MAP (Measures for Academic Progress) test to measure growth in skills and knowledge. This test is given three times a year, and the results are used to help teachers better serve each child's individual needs. Special parent reports will be made available to a student's parents/guardians.

Test dates (see school calendar) will be announced before testing. Parents/guardians should make sure their child is well-rested and has eaten an adequate breakfast so that they may perform at their best.

SCHOOL TELEPHONE

The office telephone is primarily for emergency and school business use. We ask, therefore, for your cooperation. The learning process will operate most effectively if teachers and students are not disturbed during school hours. If you must contact your child's teacher, do it through a text or a note at the beginning or end of each school day. For example, arrangements for visiting a classmate after school should be made from home, not from the school phone.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Personal cell phones and electronic devices are permitted at school for student's use before and after regular school hours. (See Digital Media Policy). Please be aware that if the cell phone or device is misused, the teacher has the authority to take the cell phone/device and keep it in the school office until the end of the school day, at which time the device will be returned to the parent.

Note: Adventist Christian Academy is not financially responsible for electronic or wireless devices that are lost, "borrowed," or damaged on campus.

SECTION 7 – SCHOOL BOARD

School Board meetings are held monthly and are open to parents and the church constituency. Called meetings may be held as needed following due notification and stated agenda. Called meetings may or may not be open to all. Executive meetings may be held to discuss sensitive issues; limited attendance is necessary at that time.

The common goal of Christian teachers and parents/guardians can be more readily achieved when a friendly, open relationship exists between the home and the school. When a problem arises between parents and teachers, the following reconciliation procedures, based on Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 6, should be used for resolve the problem:

- **Step One** - The parent/guardian should first talk, privately and confidentially, with the teacher and attempt to resolve the problem.
- **Step Two** - If the problem is unresolved, the parent/guardian should ask the school administration to become involved.
- **Step Three** - If the problem still is not resolved, the parent/guardian may request that the school board chairperson work with the administration to bring about a resolution.
- **Step Four** - If the problem still is not resolved, the parent may request a hearing by the school board.
- **Step Five** - If the problem still is not resolved, the parent may request the Gulf States Conference Superintendent of Education to assist in bringing about a resolution.

Most problems have two sides. When a parent/guardian unwisely exhibits a lack of confidence in the teacher, the teacher's influence over the pupil is irreparably affected.

The School Board does not have the authority to hire or fire a teacher. This is the responsibility of the Gulf States Conference K-12 Board of Education. The School Board does act, however, in an advisory capacity to the Gulf States Conference K-12 Board of Education.

EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

The Adventist Christian Academy requires all instructional personnel, educational support employees, volunteers, administrators, and contracted personnel submit their fingerprints to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for state and national background screening in accordance with Section 1002.421(2)(i) Florida Statutes. All volunteers and staff must also complete Child Protection and Pathogen training every three years through the Sterling Volunteers website before working with our students.

The School Board would like to dedicate the following letter to our teachers:

“Dear Teacher, as you consider your need of strength and guidance—need that no human source can supply—I bid you consider the promises of Him who is the wonderful Counselor.

‘Behold,’ He says, ‘I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.’ Revelation 3:8

‘Call unto Me, and I will answer thee.’ Jeremiah 33:3

‘I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye.’ Psalms 32:8

‘Even unto the end of the world, I am with you.’ Matthew 28:20

As the highest preparation for your work, I point you to the words, the life, the methods, of the Prince of teachers. I bid you consider Him. Here is your true ideal. Behold it, dwell upon it, until the Spirit of the divine Teacher shall take possession of your heart and life.

‘Reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord,’ you will be “transformed into the same image.’ 2 Corinthians 3:18

This is the secret of power over your pupils. Reflect Him.” *Education*, p. 282

SECTION 8 – HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

All parents/guardians are members of the Home and School Association. The goal of the Home and School Association is to:

- promote Christian education
- provide parent education
- unite the home, the school, and the church in their endeavors to provide a Christian education for the children
- raise funds for the school
- be a liaison between the home and the school
- assist as needed with school programs

The Home and School Association will conduct meetings throughout the school year. Parents and guardians, children, and all church members are encouraged to attend these very important meetings regarding the development of Christian-centered lifestyles. Parents and guardians will be given prior notification as to the time and place of a meeting. Students will be expected to have a special part in many programs. The importance of your support and attendance at Home and School meetings cannot be over-emphasized.

SECTION 9 – PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Involvement is welcomed and encouraged as parents/guardians play a vital role in the educational process of Adventist Christian Academy. Parents/guardians visiting the campus or school events are asked to set an example for students in their conduct, speech, and dress, and to refrain from smoking.

Often our students are asked to perform for our church congregation. Involvement in these events helps promote our school and builds student self-esteem.

Research has shown that parental involvement in their children’s education can result in a variety of positive outcomes including greater interest in school, better attendance, enhanced teacher-child relationships, and increased self-esteem.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences are held at the conclusion of the first and third quarters to review and distribute report cards and other pertinent data. Parents/guardians are required to attend. Parent-Teacher Conferences may be scheduled by appointment as parents/guardians or teachers deem necessary. Please feel free to call and make an appointment with a teacher if you have any questions concerning your student’s progress at other times throughout the year.

SCHOOL VISITATION AND COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

All visitors and parents/guardians are required to notify the principal and/or their child's teacher when on campus. If a parent wishes to visit or conference with a teacher, an appointment must be made. The teachers are required to give full attention to their students immediately before, during, and after school hours for supervision and instruction. Deliveries of messages and lunches will be handled in a manner that will provide as little disruption as possible.

TELEPHONE

Adventist Christian Academy tries to minimize disruptions to the students' learning process. If a parent/guardian needs to get a message to their child, the office will pass that message along. If a student needs to get in touch with a parent/guardian, the student must obtain permission from the classroom teacher.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND EVENTS

Every family is given a school calendar in their registration folders. The school calendar highlights no school days, testing days, holidays, and other important dates. You can also find the calendar on acapc.org.

Letters home and school newsletters are ways our school communicates with our parents. Please read all school communications received to be kept up-to-date.