

Wiregrass Christian ACADEMY

*a mission of
College Avenue Church of Christ*



Parent-Student Handbook

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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 ABeka 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 at the end of each school 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. Extended care is available to preschool students. 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 tuition 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 (12:15 or 3:15). **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 \$5 per minute. For 10 or more 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.

A \$40 testing fee will be assessed in February for all elementary students.

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.

We accept most forms of payment. Cash, check, money order, PayPal, venmo and credit cards may be used. If paying by credit card, there is a 3% convenience fee charged because we are charged to process credit cards. **If paying by PayPal, please send payment as friends and family** to email WiregrassCA@entercomp.com. Venmo payments should be sent to Sandra-Turner-104. In order to avoid confusion, please note what the payment covers!

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 ages 6 through 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. Students have three days after their return to school to bring in a note/doctor's excuse. After three days, the absence will be marked unexcused. All *previously announced* quizzes and exams may be administered on the day of the return. The student will be given the number of days missed to make up missed work. Work not made up in a timely manner will be given a grade of 0. Work missed for unexcused absences may not be made up and will receive a grade of 0.**

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. Preapproved absence **requests must be presented to the administrator in writing** (email is sufficient) and approval granted prior to the absence in order to be considered an approved absence.

Perfect Attendance

Perfect attendance awards will be presented only to those students who have not been absent 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 may be asked for proper identification if the school staff is unfamiliar with the individual. A note or call to the office is required if the child is to be picked up by someone who is not listed on the release form. A note/call is also required if your child is going home with a classmate unless that parent is on your release form.

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 parking lot. If you must pick up your child for an appointment or emergency, please check them out in the office before 2:40.

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 2:40.

Elementary Grade Scale

Wiregrass Christian Academy uses the following advanced grading scale:

92-100 A 83-91 B 74-82 C 65-73 D 64 and below F

WCA uses the FACTS Student Information System to track grades and attendance. Parents may also use the FACTS system to pay tuition, fees, lunches, and other costs. More information about the FACTS system will be sent home early in the school year.

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. Parents may provide over-the-counter medication to keep in the office. 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:

COVID19--Student may return to school as recommended by the Alabama Department of Health or CDC. Current guidelines are students may return 5 days after onset of symptoms AND fever free without the aid of medication for 24 hours.

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 without the aid of fever-reducing medicine.

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's 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. **PARKING LOT SPEED LIMIT IS 5 MPH! Parents are strongly encouraged to make use of carline.** 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. Children being walked into school must use the crosswalk and enter through the office entrance.**

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 in carline** instead of bringing them to the classroom. Please clear all classroom visits through the office/teacher.

Discipline

Each student is expected to exhibit cordial and respectful behavior. Students should develop self-respect by showing respect to others and to God. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior should be reported to the teacher and/or staff members. Referrals will be made to the Assistant Principal for behavior that may result in disciplinary action. A progressive discipline plan will be followed. Consequences may range from a conversation regarding behavior to expulsion. Circumstances of the situation, and the severity of those circumstances, may determine the level of discipline and preclude the progressive path. Severe infractions or when the safety of a student/students is involved will result in an immediate referral to administration.

All students have the basic right to receive a quality education. School and classroom rules are designed to enhance quality education, prevent disruption, and protect students. Each student is responsible for his/her behavior and the consequences of good or poor judgment. Teachers will inform students of classroom rules, specific to their instructional situations. There are general school rules and policies that all students need to know and follow. Three of the most important rules to follow are:

- * Do not keep a teacher from teaching
- * Do not keep a student from learning
- * Treat each other with respect.

Care of School Property

School facilities and programs are made possible through gifts of many friends of WCA. Students should keep the buildings and grounds attractive and clean. It is expected that all damage, even accidental, will be acknowledged by the person(s) involved and reimbursement/restitution made to the school when applicable. WCA is your school. Protect it and care for it.

Chewing Gum

Chewing gum is not permitted in the building.

Toys/Electronics at School

Please do not allow students to bring toys to school unless it is approved by the teacher. Electronics (cell phones, iPads, 'smart' watches, etc.) may be brought to school but **must be kept in the student's backpack during school hours**. This includes extended care hours! We understand your need to communicate with your child effectively, but we need you to understand our responsibility to protect our students and ensure quality, uninhibited learning. Items out during school hours will be confiscated by faculty and must be picked up by a parent. WCA is not responsible for theft, loss, or damage to personal property brought to school.

Consequences of Code of Conduct Violations

When a student is found to have violated a rule, the consequences will be determined by the teacher and/or administrators. The particular consequences will be administered progressively, based on: A) the nature of the infraction; B) the attitude of the student; C) the student's disciplinary history; and, D) other relevant information. The following sections A, B, and C are only guidelines for disciplinary actions.

Section A Offenses	Disciplinary action:
Defiance Disrespect Inappropriate language Property misuse Dress Code violation Electronic violation Repeated classroom disruptions	1 st offense: administrator/student conference 2 nd offense: detention/loss of privileges 3 rd offense: becomes a section B offense Note: teacher will attempt to resolve all Section A behaviors before referral to the office for disciplinary action.
Section B Offenses	
Abusive language Harassment Fighting Property damage Lying/cheating Theft of property Habitual/repeated Section A offenses	1 st offense: administrator/teacher/parent/student conference with detention/loss of privileges 2 nd offense: in-school suspension 3 rd offense: out of school suspension; may become a section C offense
Section C Offenses	
Fighting with malicious intent Abusive or obscene language Threatening others Property damage Possession of prohibited items (weapons, drugs) Leaving class or building without permission Theft of property Habitual/repeated Section B offenses	1 st offense: suspension 2 nd offense: long-term suspension 3 rd offense: expulsion Section C offenses may result in referral to law enforcement as well.

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 in that class 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. Teachers will be asked to monitor and limit the time away from instruction for parties.

Field Trips

We hope to 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 **will be given an alternate assignment and alternate supervision must be arranged.**

Special Programs

Special Programs will be held during the year. These include Veteran's Day Program, Fall Festival, End of the Year Programs, and WCA Appreciation events at College Avenue Church of Christ. Announcements will be made via FaceBook, Instagram, Remind, and school newsletter regarding programs.

Communication with Parents

A school newsletter is sent home at the beginning of each month. This newsletter explains our activities during the month. Please post it 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 grades. 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 pants, shorts, or skirts.

Leggings are **NOT** pants! Girls should wear some form of modesty shorts or leggings beneath a skirt or jumper. Girls may also wear solid colored dresses or jumpers with a solid colored blouse. **Shorts/skirts shall be no shorter than three (3) inches above the top of the knee-cap when kneeling. When leggings are worn, the top must be no shorter than 3 inches above the top of the knee.**

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. Any ‘WCA’ spirit shirt may be worn as a uniform shirt.

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. A limited supply of extra clothing is kept on hand and may be used if a student is out of dress code. 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 (no rolling backpacks, please), lunch box, and water bottle. Teachers always appreciate receiving optional items such as Clorox wipes, expo markers, baby wipes, Kleenex, hand sanitizer, etc. **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.**

WCA offers lunch for purchase on Mondays (Chick-fil-a), Wednesdays (pizza), and Fridays (hotdogs). Purchased lunches may be paid for on weekly, monthly, or semester terms and may be included with tuition payments. Occasionally, students forget their lunch. Pre-packaged lunches (pasta, soup, etc.) will be available for purchase in limited quantities. If your child forgets their lunch, a parent will be called and given the choice of purchasing one of our lunches or bringing lunch to the school. Snacks will be available for purchase with parent’s permission. Snacks cost \$.75 each and consist of items such as chips, Little Debbie snacks, animal crackers, goldfish, etc.

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. Preschoolers may purchase Chick-Fil-A, pizza, and/or hotdogs as well. **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: 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.

Preschoolers staying past 12:00 will be provided with a nap mat.

Extended Care Notes

Students staying for extended care in the afternoons should bring an additional snack. **Please do not send candy or soda for snack or lunch.**

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 Remind, DoJo, FaceBook, Instagram, and other calling systems to notify parents.** 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. Necessary closures will be announced as soon as possible to give parents time to plan accordingly.

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 in which the children have been involved. If permission is granted, 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 (fall and spring) 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.

