**Welcome to Foothills Christian Academy!**

We are excited about all God has in store for this coming school year! Foothills Christian Academy has a mandate to partner with parents in training their children to be Christian leaders of tomorrow. Our dedicated teaching and administrative staff, together with supportive school volunteers, the support and involvement of area churches, along with many private and corporate donors, make it possible to offer a unique educational experience that seeks to honor Jesus Christ in every area of learning and school life.

**Mission Statement**

**The ultimate mission of Foothills Christian Academy is to glorify God through equipping young people to become leaders, ambassadors, and soldiers for Jesus Christ in our world today.**

**Knowledge of the Bible as God’s Word and Jesus Christ as personal Savior** is held as foundational to this mission of training each student. Our curriculum intentionally incorporates Scriptural truth into every academic area. We believe it is also essential to bring this Christ-centered, biblical worldview into daily worship, the study of the arts, into athletics, as well as throughout social life and development.

Our mission makes Foothills Christian Academy a distinct alternative to secular school systems of learning. It calls us to higher standards that address not only mental, emotional, social, and physical development, but also spiritual growth. Our core motivation is to assist students to excel in every area of learning, to be accountable for their efforts, and to be unapologetic in their faith.

**Statement of Faith**

WE BELIEVE the Bible is the inspired, God-breathed Word of God. It is the divine and final authority in faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

WE BELIEVE in the one triune God, eternally existing in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Godhead is co-equal in being, power, and glory, having the same attributes in perfection. (Matthew 28:18-20; Genesis 1:1, 26-27; Deuteronomy 6:4)

WE BELIEVE IN:

* The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1-2; Luke 1:34-35; Romans 1:2-5)
* His virgin birth (Matthew 1:18-25; Isaiah 7:14)
* His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15, 7:26)
* His miracles (John 2:11)
* His substitutionary and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 2:9)
* His bodily resurrection (1 Peter 1:3-5; Hebrews 4:14-15)
* His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:10; Romans 8:34)
* His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:121, Revelation 19:11-16, Phil. 2:5-11)

WE BELIEVE that salvation of lost and sinful man is received through faith alone in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and not as a result of good works (John 3:16-18; 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:8-9 Ephesians 2:8-10).

WE BELIEVE in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit who indwells each believer at salvation and seals them unto the day of redemption. Regeneration *(being made new)* by the Holy Spirit enables the Christian to live a godly life and do good works. (Titus 3:4-7 Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

WE BELIEVE in the bodily resurrection of all people: of believers to everlasting life with the Lord, of unbelievers to the judgment of an everlasting, conscious damnation and eternal separation from God (Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 21:1-8).

WE BELIEVE in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 4:1-5; Colossians 2:2-3, 3:12-14 (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

**Objectives and Goals for Students**

SPIRITUAL

* To nurture the development of Christian character
* To acquire a life-long passion for learning and study of God’s Word

EMOTIONAL

* To accept the caring efforts of family, friends, pastor(s), staff, and community
* To acknowledge the need for correction and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

INTELLECTUAL

* To examine our thoughts, motives, strengths, and weaknesses, in order to serve God as He has planned. (Psalms 18:20, 26:2-3)
* To allow the Holy Spirit to renew, educate, and direct our minds in letting go of worldly values and behavior. (Romans 12:2, 8:5-8)

PHYSICAL

* To recognize that our bodies belong to God, having been bought with the price of Jesus’ death; therefore, to honor God by taking proper care of our bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 12:1; Philippians 1:20)

SOCIAL

* To treasure friendships within the Christian community
* To recognize that attendance at Foothills Christian Academy is a privilege, not a right

**Objectives and Goals for Faculty and Staff**

* To teach God’s Word and demonstrate a personal faith toward God
* To glorify God as we instruct and encourage young people
* To inspire students to strive for excellence in learning, and to achieve their highest potential
* To provide a rigorous academic environment that fosters a sense that learning is engaging, fun, exciting and valuable for life
* To demonstrate a strong commitment to Christian education by partnering together in prayer, working for the benefit of students, their families, and the community
* To enjoy the friendships developed in the school
* To allow freedom of expressing concerns and problem-solving ideas; to participate in the process of confirming things that are working, and cooperate with positive change

**Objectives and Goals for Parents / Guardians of Students**

* To allow their children to become who God planned for them to be
* To volunteer time and talents in needed areas of the school
* To support the FCA Christian education mission to our students, families, and community through prayer, volunteerism, and finances
* To enjoy the friendships developed in the school
* To allow freedom of expressing concerns and problem-solving ideas; to participate in the process of confirming things that are working, and cooperate with positive change

**Rules of Conduct**

Rules are always going to be part of life. An important part of education is learning how to abide by them with a positive attitude. “Respect” is the key principle behind each rule.

With this in mind, the following rules have been established at Foothills Christian Academy:

1. Students will show respect in word and actions for those in authority. This includes all school faculty, staff, and adult school leaders, and applies on-campus, off-campus, and through electronic media.
2. Students will not bully, harass, or “pick on” other students.
3. Students will refrain from foul language or words that are degrading to another person. (Psalms 39:1, 19:4; Ephesians 4:29)
4. Students will not verbally abuse or threaten harm to others or themselves on or off-campus, or through written or electronic media.
5. No form of sexual harassment is acceptable among FCA students and staff. This includes, but is not limited to sexually-oriented conversation, jokes, sexual advances, or inappropriate sexual behavior.
6. Students will not possess or use tobacco, alcohol, or harmful or illegal drugs/substances of any kind, either on or off campus, while enrolled at Foothills Christian Academy.
7. While we acknowledge the intrinsic value of weapons and knives for hunting and other legitimate purposes, the possession of either items by students on campus or during school activities (including transportation to / from school) is potentially dangerous and will not be permitted.
8. Students will show respect for the school building, equipment, and materials.
9. Students will help maintain an orderly learning environment by being quiet in class and not talking unless called upon or when appropriate.
10. Use of personal media/communication devices such as cell phones, iPods, media players, etc. are not allowed in the classroom. To avoid abuse of this policy, during the school day these personal items must be checked into designated areas as determined by the staff. In special circumstances, limited permission may be given for student use of a cell phone outside of classrooms, under staff supervision.
11. Personal toys or other items that distract students from an orderly learning environment shall not be used in the classroom. If this policy is repeatedly violated, the offending personal item may be confiscated and/or banned from school.
12. Students will not chew gum unless staff permission is given.

**FCA Student Pledge**

**AS A STUDENT OF FOOTHILLS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, I WILL …**

* Actively seek to live by the authority of the Bible as God’s Word
* Abide by the rules set forth by this Handbook and FCA staff and administration
* Uphold FCA’s standards against cheating, swearing, indecent language, gambling, use of alcohol or nicotine by students, abuse narcotics, drugs, or other substances (or speak favorably of others’ violation of these standards), gossiping, and fighting
* Act in an orderly, respectful manner and maintain Christian standards of courtesy, kindness, morality, and honesty
* Strive to be of unquestionable character in grooming, dress, conduct, and other areas of life
* Not conform to current fads or fashions unbecoming a Christian
* Recognize that much of today’s entertainment is corrupt and worldly, and will prayerfully avoid entertainment in television, movies, music, and dance venues that are improper, immoral and therefore not uplifting to my Christian life
* Seek to maintain the purity of my body as a temple of the Holy Spirit that is reserved to glorify God and for Christian service

**Question for Grades 7-12 Students:**

Have you kept your Student Pledge during this past year? YES / NO (Circle One)

*I have read the current edition of the Foothills Christian Academy Student Handbook. I am familiar with its contents and agree to adhere to all its policies, procedures, and ideals both on-campus and off-campus. I realize that my violation of this pledge is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action and for possible dismissal from the school.*

**Student’s Signature and Date:**

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**Note: Please use the back of this sheet to describe your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.**

Key Scripture: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

**The School Year**

**Length of School Year**

We will follow State of Minnesota guidelines for student contact days. FCA reserves the right to adjust our school calendar to provide for our program requirements or to allow for snow days. Overall, we will endeavor to follow the calendar of the Pine River School district, and will communicate with families regarding occasional calendar exceptions.

**School Hours – Monday through Friday**

**Start: 8:30 a.m. / End: 2:40 p.m.**

**School Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

* Students should not arrive before 8:00 a.m. and must leave campus by 3:00 p.m. unless involved in an approved after-school activity or special event, in which case students must be under approved adult supervision
* Appointments with FCA staff should be made during these hours
* School Visitors must report directly to the school office upon arrival
* Requests to visit students during school hours must be approved at least 24 hours in advance to avoid interruption in class instruction

**School Closing – Late Start – Early Release Policies**

**Closing:** If Pine River-Backus district is closed, FCA will be closed. The FCA administration also reserves the right to declare our school closed.

**Late start:** If Pine River Backus district has a late start, FCA will also start at the late time. Please stay tuned to local weather news on adverse weather days for announcements or visit the PRB website for school closing or delay information.

**Early Release:** We are subject to PRB bussing decisions regarding early dismissals/bussing due to adverse weather. On inclement weather days, stay tuned to local weather news updates for early dismissal information.

**In the event of a school closing or early dismissal due to weather, all later school activities / events for that day are cancelled.**

**Progress Reports and Parent–Teacher Conferences**

* All students will receive a quarterly progress report (report card) every nine weeks - mailed to the family
* Parent-teacher conferences will be conducted twice each year.
* Parent-teacher conferences are an important time for communicating regarding student achievement and problems

**Student Driver Policy**

* Students with a driver's license may request permission to drive to school.
* Upon arrival onto school property, students must maintain a maximum 5 mph speed limit and cautiously park vehicles in designated parking space
* Student must promptly vacate vehicle, which shall not be re-entered until after school bus departure at the end of the school day
* Special permission from parents and school administration is required for any student to leave / drive off campus during school day
* Student drivers should be reminded that driving to school is a privilege, not a right
* Violation of this policy, including any form of reckless driving on school property, is grounds for loss of FCA driving privileges

**Fire / Tornado Drills**

* Fire and tornado drills will be conducted during the school year
* Students are expected to perform these drills in a quiet and orderly fashion
* Students who purposely or accidentally set off the fire alarm or falsely report a fire will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and fines assessed to the parents to cover expenses charged to FCA for a false alarm

**Attendance**

* Students benefit the most by being in attendance every day
* Habitual absences negatively affect student performance and may disqualify families from receiving scholarship funding
* Students are encouraged to strive for perfect attendance
* Sometimes an absence is unavoidable due to student illness or the rare family emergency – see policy below

  **Sickness**

* Please keep sick children at home when ill, to help with their recovery and to avoid spreading contagious sickness at school
* Children who have had stomach flu or a fever should remain at home for 24 hours past the last bout of vomiting or break of the fever
* Parents of children who come to school before this 24-hour period may be contacted to pick up their child

**Excuse Request Note**

* After sickness or other unavoidable absence, please send a note (or email / text equivalent) with your child requesting an excuse for absence, stating the reason for absence and signed by parent / guardian
* Absences not followed by excuse request note will be considered an unexcused absence

 **Unexcused Absence**

* Doctor and dental or other student appointments should be scheduled after school hours
* Unavoidable appointments such as these will be excused ONLY if an excuse request note is sent with your child
* Excessive time taken beyond the appointment / travel time for appointments will not be excused and will be recorded as an absence
* Students with several unexcused absences per quarter may be subject to disciplinary action

**Tardiness**

* Students who arrive after 8:30 a.m. will be considered tardy
* Students who arrive after lunch will be considered absent for the day

**Academics**

Foothills Christian Academy is dedicated to Christ-centered education. This means that the Bible is the foundation for all instruction. Each of our teachers has personally accepted Christ as Savior and is attending church regularly. Teachers will make Scripture a part of their daily instruction. Christian textbooks and materials are used, unless we determine a secular text does a better job without undermining Christian principles.

We recognize each student learns differently. Teachers will collaborate with parents and students to create an educational plan that is challenging, yet allows students to be successful.

**Post-Secondary Education Options (PSEO) for FCA Students Grades 11-12**

**General Information**

FCA will be working closely with the PSEO program at Crown College in St. Bonifacius, MN. Two options are available:

1) PSEO Distance Learning courses offered by Crown College;

2) PSEO On-campus, teacher directed college courses may be offered live on the FCA campus in the future. Check with FCA for the latest information regarding available live PSEO course(s) available at FCA.

*Note: We plan to make Option #2 available to qualifying Pine River-Backus area homeschool students. Check with FCA regarding available course(s) and requirements for future availability.*

Both option 1 and 2 offer juniors and seniors with a 3.0 GPA or better the opportunity to earn college credits in high school with the convenience and support of remaining on the FCA campus. These program options are not for every student. The courses are college level and will require a lot of work. Students participating must be motivated and independent learners.

**Grading and Credit Information**

FCA will accept the college PSEO credits as high school credits with the ratio of 3 or 4 college semester credits equaling 1 high school credit in our program. Students will be allowed to take up to 8 college credits per semester.

PSEO classes may be substituted (on a case by case basis) for FCA classes only if these classes are taken from an accredited Christian college. Electives can be taken as either a graded class or a pass/fail class. The student must determine which grading option he/she will take by the mid-semester quarter. If a student wants to be valedictorian or graduate with honors, he/she must allow the PSEO letter grades to be put on their FCA transcript and figured into their GPA.

Cost: The college courses are FREE! \*The state pays the cost directly to Crown College.

Other Important Points:

1. Start the PSEO enrollment process by contacting the FCA Administrator.

2. Once a student has enrolled in PSEO, an FCA staff person will be assigned to set up a study plan with students and consult with them periodically to keep them on track if they are doing distance learning.

3. FCA will consider credits from other Christian colleges on a case-by-case basis. PSEO courses taken at public institutions may be considered by a student, but the credits will only be accepted as electives by FCA.

4. PSEO students must fulfill all FCA graduation requirements.

If you have any further questions, contact the FCA Administrator.

**Christian Community Service Work**

Christian Community Service Work Hours are required for all students graduating from FCA. These hours may consist of active ministry in the student’s local church or in another Christian ministry, such as: teaching Sunday School, serving on a worship team, singing in a choir, serving on a worship team or in a choir, helping with AWANA or other youth group, or doing practical jobs on church work days, for people in need, etc.

The required hours are as follows: Freshmen – 10 hours; Sophomores – 15 hours;

 Juniors – 15 hours; Seniors – 20 hours, to total 60

 hours.

These hours will not accrue from year to year. All Christian service credits are subject to approval by FCA administrator.

Students are responsible to request Service Hours Forms from FCA staff to document a description of their service and to have the adult in charge of those hours sign off on the number and description of hours served. These forms should be returned to the school office to be documented for graduation and placed in the student’s permanent records.

Christian Service Hours will account for a portion of each year’s high school Bible course grade on an “all-or-none” basis. Students will not normally be allowed to miss school to earn Christian Community Service credit hours. Students may turn in signed service hours sheets from summer work or complete and turn in service hours at any time throughout the school year, up to the first Friday in May. These need to be signed by the supervising adult in charge of monitoring the student’s service work.

**Extra Credit**

The purpose of extra credit is to provide a challenge for students who want to learn more. It should not be used solely to help students who have not turned in work, or to raise grades on poor quality work.

**Transcripts**

Transcripts are updated annually for each high school student and retained in the student’s permanent record file. Parents may request an official copy of their student’s high school transcript if their school tuition is current. Since transcripts are the property of Foothills Christian Academy, the school bill must be current for the family, not just one student in the family, before transcript requests will be fulfilled.

Transcript requests should be made in writing. Include the complete name of the student, name of the party requesting the transcript, the reason for the request (college, other institution, or personally copy), the complete address of the receiver if it is to be mailed, and the date needed. Please allow at least 10 school days to process and send transcripts.

**Honor Roll**

Students in Grades 7-12 must meet the following requirements to be eligible for the quarterly honor roll:

High Honors – All A or A- grades.

Honors – All A’s and high B’s (86% average or higher)

**Dress Code**

Foothills Christian Academy is committed to help parents instill Christian values into their young people. Godly values must be founded on Bible principles applied from our heart’s desire to honor the Lord in every of our life, including how we present ourselves in dress and grooming.

All FCA students are expected to dress in clean and modest apparel that present a Christ-like image. We desire to avoid legalism and endless rules, while avoiding the world’s fads that tend to violate biblical principle.

**Cleanliness,** including mended, well-fitting clothes (not overly tight or loose), reflects our God who is clean and orderly. Cleanliness also extends to messages and images on clothing that display unbiblical messages or images; for example, “death metal” or “occult” themes are not appropriate for a Christian school environment.

**Modesty** avoids distractions to the eyes that may arouse what the Bible calls the “lust of the eyes.” Instead, we are to be motivated by love for God and respected both for ourselves and for others as His creations. Modest clothing avoids low necklines, high hemlines, overly-tight, see-through or revealing styles, or clothing that allows underwear garments to be seen. Along with neat, natural-looking grooming, these standards are beneficial even for young children as we remember our goal is to *“train children up in the way they should go…”*

***Parents are expected to actively monitor their children’s wardrobe choices to avoid wearing questionable clothing to school.***

* If parents have school dress questions, please check the issue first with our staff before your child wears the questionable item. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you on this area of training. In the school, our teaching staff, under the authority of the administration, reserves final say in decisions about school dress.
* Keep in mind that our school thrift store is an excellent, inexpensive source of children’s clothing.
* If everyone honors these basic principles, it won’t become necessary to expand our list of “do’s-and-don’ts.” Thanks!

**Discipline**

Discipline will be handled as each unique situation demands. Our goal is to promote the development of a healthy, positive self-esteem. Teachers will demonstrate a firm but kind, positive reinforcement approach, striving to reinforce positive attitudes and behavior.

Unacceptable behavior will be handled in as low-key manner as possible, within a teacher-student discussion, or by redirection to another activity. More firm action may be needed if the student is more resistant to correction, or if the well-being of the students are in jeopardy, including removal from the classroom. The goal will be to correct the misbehavior, in which case the student may be returned to the classroom by the staff. If more firm action does not result in corrected behavior, the parent/guardian will be contacted and involved in the correction process.

A typical process of corrective action may look like this:

1. Verbal correction.
2. Redirection to other activities, in or out of the classroom.
3. Parent / teacher call or conference.
4. Detention with parental notification.
5. Suspension from FCA (time determined by administration).
6. Meeting with parents, teacher, administrator, and/or school board.
7. Dismissal from FCA.

These steps may be skipped at the discretion of staff as needed.

**Other Comments on Discipline**

* **Corporal Punishment.** FCA does not use corporal punishment as part of its disciplinary plan. However, physical restraint may be used to protect students or faculty from harm.
* **Parent Concerns.** Parents / guardians are expected to work cooperatively with the school in bringing needed correction, for the ultimate good of their child and the school.

 Any question or concern regarding corrective actions being taken by the school should be discussed directly with the school principal / administrator.

* **Upper school students** (grades 7-12) under correction for major offenses may be assigned up to 10 hours of in-school service work, depending on the severity of offense.
* **Damages**. If school property has been damaged, the family may be billed for damages.
* **Correction at Year’s End**. When a student is under discipline for a major infraction near the end of the school year, all assigned corrective items (such as special assignments, work hours, repayment of damages) must be completed in full before report cards, transcripts, or other school records will be released.