



*a mission of
College Avenue Church of Christ*

Parent-Student Handbook

2018-2019

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PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

Mission and Purpose

Wiregrass Christian Academy, a mission of College Avenue church of Christ, exists to provide a quality education in a Christian environment.

Wiregrass Christian Academy (WCA) is a happy place where children are encouraged to explore their world and learn through play and educational activities taught by a dedicated teaching staff.

The primary purpose of Wiregrass Christian Academy is to provide a quality educational program and to teach the principles of Christian conduct as they are contained in the Bible. If we fail to accomplish either of these goals, we cease at that point to have any real justification for existing. Your cooperation with us in these endeavors is sincerely requested and vitally needed. Without your cooperation, it is highly unlikely that your child can receive the training that is possible with your help.

At Wiregrass Christian Academy we realize the impact of a child's learning experience on his/her life, and we take a positive approach toward learning in the childhood years. Chapel is conducted regularly by the preaching staff of the church. Our Bible curriculum, along with Bible stories and values, is used for an in-depth study of the Bible. Our goal is to teach the children that God loves them, that Jesus is their lifelong friend, and that God created our world. We also strive to help them acquire the skills they will need to succeed academically. Children are taught to play and work with others; to feel secure, wanted, and happy; to be helpful and kind. The A Beka curriculum is utilized as the basic text for reading, phonics, and math skills; it is supplemented by other published materials as needed.

The teacher will:

- encourage the child's independence through routines and activities.
- help the child develop a desire to share with others and take turns.
- help the child feel secure at school with friends and teachers.
- help the child have respect for teachers and classmates.

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. The preschool children will have alternate periods of vigorous activity and opportunity for quiet play. They have daily Bible classes, as well as age-appropriate academic lessons. As the child grows in the program, he/she will learn to follow oral directions, to use and care for materials properly, and to recognize his/her name in print. There are periods of indoor work/playtime when the children are permitted to proceed as they choose from one activity to another, alone or in small groups. The classrooms have learning centers designed for this purpose. There will be periods of supervised outdoor play provided each day, weather permitting, and large motor activities provided indoors on days of inclement weather. Elementary students have daily Bible classes as well as the usual academic subjects and outdoor time.

Tuition and Extended Care Statements

You will receive a statement on the **last school Friday of each month** as a reminder that tuition and extended care payments are due. Extended care charges will be on the statement following the month the extended care is used. Regular daycare charges are \$4.20/hour. However, we also offer full-time preschool rates for those who need three or more hours of extended care per day. This rate includes tuition. Records are kept to be sure that charges are accurate. There will be no reduction in charges due to trips or illness. **Tuition is due by the 10th of each month.** If it is not paid by the 15th, **a \$25 late fee will be added.** There will be a \$25 returned check fee. Extended care charges are in effect from 6:45-7:45 a.m. and begin 15 minutes after dismissal time from your child's class. Late pickup after 5:30 p.m. will result in a \$1/minute charge for the first 4 minutes. For 5 – 9 minutes late pickup, you will be charged at \$5 per minute. For 10-14 minutes late, the charge will be \$10 per minute. Extended care staff is paid to work until 5:30. They have families and responsibilities, too. Continued misuse of late pick-up from extended care may result in your child being disenrolled from extended care. Please call or come by the office if you have any questions concerning your bill.

In your February statement, you will see a \$25 testing fee (K – 6th only).

If a monthly payment is missed and payment of the account in full has not been made by the 10th of the following month, dismissal from WCA may follow. Late fees will continue to incur monthly until balance is paid. No records will be transferred to another school until the account is paid in full.

Elementary Attendance Policy

Tardiness:

1. School hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.
2. A student is considered tardy if he is not in his seat at 8:05 a.m.
3. A student who is tardy five (5) times will be subject to a ½-hour in-school suspension to be served at the discretion of the administrator.
4. Excessive tardiness may be reflected in the conduct grade.
5. Any student who is tardy must report to the office. K-6th graders will need a tardy slip from the office in order to enter the classroom.

Absence:

The State of Alabama has a compulsory attendance law for children through age 17. Furthermore, the Attorney General has issued an opinion that local school boards may determine the number of absences that constitute a failure of the grade level or subject. WCA has

determined that any student K – 6th missing more than twenty (20) days in one year may fail the grade level.

Regular attendance is essential to the progress of learning. Realizing that absence is sometimes necessary, it will be excused upon verification by the student's parents. **Students returning from an absence must bring a note from a parent and /or a doctor's excuse.** All previously announced quizzes and exams will be taken on the day of the return. The student will be given the number of days missed to make up the work. Work not made up in a timely manner will be given a grade of 0. Work missed for unexcused absences cannot be made up and will receive a grade of 0. No work is to be made up during regular class time.

Students who check out of school before 11:30 a.m. and do not return, or check in for school after 11:30 a.m. will be counted as absent for the day.

Excused Absences:

1. Personal illness
2. Severe illness or death in the family
3. Emergency medical or dental attention. Medical and dental appointments are included; however, you are requested to make appointments for after school hours as much as possible.
4. Absences approved **in advance** by the administrator.

Perfect Attendance

Perfect attendance awards will be presented only to those students who have not been absent or tardy, checked out of school, or assigned to ISS (in school suspension) during the entire school year, whether excused or unexcused.

Release of Children

Your children will be released at the end of the school day only to you or to a person specified on your release form. A person listed on your form will be asked for proper identification if the school staff is unfamiliar with the individual. A note is required if the child is to be picked up by someone who is not listed on the release form. A note is also required if your child is going home with a classmate.

Remember that we are a school, not a daycare facility. The preschool classes are in session until noon and elementary classes until 3:00 p.m. Early pick-ups disrupt classes. Please do not pick up your child early unless it is absolutely necessary. Please use the drive-through to pick up your child at 12:00 or at 3:00. The drive-through is safer, more efficient, and prevents needless noise and congestion in the hallways. If you must pick up your child for an appointment or emergency, please check them out in the office before 2:45.

Checking Out of School

The following procedure must be observed in order to check out elementary students:

1. Parent or guardian must sign out the student in the office.
2. The student will wait in the classroom until the parent arrives at school. The student will then be notified to come to the office. **Parents must wait in the office for the child, rather than go to the classroom.**
3. If a student returns to school, the parent must sign in the student in the office.
4. Excessive use or abuse of the privilege of leaving school early is discouraged. The student should be checked out only for necessary appointments, and this should be on an occasional basis.
5. No students will be permitted to check out later than 2:45.

Chewing Gum

Chewing gum is **not** permitted in the building.

Sickness

If your child becomes sick, you will be called. Please make plans to pick up your child immediately. Children should not be brought to school if they have severe colds, fever, undiagnosed rash or spots, vomiting, diarrhea, or other symptoms of illness. **A child must be free of fever (without medication), vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.** A written note of instructions must accompany any medication which is to be given during school hours. Such medication needs to be turned in to the office, not given to the teacher. WCA does not purchase medication to give to students for headaches or stomach aches, allergies, or coughs. If another child is diagnosed with a communicable disease such as chickenpox or flu, you will be notified to watch for symptoms in your child.

Alabama Law requires that all students present to school officials a Certificate of Immunization (or exemption). The appropriate form may be obtained from your doctor or the Department of Public Health. A copy of the birth certificate is also required.

Students must stay home for certain contagious diseases:

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) -- Student may return to school after 24 hours of prescribed medication.

Strep Throat – Student may return to school after prescription medication has been taken for 24 hours and the student is fever-free for 24 hours.

Head Lice – Students discovered to have lice are required to remain at home during treatment and must be cleared by a physician or lice removal specialist before returning to school.

Fifth Disease – Symptoms include the “slapped cheek” appearance of the face. A lacy rash over the body may be present with or without fever. Student may return to school if no fever is present.

Ringworm – This is a fungal infection of the skin appearing as a round, reddened lesion with a raised border which clears in the center as it enlarges. Student may return to school after treatment has begun.

Hand-Foot-and Mouth -- Children with hand-foot-and-mouth disease may return to school 24 hours after the fever is gone and open sores have healed.

Parking Lot Safety

When arriving or departing, please follow the traffic flow pattern. **Children should be delivered and picked up under the overhang in the center of the building.** Please have children exit your vehicle on the side closest to the sidewalk. Under no circumstance should any child be allowed to wander unsupervised in the parking lot. **If you need to come into the office, please park in designated parking spaces. Do not drive up near the office door at any time of day and leave your car while you go inside. All children entering the building between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. should enter through the middle doors.**

Classroom Visitation

Any parents wishing to visit the classroom to observe classes should make an appointment through the office. Parents and visitors should go by the office to clear their visit and to receive a visitors’ pass. **Drop-in visits or lingering in the classrooms in the morning distract a teacher from his/her classroom duties** and make it harder for children to settle down. Our teachers have found that the best way to resolve separation anxieties of some preschool children (and their parents) is to **drop the children off at the drive-through** instead of bringing them to the classroom.

Discipline

Teachers will use isolation, “time-out,” redirection, and/or positive reinforcement methods of discipline in their classroom. Any student involved in a fight is subject to a one-day or longer suspension. If the undesirable behavior continues over an unprolonged period of time, a conference will be scheduled with the parents.

Students are not allowed to have **cell phones** or other electronic devices at school. “Fidget Spinners” are not permitted at school. Any such items brought to school will be confiscated and may be picked up at the office by a parent.

Disenrollment

Wiregrass Christian Academy has a **no-tolerance policy regarding threats, violence, and harassment**. All students are expected to abide by classroom rules of behavior. Problems can usually be resolved through the cooperative efforts of the parents, the teacher, and the administrator. However, in the event of continuing disruptive behavior, disrespect, belligerence, or other behavior counterproductive to classroom learning, the student in question will be disenrolled and the parents billed for two weeks' of tuition.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Everyone at Wiregrass Christian Academy is committed to making our school a safe and caring place for all our students. We will treat each other with respect, and we will refuse to tolerate bullying in any form at our school.

Wiregrass Christian Academy defines **bullying** as follows:

Bullying is unfair and one-sided. It happens when someone hurts, frightens, threatens, or leaves someone out on purpose. One characteristic of bullying is that it repeatedly targets an individual.

Students found to exhibit bullying behavior may be subject to suspension or expulsion.

Examples of bullying behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Hurting someone physically by hitting, kicking, tripping, pushing, spitting, etc.
- Stealing or damaging another person's things.
- Ganging up on someone or intimidation of any kind
- Name-calling, teasing, laughing at someone in a hurtful way
- Insulting someone's race, ability, clothing, looks, etc.
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Leaving someone out on purpose or trying to get others not to play with someone
- Using verbal or physical threats, or using non-verbal threats such as glaring, staring, making faces, note-writing, etc.
- Using technology (e-mail, texts, etc.) to send hurtful or mean messages.

Staff at Wiregrass Christian Academy will do the following to prevent bullying behavior and help children feel safe at school:

- Teach students that bullying is wrong and unacceptable
- Communicate the anti-bullying policy
- Closely supervise students in all accessible areas of the school and playground
- Watch for signs of bullying behavior and stop it when it happens
- Respond quickly and sensitively to bullying reports
- Take seriously parents' concerns about bullying behavior
- Look into all reported bullying incidents

Provide immediate consequences for students who retaliate against a student who reports bullying

Students at Wiregrass Christian Academy will do the following things to prevent bullying:

Treat each other respectfully

Refuse to bully others

Refuse to let others be bullied

Refuse to watch, laugh, or join in when someone is being bullied

Try to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out

Report bullying behavior to an adult

Act in a Christ-like manner

Recess

Recess should be a fun break from classroom activities. To ensure the safety of all students, it is important for all students to follow these guidelines:

1. Students may not play any game which results in another student being tackled or ending up on the ground.
2. Students should not exclude others from playing a game.
3. Students are expected to remember that dirt, rocks, sticks, mulch, and most objects are not for throwing and can injure a fellow student. Balls may be thrown to, not at, one another.
4. Students should not climb trees or go behind the bushes or fenced areas.
5. If a ball goes out of the fenced area, a teacher must be notified. Students may not go beyond the fenced area to retrieve anything.
6. The swings are limited to one person per seat. No standing on or jumping from moving swings.
7. Observe the following rules when playing on the playground equipment:
 - a. Use only the ladders or steps when getting on or off a structure.
 - b. Don't sit, stand, or climb through any of the rails.
 - c. Don't go up the slides.
 - d. Play only on age-appropriate playground equipment.
 - e. Do not hide in playground tunnels.

Birthdays and Special Holidays

The children enjoy celebrating birthdays with their classmates. You may bring or send simple refreshments on your child's special day. No birthday parties will be held at school. However, you may send invitations to an off-campus birthday party. Please note that if invitations are to be distributed at school, **every child must be invited**. The only exception is if the party is for boys only or girls only. In that case, **all boys or all girls** must receive invitations. **Please be advised that any invitations sent to school which do not follow these guidelines will be returned to the sender.**

We celebrate the following special holidays at school: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Parents may be asked to help furnish refreshments for these parties. **Class parties should be planned for the end of the school day. Parties during this class time should not exceed 30 minutes.** Teachers will be asked to monitor and limit the time away from instruction for parties.

Field Trips

We will have numerous field trips during the school year. We will notify you in advance of each event. We encourage parents of preschool students to chaperone these trips. Children in the 3s class **must** be accompanied by an adult on all field trips. A limited number of parents may accompany elementary students on field trips. **Only students enrolled in the class(es) attending the field trip may attend.** Children/students not attending WCA may not go on any school-sponsored field trip. We must ask that any parent who accompanies our students on a field trip refrain from smoking. Field trips are part of the education program. Any child who does not go on a field trip **may not** come to school that day. Choosing not to go on a field trip will result in an unexcused absence.

Special Programs

There will be two evening programs during the school year. The Fall Festival will be held in October. The end-of-year awards program will be held on **the last Tuesday before Memorial Day.** It is important that your child be at both programs.

Communication with Parents

A school calendar is sent home at the beginning of each month. This calendar explains our activities during the month. Please post the calendar in a prominent place at home. Conferences will be scheduled as needed by teachers or at the request of the parents. Each teacher also sends home weekly folders. **Please check your child's folder each week for communications from the school.** Remember to check our Facebook page regularly for announcements and information.

Please remember to update your child's school records whenever you move, change jobs, or change telephone or cell phone numbers.

Occasional conflict is inevitable. However, if proper protocol is followed, such conflicts can be resolved peaceably. **Should a problem arise, parents should talk with the teacher first, and then, if necessary, with the administrator.**

Dress Code

All children will need a complete change of spare clothes, which should be changed as the seasons change. Please send clothes in a zip-lock bag labeled with the child's name. Label all sweaters, jackets, etc., with the child's name. It would be helpful to the teachers for the preschool children to wear play clothes the child can manage as far as buttons, zippers, Velcro, etc. Tennis shoes are the recommended footwear for school, since sandals and slick soles lend themselves to injuries during vigorous play. Kindergarten through 6th grade students are required to have tennis shoes for P.E.

A dress code is in effect for grades K – 6th. Clothing at school must be considered clean, not disruptive to the educational process, and should promote a positive school culture. Clothing that is considered to be indecent, suggestive, or inappropriate for school activities and godly morals will not be permitted. Administration reserves the right to make the final judgment about the appropriateness of a student's attire and may pre-approve exceptions for spirit days. Guidelines for appropriate dress include:

Pants, skirts, and shorts: students may wear khaki, gray, or navy slacks, shorts, or skirts. Girls should also wear some form of modesty shorts beneath a skirt or jumper. Girls may also wear solid colored dresses or jumpers with a white blouse. **Shorts/skirts shall be no shorter than three (3) inches above the top of the knee-cap when kneeling.**

Shirts and blouses: students may wear any SOLID COLORED shirts (polo-type, button-down, t-shirts, etc.). White "undershirts" are not acceptable. No sleeveless shirts are allowed.

Elementary students are not required to wear uniforms on Fridays; however, modesty rules (lengths/shirt sleeves) still apply.

Students who come to school out of uniform will be asked to change clothes. If necessary, a parent will be asked to bring the proper clothes to school.

Miscellaneous Items Needed

The children will need a book bag or backpack. Preschool students in extended care will need a "bed roll" or a nap mat for rest time. Remember to label all personal items.

Elementary Snacks and Lunches

K-6th grade students may bring a healthy snack (milk, juice, fruit) from home to eat during a designated break in their classrooms. **No soft drinks or candy will be allowed for snacks or for lunch.** All lunch boxes should be labeled. "Heat-ups" should be labeled on the tubs and lids in order to prevent mix-up of lunches. Please be mindful of the amount of time required to heat

your child's lunch. Microwave times should be kept to 90 seconds or less. On Mondays we will offer Chick-Fil-A and on Wednesdays we will have pizza, which you will have the opportunity to order each week. Snacks will be available for purchase with parent's permission. Snacks cost \$.50 each and consist of items such as chips, Little Debbie snacks, animal crackers, goldfish, etc. Popsicles and ice cream are available for purchase on Fridays.

Preschool Notes

Each child should bring a snack from home every day. Lunches must be brought from home if your child stays after 12:00 p.m. Lunches should not require long heating time and should not need to be cooked at school. On Mondays we will offer Chick-Fil-A and on Wednesdays we will have pizza, which you will have the opportunity to order each week. **Please do not send candy or soda for snack or lunch.**

Preschool students entering the 3-year-old program must be potty trained. If a child is enrolled and we see that he/she is not potty trained, we will disenroll that child until he/she is fully potty trained. **Three- and four-year-olds are not to come to school in pull-ups.** If necessary, they may wear pull-ups at naptime.

Share Day

The children may bring items to school to share on a "Share Day" specified by individual teachers. **PLEASE DO NOT LET YOUR CHILDREN BRING TOYS TO SCHOOL** unless the teacher gives permission for a toy sharing day. The school is not responsible for lost or broken toys. Toy guns and knives are not allowed.

Unexpected Severe Weather Conditions Procedures

Although most severe weather conditions may result in the closure of school prior to the onset of the severe weather, there is always the possibility that unexpected severe weather may occur. **Wiregrass Christian Academy uses an all-call system to notify parents in case of school closure or early dismissal.** Be sure that the office has the 1 best number to reach you at any time. If circumstances beyond your control should prohibit you from picking up your child, your child will be cared for by a staff member until you, or someone designated on your emergency list, can pick up your child. The school will try to reach you by phone; but if we are unsuccessful, please know that we will take care of your child until you can safely arrive. Contact the office, if possible, to advise us of your circumstances.

It is very important that your telephone contact information is kept current, or you will not receive these announcements! Your child's safety is always our primary concern. If you feel it is unsafe for your child to be at school, their absence/check-out will be excused. Unless announced otherwise, school will be open.

Fire, Lockdown, and Tornado Drills

We will have both announced and unannounced fire, lockdown, and tornado drills during the school year so that the children will become familiar with the procedure and, should an actual fire, tornado, or other emergency situation occur, so that children will be less likely to panic. Our building is well equipped with smoke detectors and fire extinguishers that are checked periodically to insure proper function. We have deadbolt locks on all classroom doors, and we have “safe rooms” as designated by the Coffee County EMA director.

Photographs and Videos

Photographs will be made of the children during the school year. The photos will be used in a slide show at the spring program to give parents the opportunity to see some of the activities the children have been involved in. Photos may also be used in short cable TV ads, on our Facebook page, or on our website. School pictures will be made twice during the year (October and March) and will be made available to parents for purchase. Purchase of these photographs is optional.

School Withdrawal

A two-week notice is required if withdrawal becomes necessary. Tuition will be charged during this time period.

Policy Awareness Form

Upon reading the handbook, please sign and return to your child's teacher or to the office.

I, parent of _____, have read the Parent-Student Handbook for Wiregrass Christian Academy, and I understand, and will abide by, the policies contained in the handbook.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date