



**FOR**†**IS**  
A C A D E M Y

Parent & Student Handbook  
2019-2020

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## **GREETINGS**

Dear Fortis Academy (or prospective FA) Parents,

As a classical, Christian, University-Model School®, Fortis Academy believes partnering with parents will provide an excellent Christ-centered education for our youth. While not everything relevant to our school is contained in this handbook, it is an effective summary of information vital to understanding and navigating life at the academy; therefore, it is important to read, understand, and be prepared to abide by the policies and procedures expressed.

Most importantly, is it essential that the reader comprehend the rationale for such a handbook— as a voluntary private educational institution we confidently convey our Christian beliefs, as well as the standards of conduct expected of students, parents, faculty and staff at FA. This allows the reader to prayerfully count the cost of that education (in terms of financial, spiritual, and academic commitment) and to know that we desire everyone at FA to grow in a way that will bring glory to Jesus Christ.

If you have any questions regarding the handbook, please feel free to contact us directly at [info@fortisacademy.net](mailto:info@fortisacademy.net).

In His Service,

*The Administrative Staff*  
Fortis Academy

## **THE VITAL ROLE OF THE PARENT AT FORTIS ACADEMY**

We concur with the Scriptural mandate set forth in Deuteronomy 6:6-9:

*“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

In context, Moses writes of the commands given to Israel—that in following and teaching God’s word His people would prosper. The same can be said of the discipleship of our children; in following and teaching God’s word and ways to our children, we fulfill our biblical obligation and foster continued blessing from generation to generation.

In this process of biblical discipleship, there is no more important role than that of the parent. From spiritual life to social skills, from intellectual awareness to self-identity, the parent is *the* most influential person in a student’s life; this reality is the cornerstone of our educational philosophy. While parents may properly delegate portions of their child’s training to others (as was the case with young Jewish children taught in the Temple), ultimately they are accountable to God for the *whole* of that training.

Consequently, at Fortis Academy we take seriously the delegated responsibility placed upon us by parents—to provide students with a Bible-based, character-focused education that will prepare them not only for college but also promote a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ. Still, we cannot do this without parents taking an active role in the discipleship of their children. Whether it’s working with a younger child at home when not in school, or closely monitoring an older child to ensure his or her success, Fortis Academy works best when parents understand and accept the role given to them by God.

Working together, it is our hope to glorify the Lord, encourage the parent, edify the student, and jointly produce future leaders with servants’ hearts.

## **HISTORY AND CONCEPT OF FORTIS ACADEMY**

In the summer of 2008, a group of parents met to discuss the need for an alternative in education—fueled by a desire to be serious and active in carrying out their unique responsibilities as parents in the total education of their children. The known educational alternatives at the time were traditional public schooling (including charter), traditional private schooling, and home-schooling. Having experienced two of the three, the parents realized that while each had its positive aspects, these traditional options were in some way less-than-ideal for their family’s needs or life situations. Prayerfully, they agreed to work together to start a new school that represented a different alternative—one that incorporated positive aspects from the others while embodying its own special set of distinctions. If they succeeded in addressing their own concerns regarding active parental involvement, it seemed appropriate that they would also begin sharing what they learned with other parents who, like them, were seeking an effective means of educating their children.

The result of their efforts was the formation of Fortis Academy (“FA”) in Williamson County, Texas—a unique private classical school that utilizes a university-type schedule and a teacher-parent integrated instructional approach to produce a high level of academic achievement, all the while enabling strong ties between parents and their children. The academy is an officially recognized University-Model School® in which two proven elements of educational success, the professional classroom instruction of a teacher and the caring at-home mentoring of a parent, are combined into a single, unified, college-simulated program. FA was incorporated on September 12, 2008 and began its first day of classes on August 17, 2009. FA is currently an accredited institution.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Founded on biblical principles, Fortis Academy believes that when priorities are properly balanced, optimum growth can occur.

Our mission as a college preparatory school is to restore the role of parents as their children's primary influence while still attaining superior academic results. To achieve this, we employ a University-Model® approach that engages parents as co-teachers where students profit from the specialized instruction of a classical academic environment tempered by the on-going character development that largely takes place in the home. Our goal is to promote a body of educated, well-rounded individuals, wholesomely prepared for a life of servitude.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Matthew 6:3

## **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

The philosophy of education at FA is rooted in the biblical example set forth by Jesus, who took ordinary people and did extraordinary things in and through them. Therefore, a student who satisfies the requirements for admission to FA, and is subsequently recommended for enrollment in the academy, regardless of his/her educational background will be challenged and equipped to move to an even higher level of spiritual and academic accomplishment in preparation for college, and for life. Added to this is the fundamental focus on preserving and strengthening the God-ordained family relationships in which Christian faith and education is most effectively fostered—thus we provide the “gift of time” to students and families by offering a college-style schedule of classes, which typically demands no more than three classroom hours per week per course.

With this in mind, FA provides a challenging academic environment in the context of biblical values, whose instructors unapologetically teach in a manner consistent with the academy’s statement of faith, emphasizing the necessity of personal character growth. In addition, the academy offers academically challenging, college-preparatory courses that integrate an appropriate level of parental involvement into each student’s out-of-class study. The academy encourages and expects the student to learn the material assigned and provides regular feedback to both the student and parents concerning the student’s progress in each class enrolled. Finally, the academy integrates a biblical worldview into the context of the various subject areas offered; that Christian character-building will receive support and enhancement inside and outside the home.

This model of schooling is therefore designed for those families in which parents take an active role in the oversight and implementation of their children’s education. As the level of parental involvement progresses from being a co-teacher in the grammar school years, to a guide for dependent study in the school of logic, to more of a course monitor in the school of rhetoric, parents are expected to continue exercising loving and active responsibility for their children through graduation. In partnership with these committed parents, the academy is then able to integrate the home and school effectively toward the common goal of Christian character development and solid academic preparation for college.

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

About the Bible - We believe the Bible to be the only inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God. The Bible includes the history of God’s relationship with people, written by human beings working under God’s direction. It is the ultimate truth for all people. It tells us how to conduct our lives as God’s creation and as members of His family. Psalm 19:7-11; 119:105; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

About God -- There is only one God, the Creator of all life and the ruler of the universe. God shows Himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God loves us more than we can imagine and passionately desires a relationship with us. Genesis 1:26-27; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:13-17; John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6

About Jesus – God came to earth in human form as Jesus Christ who is the one and only Son. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, was crucified for the sins of us all, was buried, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven. He is the only one who can restore our broken relationship with God the Father. Acts 10:42-43; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; Galatians 4:4-5; Colossians 1:13-23; Hebrews 1:1-3

About Man – We are all created by God, in His spiritual likeness, to live in an eternal relationship with Him. Through sin, everyone breaks their intended relationship with God. We experience the destructive consequences of that broken relationship in this life and beyond. God offers a wonderful alternative - salvation through our faith in Jesus Christ. Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 119:73; 139:13-16; John 3:16; Ephesians 1:7-8

## STATEMENT OF NON-AFFILIATION

Fortis Academy is a private, Christian-influenced, learning institution and an independently governed 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It is not a ministry of any particular church or denominational body, nor does it promote or endorse any particular denomination. It is our desire to maintain this position for the purpose of unity and fairness to each student, avoiding any dissension that may be caused by denominational distinctives. As an organization founded on biblical beliefs, all board, faculty, and staff profess faith in Jesus Christ.

## ADMISSIONS—OVERVIEW

FA offers both individual courses (on a space-available basis) for students augmenting their home- school education, as well as full-load schedules for students who desire to graduate from FA with a high school diploma. (By reason of the credit requirements for graduation from FA, full-time students are given priority during registration.) Each student who registers for courses at FA will have a transcript on file with the academy, and a copy of this transcript will be made available to the student's parents upon request as long as all financial obligations to the academy have been met. FA is accountable only for the courses selected and attempted at the academy—any course instruction received at other schools or provided through home education is the responsibility of the parent. Transfer of credit to FA for any such instruction may be granted if it is in accordance with FA's policies concerning credit transfer. (Contact Registrar for Transfer Fee Schedule.)

Since parent involvement and student cooperation is essential if FA is successfully to fulfill its mission, the parents and students applying for admission must be supportive of the academy's doctrinal position, and commit to the following guidelines:

### Parental and Student Responsibilities

- Parents must be Christians—i.e., ardent followers of Jesus Christ in submission to Him and God's word, the Bible, and in complete agreement with the academy's *Statement of Doctrinal Beliefs* contained herein
- Parents and their FA students must be in agreement with the academy's purpose and spiritual objectives, and abide by the academy's rules and regulations
- Parents must be committed to the parental responsibility for providing a quality, Christian education for their children in accordance with the Bible
- Parents and their FA students must be active participants in a Christian church that is in keeping with our *Statement of Faith*
- Parents must agree to use a Christian Conciliation Service if ever necessary to settle legal or financial disputes between FA and the student, parent(s), or related business entities
- Parents must provide FA with a completed application form for each child applying for admission, along with transcripts and transfer credit requests from previous schools or home-school

- Parents must be in agreement with, and supportive of, the school's procedures for handling student discipline
- Parents must provide continually updated immunization records or an exemption affidavit for each child
- Parents must be willing to have the child's picture in the academy's yearbook
- **Parents must acknowledge that each of their children at FA has reviewed FA's *Student Code of Conduct and Student Dress Code Policy* and are willing to abide by those policies**
- Parents must accept the primary responsibility for their child's behavior at school and supervision at home
- Parents must be familiar with and consult the policies of the academy as published in the current FA Parent/Student Handbook or its amendments and other official means of communication, and agree to any parent requirements that might be listed in the following *Statement of Parent Responsibility*:

## STATEMENT OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

*"In enrolling one or more of our children in Fortis Academy, a school which affirms the comprehensive responsibility of parents for the education of their children, we acknowledge and accept primary responsibility for our child's behavior at school and supervision at home. We also acknowledge that we are responsible to be familiar with and consult the policies of the academy as published in the current Parent/Student Handbook, its amendments, and other official means of communication, before making decisions affecting our child or our family's relationship with Fortis Academy. We further agree that should difficulties arise from our failure to be familiar with or consult published academy policies when making decisions affecting our relationship or our child's relationship with the academy, we will accept full responsibility for the results of our decisions. In addition, we agree to attend required parent meetings or individualized conferences that are intended to help parents better understand their role at Fortis Academy, and to sign and abide by an enrollment contract each year for each child enrolled at FA."*

## ADMISSIONS PROCESS

- 1. Attend a FA Information Meeting.** *All prospective families are required to attend an information meeting about Fortis Academy before the admissions process begins.* These meetings are held at scheduled times, posted on the FA website or communicated directly through correspondence with new families.
- 2. Download the PDF file from the FA website and carefully review a copy of the FA Parent/Student Handbook.**
- 3. Request from the school office (or if available, download the PDF file from the FA website) and complete the entire Application Form.** Once completed, the application must be returned to the school office along with a non-refundable fee of \$75.00 per application. Please note that the actual date you formally apply for admission may be used in determining course registration priorities in relation to other new students.
- 4. Schedule a Family Interview.** The purpose of this interview is to make certain that each family has a personal opportunity to have their questions regarding FA answered, to make certain FA is the appropriate school for their child(ren). A FA representative will call to arrange the interview, which typically occurs during school hours.
- 5. Schedule placement testing for each student seeking entrance into FA.** All 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students applying for admission to FA must be tested for potential academic success at the academy. Directions for test registration will be given upon following the application submission and family interview.

### ***Acceptance/Non-Acceptance Notification***

Once the interview process has been completed, each family will receive an email from an administrator indicating the school's decision. **PLEASE NOTE: An acceptance letter does not automatically confirm a course schedule at FA.** Due to the nature of our school, the registration process is wholly separate from the admissions process. If

school records or placement testing indicate a significant academic problem, the student may be admitted provisionally, with specific guidelines involving student achievement, tutoring, parental responsibility, etc. If a student is recommended for enrollment, and class space is available, each family must sign a *Contract of Enrollment* for each child enrolled at the academy—*this includes families whose children are currently enrolled at FA.*

### ***Registration/Diploma Plan Materials***

Students accepted to FA will receive registration materials detailing course registration. *If your child is a student, you must contact FA's Registrar to arrange a meeting to discuss various diploma options for graduation.* All School of Rhetoric students entering are required to undergo academic advising for the purpose of establishing a diploma plan. Students not planning to graduate from the academy must still confer with the Registrar in order to clarify their purposes for attending the academy.

### ***New Student Enrollment***

Those students accepted to and registered in courses at FA for the first time will be subject to screening for the first six weeks of the semester in which they enroll. During this time, designed to acclimate students to the academic rigors of FA, teachers, coaches, and administrators will observe and report the student's progress regularly to determine whether the student will be successful at the academy. If, however, it is determined that he/she will not achieve academic success at FA, a meeting with the parents and student(s) will be arranged by the administration to determine the best course of action.

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

### ***Tuition Payment Policies***

Per the FA *Contract of Enrollment*, unless paid in full by July 1 for the fall/spring semesters, **monthly installments for tuition/fees are due and payable thru FACTS, our online tuition management company.** For monthly payment purposes, the total cost of a year at FA is divided over a ten month period. In the event of a mid-year or mid-semester transfer into the academy, tuition/fees are divided out over the remaining number of months in the school year. Tuition/fees are due and payable whether or not the student actually enters school, or if the student withdraws, is expelled, or for any other reason fails to commit to or continue in attendance at FA for the school year. If a tuition account remains delinquent for two or more months, or there is evidence of chronic tardiness in making the monthly payments, FA reserves the right to withdraw the student from the academy, or deny re-enrollment for the following semester or year (whichever is applicable), and to withhold the student's grades, testing results, transcripts or diploma until the Family Tuition Account is paid in full. Seniors whose Family Tuition Account is not paid in full prior to graduation will not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies, nor will they receive their diploma, until the Family Tuition Account is paid in full.

### ***Refund Policies***

All tuition and fees at FA are based on an estimated cost of providing the educational and athletic services of the academy to all enrolled students. By signing and returning an enrollment contract, *we* reserve a place for your child (as class space is available) and *you* pledge to FA that you will pay the costs indicated in order that we may meet the budget of the academy. We employ faculty, administrative staff, and coaches in accordance with the number of students enrolled and must honor those staff contracts whether or not a student withdraws from the academy.

If you find it necessary to withdraw your child after an enrollment contract is signed and returned to the academy, please contact our Registrar as soon as possible. *There are no tuition or fee refunds.* Please note the following:

- All tuition payments for any course which is cancelled by FA will be credited in full to the existing family tuition account.
- Athletic or other extra-curricular activity fees/costs are not refundable under any circumstance, unless noted differently by the Administration.

### ***Schedule Change Fees***

Changes to a student's schedule *at any time* after the course registration forms have been given to the Registrar for processing will result in an administrative fee of \$25.00 per form, regardless of the number of changes requested. A separate form must be used for each student. This fee does not apply to scheduling changes initiated by the academy.

### ***Late Payment Fees***

FACTS tuition payments received after their scheduled due dates are subject to a \$10.00 late payment fee regardless of the total amount of the tuition payment. In addition, there will also be a \$25.00 service fee for ANY check returned by the bank.

### ***Transcript Request Fees***

Transcripts are available upon request for those that have fulfilled their financial obligations to FA in accordance with FA policies—the first three requests are free for students currently enrolled at FA, with a \$5.00 per transcript fee thereafter, and \$10.00 per transcript fee for FA Alumni or withdrawn students.

### ***Graduation Fees***

Students graduating from FA will have a \$100.00 fee assessed on their Family Tuition Account to cover the cost of diplomas, academic awards, facilities rentals, and other items related directly to the graduation ceremony.

### ***Financial Aid for the Class of 2020***

Despite the relatively low cost of education at FA, at times families whose children attend the school find themselves in a financial predicament that requires assistance. While we are neither a local church nor lending institution we remain committed to reviewing all requests for the tuition assistance of the 2020 graduating class. All financial aid is measured and appropriated within the following guidelines:

- Financial aid will be available only to current full-time students at FA or new students registering for full-time status.
- The percentage covered will vary from family to family depending upon need as assessed by FACTS.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

The purpose of FA's *Student Code of Conduct* is to promote a Christ-like attitude in the learning environment and to encourage the development of positive Christian relationships among students. Therefore, it is important that specific guidelines regarding behavior at FA be set. The purpose of these guidelines is to promote and maintain a community conducive to our mission. The student who violates these guidelines will undergo corrective and disciplinary measures designed to eliminate the behavior and ensure the student's continued participation in the academy. The student who demonstrates continued violation of these guidelines places his or her enrollment status in jeopardy. While on-campus concerns are primary, FA reserves the right to address any off-campus conduct deemed to significantly affect on-campus relationships and/or learning environment. Thus, with agreement and support from home, FA students must abide by the following rules of conduct:

- FA operates on an honor system—students are expected to be truthful, honest, and upright in their words and actions as a matter of commitment to Christ. Violations of the honor system (e.g., lying, dishonesty, impure speech or behavior, academic dishonesty, etc.) in matters pertaining to any facet of school life are not tolerated.
- Students must show respect to adults at all times. A title (Mr., Mrs., Coach, etc.) and appropriate tone must be used when addressing an adult.
- Students must treat each other with respect, kindness, purity and compassion. Bullying, intimidation, slander, verbal or physical abuse, or harassment of another student in any form is not tolerated.
- Public displays of affection between genders, such as but not limited to hand-holding, kissing, affectionate hugging, etc. are not permitted at any time, whether on campus or at FA-sponsored events.
- There will be no horseplay, running, or rough play during or between classes. Fighting in any form is not tolerated.
- Use of profanity, worldly slang, or vulgar colloquialisms in spoken or written form, or the use of offensive gestures is not permitted at any time, whether on campus or at FA-sponsored events.
- Speech and expression on bloggings, websites, instant messaging, text messaging, etc. that is considered inconsistent with the Student Code will be addressed by the Administration. Parents are encouraged to be aware of and monitor their child's electronic communication in order not to jeopardize the student's enrollment at the academy.

- Students will remain under adult supervision while on campus. Being absent from class or extra-curricular commitments without the knowledge or permission of parents or FA staff will be treated as a disciplinary event.
- Chewing gum is never allowed in the classroom. Other candy and treats are prohibited except as part of teacher-led special events.
- Personal music devices are not allowed on campus.
- Cell phones are not allowed on campus. Cell phones caught on campus will be confiscated and held by the teacher for a parent to pick up, at which time a \$20 fee will be required.
- Personal video devices are not allowed on campus. Camera usage, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed except as part of a student's participation in photography classes or as permitted by the Administration.
- During class hours, necessary communication can be relayed from a parent or guardian to a student by calling the school phone at **(512)528-5323**.
- The school facility and grounds must be kept clean and orderly, reflecting an attitude of gratefulness and biblical stewardship.
- Driving on campus is a privilege, not a right. All student cars driven on campus will be registered in the office for quick reference. Posted speed signs, direction markers, and parking striping will be observed. The front windshield and front side windows will be kept clear of any writing that may obstruct vision. A student's on-campus driving privilege will be revoked after the first event of driving deemed dangerous by the administration.
- All medication to be taken during school hours shall be delivered to the front office with the student's name on the container and dosage instructions. The taking of this medicine shall be monitored by front office personnel. No medication shall be retained in the student's possession.
- Tobacco products, illicit drugs, alcohol, or weapons (including but not limited to replicas, paintball guns, slingshots, BB or pellet guns, bows and arrows, knives, martial arts paraphernalia, tear gas, explosives, etc.) are not allowed on campus or at any FA -sponsored event.

### ***Consequences for violations of Student Code of Conduct***

Items such as cell phones, IPODs™ or other music devices, handheld game devices (to include calculators used as gaming devices), and personal video devices will be confiscated from the student by the teacher and returned to a parent only, at which time a \$20 fee will be assessed.

Minor infractions including, but not limited to, eating and drinking in class, running in the halls, horseplay, etc, will result in personal correction by a teacher or board member and a record of the event will be retained in the student's TeacherEase file and sent to the parent's e-mail address.

Major violations including, but not limited to, bullying, intimidation, academic dishonesty, slander, abuse, harassment, lying, disrespect, stealing, vandalism, profanity, fighting, public displays of affection, tobacco, alcohol or drug possession or use, and the possession of weapons will result in measures designed to either eliminate the behavior in question or remove the student from the academy. This may include such things as loss of privileges, suspension, and recommendation to the Board for expulsion.

### ***Student Dress Code***

FA's Dress Code is intended to reflect the academy's stated aims to honor God, disciple students in the biblical principles of modesty, decency, and propriety, and de-emphasize the use of clothing as a significant means of establishing self-identity or gaining attention or social status. The faculty and staff retain the authority to determine the appropriateness of a given student's attire or hairstyle, and may remove from the campus or FA-sponsored event, or otherwise discipline, any student deemed to be inappropriately dressed. The Administration also reserves the right to grant a limited variance to these regulations for special purposes, such as FA sports programs and physical education classes, special dress days or other instructional exercises, provided that high standards of modesty are upheld. All elements of the Dress Code are in force (and may be enforced) on the FA campus from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM each day of the school week. During that time, students anywhere on campus must be dressed in either proper class attire or proper FA sports attire. Changing into off-campus attire is allowed on-campus only for the purpose of participation in athletic practices or competitions and immediately prior to leaving campus. All students involved in athletic practice on campus or leaving campus for school-sponsored athletic practices or games will be dressed in

either the specific practice uniform, the general FA practice uniform or the game uniform. While Dress Code enforcement will be limited to school days, provisions and standards relating to modesty and decency should be respected by the students and are enforceable by the faculty and staff anywhere on the campus as well as at all off-campus, school-sponsored events.

***Upper body wear:***

Polo shirts without logos, short or long sleeves, in navy blue, white, or grey must be worn tucked in. Shirts must be buttoned no lower than the button just below the top button. For cooler days, solid navy blue or white v-neck sweaters may be worn. White camisoles are required underneath any white polo that could be considered see-thru.

***Lower body wear:***

Lower body wear may include appropriately fitting, full length khaki or navy colored Docker-style pants, and khaki or navy colored Docker-style shorts. Shorts must at least reach the kneecap and be no shorter than 3 inches above the top of the kneecap when sitting. Girls are also permitted to wear khaki, navy or grey colored Docker-style or pleated skirts, skorts, jumpers, and polo dresses provided that they do not rise above the top of the knee cap when sitting. Grammar school girls are required to wear solid navy or white bike shorts underneath skirts and jumpers. Ankle-length, lace-free navy or white leggings for cold days may also be worn underneath skirts or polo dresses.

Unacceptable lower body wear includes “low risers,” tight-fitting pants, pants that are too loose, jeans, corduroy pants, cargo pants, or painter-style pants.

***Foot wear:***

Shoes for boys include black, brown, or navy blue dress shoes or athletic shoes (NEON COLORS ARE NOT ALLOWED). Shoelaces must be white, black, brown, or gray. Shoes for girls include solid brown, solid black or solid navy blue flats or dress shoes with a heel no higher than two inches. Also athletic shoes may be worn. (NEON COLORS ARE NOT ALLOWED). Shoelaces must be white, black, brown, or grey.

Solid brown, black, navy, or white socks must be worn and visible with all shoes except girls’ dress shoes.

***Outer body wear:***

Solid navy blue, black, grey, or white hoodies, jackets, and windbreakers may be worn in the classroom. All other winter wear may not be worn during class hours unless severe weather or extenuating circumstances warrant the wearing of this apparel.

***General regulations:***

Hair for boys and girls must be clean and neatly groomed and may not include unnatural coloring or bizarre styling. Boys’ hair may not extend beyond the bottom of the collar of the shirt, bangs must be no longer than the top of the eyebrows when combed straight down, and hair on the side of the head cannot extend further than half the length of the ear.

Facial hair is not permitted, with the exception of facial sideburns, which must be neatly groomed and extend no lower than the bottom of the ear.

Colored hair bows, ribbons, beads, or other distracting attachments to the hair are not permitted. Girls may wear solid navy or white hair bands, bows, or ribbons.

Girls may wear nail polish, as long as it is not “loud” in color.

Make-up for Upper-level girls must be simple, modest, and reflect a “natural” look. Make-up is not permitted for Grammar school girls.

Tattoos of any kind, whether permanent or temporary, must not be visible during school or at school functions.

Hats, caps, hoods, scarves, bandanas, or any other head coverings are not permitted in the school buildings unless authorized by the administration for special events.

Clothing and shoes must be neat and clean at the beginning of the day, may not be excessively wrinkled, excessively tight, form-fitting or loose, and should be of a modest design or style.

All clothing will be free of logos, pictures, artwork, mottoes, slogans, etc, except Fortis-approved Student Club apparel.

Patches may be used to repair torn pants, provided they are of the same color of the pant and affixed to the inside of the pant leg. Pants with holes in them are unacceptable.

### **Dress Code for After-School Sports Practice and Sporting Events**

Students are permitted to change out of their school uniform for sports practice after school. The modesty policy that Fortis Academy has outlined for school uniforms will be upheld during these practices. Knee-length shorts or pants and T-shirts with sleeves are acceptable. Unacceptable practice attire includes skin-tight pants, shorts, or shirts, and sleeveless shirts or tank tops. These guidelines will also apply to sporting events where no uniform is provided.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2

### **Dress Code for Groups leaving Campus for School-Sponsored Activities**

All student groups leaving campus for school-sponsored activities will be dressed according to Fortis dress code standards unless otherwise notified.

### ***Dress Code Violations***

**Initial Offense** A record of the offense will be made and included in the student’s file and the student will be required to correct the problem at that time. If the violation cannot be corrected at the time of the infraction, the student may be suspended from school until corrections are made, or remain in Study Hall for the remainder of the day with the possibility of no make-up work in classes missed. Parents will be informed via e-mail of their student’s violation of the Dress Code. **Students whose dress allows either their underwear or midriff to be exposed will be suspended from school for the day.**

**Subsequent Offenses** Further violations of the Dress Code will result in disciplinary action. Three violations in one semester, or two violations in the same day for the same offence, will usually result in a one-day suspension without the ability to make up missed work. Parents will be contacted in the event of such disciplinary actions.

**Chronic Offenses** A student that, in the eyes of the Administration, exhibits a flagrant disregard for FA Dress Code regulations will be recommended for expulsion. The parents of that student will be contacted, and the matter will be formally included in the student’s permanent record. Such assessment is based not only on the number of violations, but also on the attitude and response of the student to corrective measures.

### ***Student Use of Telecommunication Devices, Electronic Games and other Equipment***

Cell phones and other communication devices are not permitted on campus. All student communications with parties outside the school during school hours should go through the teacher or campus administrator while a student is on campus. Electronic games, recorders, cameras of any type (with the exception of students registered in a photography class), laser pointers, or any other telecommunication or electronic devices are not permitted on campus. Any variance to this policy must be granted by the teacher or campus administrator.

### ***Open Campus Policies***

Because of the academy's format, FA students enter and leave the academy's campus at different times of day, depending upon their individual course schedule. Furthermore, many of the academy's Rhetoric students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the campus. Of necessity, FA's Rhetoric (but not Grammar or Logic) School operates under an open-campus policy, defined as follows:

- Rhetoric students are *not* required to check in or out when arriving at or leaving the FA campus on regularly scheduled Rhetoric School days.
- Rhetoric student attendance records will be kept for all classes and Study Halls.
- All students are to be under supervision by being physically present in the class for which they are registered whenever they are on campus. Being present on campus but not in the class for which he/she is registered, or present on campus at a time when the student does not have a scheduled class, may result in disciplinary action.
- Parents are responsible for guiding their students regarding the student's freedom to come and go from the campus without securing the permission of school personnel. Students who violate their parent's wishes regarding the use of this freedom are accountable to their parents, but not to the academy.
- No student will be allowed to walk off the campus. The only exception will be for a student living next to the school that has written permission from the parents to walk home.
- It is considered a discourtesy to the teacher and a disruptive influence to the learning environment for a student to leave a class or Study Hall in session before that class has been dismissed. Therefore, unless prior arrangements have been made or permission is granted by the instructor, leaving a class or Study Hall early will be considered a breach of good conduct and treated as a discipline issue.

### ***Campus Hours***

The official school hours at FA are 9:00 AM-5:00 PM, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Once students have finished classes, or completed athletic practices/events for the day, they become the responsibility of the parents. While FA policies are in force at all times in which students are on campus, the school cannot be responsible for unsupervised activities of students before or after the established school hours (except in the case of special FA -sponsored events). **Parents therefore must arrange for their student(s) to be picked up from FA within 15 minutes of completion of the student's day at school.**

### ***Student Discipline Procedures***

Our assumption is that all students have read and understand the Student Codes of Conduct and Dress. In cases of violation of these codes, the academy will employ mild forms of reproof, rebuke, and correction in order to encourage cooperation among the student body and compliance with academy standards (under no circumstances does FA practice spanking or similar forms of corporal punishment). These measures will be utilized by faculty and staff for the purposes of sound classroom management and appropriate student behavior and relationships. The following information outlines how inappropriate behavior will be addressed at school.

- In most cases, a distinction will be made between Elementary and Secondary students in specific discipline measures, since it is assumed that a greater degree of self-discipline and good conduct should be expected from Secondary students.
- Any and all Secondary discipline cases referred to the Administration for handling are to be accompanied by a written account of the event completed by a staff member
- Any discipline matter deemed to be of an urgent or potentially dangerous nature shall be brought immediately to the attention of the Administration, which will in turn notify the parents of the offending student. It will not be necessary to notify the Administration (and therefore, the parents) immediately of discipline problems of a routine or non-serious nature (e.g., talking out of turn in class, an untucked shirttail, etc.). Such problems will be handled in a manner convenient to the Administration and in

conjunction with faculty and staff. Parents will be notified if the Administration believes such minor offenses have become chronic.

- Violations of the Student Code will be recorded in the student’s online behavior log. If deemed necessary, details will be e-mailed to the parents.
- An administrative staff member will personally attend to serious, urgent, or potentially dangerous discipline matters, and the parents will always be notified in such cases. This administrative staff member shall enjoy a broad range of personal authority to act in such cases, including but not necessarily limited to suspension of the student from regular school activities.
- Should repeated or serious first-time violations of the Student Code of Conduct or Dress Code occur, a student may be suspended or expelled.
- Since student participation at the academy naturally has an impact on other students, off-campus behavior can, at the discretion of the Administration, have an impact on a student’s level of school involvement. This may include suspension, or a recommendation to the Board for a change in the student’s enrollment status. Such “off-campus” behavior may include the use of telecommunication devices, bloggings, websites, or written correspondence that expresses or details verbal or physical threats against any member of Fortis Academy or the institution as a whole; including but not limited to immoral or illegal activities, vulgar language, sexual promiscuity, etc.

### ***Disciplinary Responses to Major or Chronic Misconduct***

**Suspension** There are two types and several durations of suspension governed by the FA Administration:

1. Suspension from all FA classes and activities with no permission to make up work
2. Suspension from all FA classes and activities with permission to make up work

The duration of a suspension can be up to five successive campus school days. A two-day suspension can, but will generally not include, a Friday—Monday combination. Suspensions may also carry with them any number of requirements that the Administration deems appropriate. Failure to meet those requirements can extend the duration of the suspension or lead to expulsion considerations.

**Expulsion**—Such action can be *recommended* by the FA Administration, but only *administered* by the FA Board.

There are two types of expulsions:

1. Expulsion without permission to appeal, in which the expulsion must appear on the student’s permanent record
2. Expulsion with permission to appeal, in which the student is suspended immediately from all classes and activities and the family’s *Contract of Enrollment* with the academy is declared null and void. If the family does not wish to appeal, then the student is officially no longer a Fortis Academy student and the record of expulsion will appear on the student’s permanent record and transcripts. If the family wishes to appeal, they must submit their formal request for readmission in writing, stating their reasons for requesting a new and more restricted *Contract of Enrollment* with the academy. If the formal request is accepted, the student may continue to receive class assignments while the appeal is pending. Both parents (unless parent is single) and the student must schedule a time to appear before the Board to discuss the appeal. Re-admittance, if granted, may only be on the condition that the family obligates itself to a new and revised *Contract of Enrollment*, complete with the Board’s required corrective actions, restrictive measures, and future accountabilities. Failure to keep the new agreement can result in automatic forfeiture of the student’s admission status with no permission to appeal.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *A student expelled from FA is not allowed on campus at any time, or at any FA-sponsored event, except with approval from the Administration for the dropping off and picking up of siblings from the FA campus or FA-sponsored event. Furthermore, all tuition/fees owed per the Contract of Enrollment are due and payable to FA even when a student is expelled from the academy.*

## **PARENT CONDUCT**

Just as students at FA are held accountable for their words and actions, so, too, are the *parents* of those students—particularly regarding communication between home and school. Parents should model humility, gentleness, and spiritual maturity to their students by treating the FA faculty and staff with respect, both publicly and privately. Our communication to and about one another must be seasoned with grace, edifying to others and glorifying to God. If a parent (or student) acts or speaks in an unkind or disrespectful manner to any faculty or staff member at FA, the matter will be taken up by the Head of School, who according to biblical instruction will give the offending party an opportunity to repent and to ask forgiveness of the offended party—thus encouraging unity and grace. If the

offending party is unwilling to comply with these guidelines, the student(s) of that parent or parents may be withdrawn from the academy, or barred from admission to the academy for the following semester. In severe cases of slander or disrespect, a recommendation can be made to the FA Board for immediate expulsion of the student(s) whose parents are unwilling to walk in a biblical manner in their relationship with FA faculty and staff members. *This Parental Code of Conduct also applies to FA-sponsored events. While enjoying the event, participants and fans should exemplify Christ and therefore be peculiar in comparison to the world. The FA Administration will “encourage” participants and fans that act unbecomingly to rethink their words and actions as witnesses of Christ, and to ask such participants and fans unwilling to change their behavior to leave the game immediately. Chronic misbehavior on the part of any participant or fan can result in negative consequences.*

## **FACULTY AND STAFF CONDUCT**

In the same manner, the faculty and staff of FA are expected to follow the highest standards of integrity, propriety, and Christ-likeness. Students are never consciously to be demeaned, shamed, or humiliated. Students and parents, as well as fellow staff members, are always to be treated with respect and dignity. FA faculty and staff are ambassadors of Christ, dedicated to His glory, determined to equip the next generation with a biblical worldview in preparation for the Great Commission and Christ’s glorious return. Failure to exemplify this high moral and ethical standard may result in termination from employment from FA. Further information regarding faculty and staff conduct is detailed in the Faculty/Staff Handbook.

## **VISITOR POLICIES**

By its very nature, FA encourages a high level of parental participation in education. However, in order to enhance both student safety and operational efficiency, the academy has adopted the following guidelines governing the presence of visitors on the campus during regular school operating hours (9:00 AM-5:00 PM on school days). For the purposes of this policy, "visitors" are defined as all individuals other than staff or students (on their respective class days) present in any part of the building other than the front foyer or office complex, or on the grounds other than the normal student loading area (e.g., the front walk). Anyone failing to abide by these provisions may be denied access to any and all restricted areas or be required to leave the campus. Persons having no legitimate connection with the academy, or reason for being present on the school campus, will be expected to leave immediately.

Other than conducting normal business with the FA front office, all visitors should call before coming to the school to secure access to academic areas—i.e., all areas of the campus, either inside or outside of the building, other than the front foyer and office complex, as well as normal delivery and student loading areas, such as the front walk and the parking areas adjacent to it.

All visitors must check in with the office staff upon arriving at the campus. At a minimum, visitors must identify themselves, explain their intended business, and indicate how long they expect to be on campus. A written record of this information will be kept, and a Visitor’s Badge may be provided to the visitor to be worn at all times while on campus.

All visitors must be willing to comply with all rules and regulations governing student and/or staff conduct, including the appropriate dress regulations (variances for legitimate and honorable reasons may be granted). Visitors are expected to dress in such a way as to honor the spirit of the student dress code: no skin-tight pants, shorts, or shirts; no tank tops or shirts that hang low in the neck line; all lower body wear must at least reach the kneecap when sitting. See [Visitor Expectations](#) for further detail.

## **VOLUNTEER DRIVERS**

All drivers must be pre-approved by the school and must have a good driving record. A copy of the driver’s current proof of auto insurance (copy of insurance card) and current driver’s license must be on file. As these items are renewed the parent is responsible for updating the office with the current information.

All chaperones and drivers of automobiles or watercraft must be at least 21 years of age and be approved by the Fortis administration.

A person with a driving record with excessive or severe violations may not drive or operate any vehicle at Fortis events.

The drivers and/or owners of all vehicles or watercraft used in Fortis events and field trips must depend upon their own insurance coverage for the purpose of covering their liability and damages to their vehicles or watercraft. Each vehicle must have a current inspection sticker.

Both the owners and the drivers of vehicles or watercraft assume full legal and financial responsibilities for both the operation of their vehicles/watercraft and the safety of their passengers. Any liability arising out of the use of a vehicle or watercraft is the sole responsibility of the owner (first) and the operator (second).

## ACADEMIC POLICIES

### *Earning Course Credits*

*All students must earn a 70% cumulative grade point average for all courses completed through the academy in order to receive a diploma.*

Any student achieving a final semester grade below 70% in any course does not earn credit for that course; therefore, to earn credit the course must be repeated at FA or taken via an off-campus course *pre-approved* by the Head of School. For pre-approved off-campus courses, if the student completes and passes the course with at least a 70% average, FA will accept the credits, *yet the grade will not be included in the student's aggregate grade average for that semester*. Moreover, this transfer of credits may affect a student's residency status at FA, thus their graduation from the academy. The Head of School will determine whether a student's transfer of credits will satisfy residency requirements for graduation, as well as eligibility for extra-curricular activities.

Students may also earn credits for participation in Senior High athletics at FA— $\frac{1}{2}$  credit for *completion* of each sport *and* accompanying off-season requirements, up to a maximum of 1 credit per year. However, these credits *cannot* be used to satisfy full-time student status for athletic eligibility requirements.

### *Final Grade Reports*

Final grades are posted on TeacherEase, where parents can print a copy for their records. **Please Note:** Semester grades are independent of one another—the spring semester final grade is *not* a cumulative grade for the entire school year.

Parents can also review their student's current course grades, updated at least every two weeks, at any time on TeacherEase. While instructors will do their best to alert parents of any academic (or behavioral) issues regarding a student, *parents* are ultimately responsible to monitor their student's grades and to communicate with the appropriate instructor if a concern arises. In response, instructors will work with parents to cultivate the student's success at FA. If at any time a parent believes his or her student's grades are not correct, or are not being posted in a timely fashion, the teacher should be notified as soon as possible to mitigate any further problems.

### *Skill Based Assessments*

Assessments are considered important measuring tools for both instructors and parents, as part of a unified path of education at Fortis. Students that do not perform well in our Grammar School will have great difficulty in achieving success in our Schools of Logic and Rhetoric. Therefore, for the benefit of the student, it is important that parents and students treat seriously the academic requirements set forth in these formative years at the academy.

### *Grading Scale for Grades 3-12*

For those courses at FA that provide a percentage or letter grade, the following grading scale is used:

Final Course Score	Letter Grade	Interpretation
97-100	A+	Exemplary
94-96.9	A	Excellent
90-93.9	A-	
87-89.9	B+	Surpassing
84-86.9	B	
80-83.9	B-	
77-79.9	C+	Satisfactory
74-76.9	C	
70.0-73.9	C-	
0-69.9	F	Failing

### ***Full-Time Students Status***

A School of Logic student is considered to be a full-time student at FA if he is enrolled on campus in at least three courses. A School of Rhetoric student is considered to be a full-time student if he is enrolled on campus in at least four FA courses. For freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, three of these four must be academic courses. Seniors must be enrolled in four FA courses, two of which must be academic courses. In order to participate in any scholastic competition that represents FA, a student must be considered a full-time student.

### ***Class Rank***

Class rank is important for those students seeking a variety of scholarships or acceptance into state colleges and universities in Texas. At FA, class ranking occurs only for the top 10% of students who have completed their Junior and Senior years in residence at FA, and is based on a cumulative grade average of all 300, 400, and 500-level courses successfully completed at FA regardless of the year in which they are completed. Since a student can achieve a grade percentage score higher than 100, yet never a grade point average higher than a 4.0, the student's class rank is determined by his cumulative percentage score (e.g., 88.75%) and not the cumulative grade point average (e.g., 3.75) in relation to other qualifying students at FA. Please note: This comparison system of ranking students in no way diminishes the importance of impact of academic performance during the Freshman and Sophomore years at the academy. Achievement during these years will directly impact overall grade point average, the ability to enroll in Junior and Senior-level courses, participation in athletics, and possibly re-enrollment at the academy. Fundamentally, the policy is intended to level the academic playing field between those that transfer to FA during high school, and those FA students that have attended the academy the entirety of their high school years.

## **CREDITS AND ATTENDANCE**

### ***Definition Of Credits***

In general, 1 FA credit is equivalent to a full year's instruction in a given course of study – ½ credit per semester. Properly enrolled students will earn course credits on a semester-by-semester basis. The Standard Per-Credit-Requirement (PCR) for all courses offered at Fortis Academy is 48 hours of instruction for each credit earned per semester, as the fall and spring semesters at FA are typically scheduled for 16 weeks of instruction.

### ***Minimum Per-Credit Attendance Requirement***

The minimum PCR for all courses offered at FA is 48 hours of instruction per semester for each credit earned. Credit, therefore will not be awarded to students in attendance below this requirement. For example, a student enrolled in a ½ credit course cannot miss more than 3 hours of instruction, or 6 hours for a year-long course in order to obtain credit in a course. A student cannot miss more than the allotted time given. (See Attendance Requirements) A variance to this requirement may be granted by the Administration to a properly enrolled student when that student has been unable to meet the attendance requirements of the course or courses in which he or she is properly enrolled due to absences – i.e. mission trips, circumstances beyond the family's control (such as an extended illness, death in the family, etc.) provided the student has, in the judgment of the FA instructor overseeing his work,

achieved minimum mastery of the course content, as defined by the relevant school and curriculum policies and standards. Any cases in which the Head of School is in doubt concerning the appropriateness of granting a variance to this policy may be referred to the Board for consideration. Any credit approved for courses taken at FA will be handled as standard credit.

### ***Attendance Requirements***

Students must regularly attend classes in order to successfully complete a course. This means they may not be absent, whether excused or unexcused, more than:

- Two days during a semester for a course meeting two days a week
- Three days during a semester for a course meeting three days a week

The records of students failing to meet these attendance requirements will be reviewed by the Administration upon the completion of each semester. A decision whether or not to grant credit for the course will be made based upon attendance records and other factors, such as student conduct. Should credit not be granted, a grade of incomplete shall be awarded. In most cases, a failure to successfully complete a course because of excessive absences will also prevent a student from being able to register for the next course in the sequence. Removal of the incomplete can be done by the granting of a variance (refer to the policy above in “Definition of Credits and Minimum Per Credit Attendance Requirement”), or by make-up course work prescribed by the academy.

### ***Late and Make-up Work***

Late and make-up work policies are established by FA and therefore may not be available to students in every course. Those teachers that do allow late or make-up work may, at their discretion, require from parents a note explaining the reason for a student’s absence before allowing the student to submit work or escape late penalties, as the case may be. Make-up work is defined as work that was due on a date validated as an excused absence. FA allows two class periods to turn in make-up work for full credit. It is not accepted after that. Late work can be turned in one day after it is due for a 20% deduction.

### ***Excused Absences***

When a student has been absent from class, it is expected that a note from a parent will be sent within two class days of the student’s return to school. If a note is not received within two days, the absence will be counted as unexcused. The excuse note should contain the following information:

- Date letter is written
- Name of student
- Date(s) of absence
- Reason for absence
- Name and signature of parent
- Phone number where parent can be reached

While students should make every effort to attend class on a regular basis, there may be times when they cannot attend a scheduled class (“non-elective” absences). In most cases, the academy will validate the following reasons as an excused absence:

- Doctor/dentist appointment (please try to schedule these outside of class time if possible)
- Personal illness
- Sickness or death in the immediate family
- Family emergencies (parents should contact the school if at all possible)
- Car trouble, or weather or road conditions making travel dangerous or impossible
- College visit (only for Juniors and Seniors – one day in the fall, one day in the spring)

- School related activity (game, competition, academic meet, etc.) Please note: an excuse note from home is not required for school-sponsored activities – a timely notification to the faculty from the appropriate coach is sufficient for the absence to be considered excused.
- Any long-term absence (longer than three consecutive MWF class days or two T/TH class days) will be evaluated by the Administration.

### ***Tardy Policy***

In general, a tardy is treated as a discipline problem (especially when in excess). It is important to remember that when a student is late to class or Study Hall, it disrupts the teacher and other students. As our class time is valuable, students need to know that every three tardies will equal one absence. Only those tardies beyond the immediate control of the student or his/her parents will normally be considered excused. The administration will review reasons for tardies at the end of each semester.

### ***Early Dismissal***

Any student who needs to leave a class or Study Hall for a valid reason (doctor's appointment, etc.) should have a note from parent: (1) explaining the reason for the early release, (2) including the time and date the student should be released, (3) explaining when (or if) the student will return, and (4) including a phone number where the parent can be reached. If a student does not have a note with this information, the parent must talk with someone in the front office validating the student's early dismissal before the student will be released. No student will be released from a class or Study Hall without prior consent. Please note: parents are not required to send a note requesting early dismissal for school-related activities (games, competitions, etc.); however, a notification from the appropriate coach is required for the student to be released from class or Study Hall.

### ***Transfer of Credits***

FA accepts application for transfer credit from any student who is currently enrolled at FA or who is entering FA for the first time. There are guidelines that must be met by the student and then reviewed by Administration, before credit will be granted. Simply turning in an application for transfer of credit does not ensure approval.

## **GRADING AND EVALUATION**

### ***Grading Standards***

Courses at FA are graded on a standard percentage scale of 0-100. The course grade itself represents a percentage of content mastery, which is then used to determine the grade value of individual courses. For those students that achieve the minimum course grade requirement for the dedicated and blended Honors courses, (see "Academic Policies- Earning Course Credits"), the academy recognizes the difference in rigor between standard and Honors course tracks by adding ten (10) points to the final grade in any Honors course. Although a cumulative grade average in excess of 100 is possible due to the differential between standard and Honors courses, no course grades in excess of 100 are recorded on official transcripts. The influence of weighted Honors grades is reflected in a student's overall grade average. Thus, any cumulative grade average above 100 is simply considered an A+ and the final standard grade point will not exceed 4.00.

Other grades recognized by the academy are WP (withdrew passing), WF (withdrew failing), and P (passing). These grade designations are not calculated into the student's cumulative grade average at any time, nor will credits transferred to FA be included in the determination of a student's grade average. Specific criteria for assessing grades in any given course will be defined by the instructor in that course. All such criteria must honor any standards, requirements, or limitations imposed by curriculum guides and other relevant policies.

***Academic Standing***

Students must earn a cumulative grade average of 70% or above each semester in attendance at Fortis Academy in order to remain in good academic standing. A student whose semester grade average falls below 70% at the completion of the semester may, at the discretion of his principal, be placed on academic probation. A student placed on academic probation must raise his cumulative grade average to a 70% or above in order to return to good academic standing. If a student should earn a cumulative grade average less than 70% for two consecutive semesters, he may be blocked from further enrollment in classes at FA, or be required to retake any classes in which he earned a deficient grade. Any sequential course required for graduation, which a student fails, must be successfully repeated before the student will be allowed to enroll in the subsequent course. If the student successfully completes the failed course at FA, the passing grade earned will absolve the failing grade (which is removed from the transcript). If the student successfully completes the failed course through a preapproved course outside of FA, both attempts at taking the course will be noted on the transcript.

Note: Students must be careful to accurately account for their diploma credits in order to graduate from FA. A student who fails to meet residency or graduation requirements because of failure of, or withdrawal from, a course during his senior year at FA may jeopardize the possibility of graduating from the academy. In such cases, the student may consult with his principal to review graduation requirements and the effect of this failure/withdrawal on his diploma plan. Any variance granted must be approved by the Head of School.

In the case of failing a course, a student may attempt to absolve a failing grade at FA in an academic setting other than FA, such as a FA-approved correspondence or home-school course—all such attempts must be pre-approved by the Head of School. Should he desire to have the pre-approved course credit recognized by FA, the student must request the transfer of credit in writing following the successful completion of the course. If such credit is granted, it will absolve the failing grade on the student's transcript; however, both attempts will be noted, and neither the original failed course nor the transferred credit will be calculated into the student's cumulative grade average. Any student, including one who has been granted transfer credit, must take an entrance test to enroll in any course for which entrance testing is required, unless he has successfully completed the previous course in sequence at FA.

***Academic Incompletes***

Students may receive a grade of "I" (incomplete) when circumstances beyond their control render them incapable of fulfilling all of the requirements for completing a given course by the end of the semester in which it is offered. All Academic Incompletes must be approved by both the course instructor and the Head of School, and must be filed with the student's principal according to current guidelines and procedures governing such situations. All course requirements must be fulfilled by the date determined by the course instructor and the Head of School. Any required work not completed by that date will be awarded a grade of "0". The student's final grade will be calculated after the date given for completion of the course using whatever grading system was employed for all other students in the course (unless other arrangements have been previously made) and including all grades earned up to that time. Course instructors must provide the student's principal with a description of the grading system to be used as well as any and all evaluation materials (e.g., tests and keys) necessary for completing the course.

***Modifications to Standard Instructional or Evaluation Practices***

While instructors will be made aware of such circumstances, FA is not currently equipped to modify its instructional or evaluation practices or procedures in response to a student's learning disability or other special challenges, such as ADD, dyslexia, etc. All students will receive (or not receive) credit based upon what they have (or have not) done relative to a common standard, rather than upon individualized standards developed in response to special needs.

## **ELIGIBILITY POLICIES**

### ***Purpose***

All FA students in grades 6-12 who are involved in any of the school-sponsored activities listed under Areas Affected by Eligibility can be determined to be ineligible. Our desire in declaring a student “ineligible” is to reduce the time spent in the preparation and training for public competitions and performances so the affected student’s time can instead be spent toward his studies, particularly toward the course or courses where failure is imminent.

### ***Course Load Requirements for Academic and Fine Arts Competitions***

In order to participate in FA’s School of Logic academic and fine art competitions (grades 6-8), students must be registered for at least three FA courses (excluding other P.E. or athletic courses).

### ***Academic Performance Standards***

Upper level students (6-12) must meet academic performance standards in all courses taken at the academy in order to continue participating in school-sponsored extra-curricular activities (including athletics, student organizations, fine arts programs, etc., as listed under Areas Affected by Eligibility). In accordance with TAPPS regulations, a student becomes ineligible if he receives a cumulative failing grade in more than one course at the end of either the first quarter or at the conclusion of a given semester, and as a result will not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities for a period of two weeks following the grade reporting term. At the end of this period of ineligibility, the student’s principal will determine whether the student has shown sufficient academic progress and in response will either deem the student eligible for participation in extra-curricular activities or impose further restrictions, including but not limited to Academic Probation. A student’s eligibility after dropping a course in which he is failing is affected only if the number of remaining courses drops below the minimum required for participation in extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, at the discretion of the student’s principal, students on academic probation may not be allowed to participate in affected activities. No refunds, partial or otherwise, will be given to students temporarily barred from participation due to academic or disciplinary problems.

### ***Implementation of Eligibility***

Implementation of ineligibility will be handled by the student’s principal after each grade reporting term. Families, sponsors, directors, and coaches will be notified of such ineligibility. The principal also reserves the right to add to the list of affected school-sponsored activities other extra-curricular activities, selected course, student clubs or organizations, programs, etc., if the time involved in such activities is determined to be a possible detriment to a student’s academic achievement and success.

### ***Areas Affected by Eligibility***

Ineligible students involved in any of the following extracurricular activities will be temporarily suspended from their responsibilities and student representation for a period of at least two weeks, in order to provide opportunity for grade improvement to reach a level permitting eligibility:

- Athletics
- Interschool Competitions
- Fine Arts Competitions

Ineligible students may, at the discretion of the Head of School, continue athletic practices and attend FA-sponsored activities. When fine arts performances are a requirement for course grading, academic ineligibility will not require a suspension from participation in these events.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICIES

Academic dishonesty in any form is a rejection of biblical values, a serious breach of personal integrity, and a severe hindrance to student learning. We view any instance of academic dishonesty as a serious violation of academy policies, and will respond accordingly to ensure the integrity of our academic and Christ-centered mission.

Academic dishonesty is broadly defined as:

“Any attempt, whether successful or not, on the part of a student or parent, whether realized or not, to falsely represent the student’s level of achievement or mastery in a given course, or with regard to any element of that course.”

This definition includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Claiming or indicating in any form or fashion that the student has fulfilled any assignment or other academic responsibility, such as reading assigned texts or engaging in assigned study, when in fact he/she has not done so
- Using any resources, including but not limited to solution manuals and teacher-edition textbooks, other than those authorized by the course instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or completing other course assignments
- Obtaining quizzes, tests, examinations, or other academic materials or evaluation instruments, in whole or in part, created by or belonging to an instructor, other staff member, or the academy itself, including but certainly not limited to such materials improperly used and in the possession of students currently or previously enrolled in the course, without the explicit authorization of the course instructor
- Engaging in plagiarism, which includes but is not limited to “the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direction quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment” and “the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency” which customarily sells or offers free of charge term papers or other academic materials
- Altering a graded paper or project for the purpose of disputing the accuracy of the grade
- Collaborating without explicit authorization with another student or students during any quiz, test, or examination or in the fulfillment of any other academic assignment or responsibility

### ***The Policy as it Relates to Testing Instruments***

All quizzes, tests, and other examinations, whether conducted in the classroom or in some other location, must be taken at a single setting and without outside assistance of any sort, including but not limited to books, notes, other individuals, reference works, and audio or visual media. Any exception to these guidelines must be given in writing by the instructor on assignment sheets, the evaluation instrument itself, or other written instructions disseminated to all of the students in the class.

Practically, this means that the following actions will be considered events of academic dishonesty should they occur during or after the administration of quizzes, tests, examinations, or any other in-class instrument designed to gauge a student’s measure of mastery of a subject:

- The use of any medium (paper, skin, clothing, walls, desk tops, etc.) to write in advance the answers to questions found on the testing instrument. This is commonly known as a “cheat sheet”.
- The act of looking on another student’s paper, whether or not that results in a change of answer
- The *obvious* act of position one’s own paper so as to give access to information to another student(s)
- The act of informing, any means (speech, writing, body signals such as tapping or coughing, electronic devices such as cell phones, walkie-talkies, etc.), another student(s) about the general or specific content of a testing instrument before, during, or after its administration
- The act of showing a completed and/or graded testing instrument to another student(s) who has yet to be evaluated by performance on that instruction
- A *significant* neglect in grading smaller testing instruments (such as quizzes and homework assignments that are often graded in class by students) with the result that a student receives a higher grade than should have been earned

### ***The Policy as it Relates to Homework***

Homework should be done by the student alone and without assistance of any sort, including but not limited to information provided in teacher edition textbooks, unless such assistance is authorized, either orally or in writing by the instructor in the course, or an approved Curriculum Guide's description of the parent role for the course. The course instructor may grant such authorization, either in conjunction with the giving of the assignment or in response to student requests, at any time and for any duration to all of the students in the class or to selected students only, provided that the instructor feels it is in the best educational interests of the student(s) receiving such authorization.

Practically, this means that the following actions will be considered events of academic dishonesty should they be determined to have occurred during the completion of homework:

- The act of two or more students completing together, without the authorization of the instructor, homework designed to be completed individually. Common examples occur in Study Hall, over the telephone, and in homes and include: grammar workbook homework; foreign language workbook homework; math homework; English, History, and Science reading comprehension check questions; worksheets given out by the instructor; writing assignments, etc. *Please be aware that it is understood that all homework assignment is to be completed individually unless otherwise directed by the instructor.*
- The act of providing to another student(s) by any means the content of one's own homework
- The act of providing to another student(s) by any means the content of another student's homework
- The act of taking homework from another student, or from a classroom, book bag, binder, workbook, Study Hall, library, computer, car, room, etc.
- The act of positioning one's self in order to observe and benefit from the work of another student(s) as he completes his homework
- The act of using any resource not authorized by the instructor to be used in the course – examples include teacher's editions of textbooks, solution manuals, answer keys, the papers of siblings who have taken the course earlier, etc.

### ***The Policy as it Relates to Papers and Projects***

Papers and projects should be completed only by the student or by the members of a student group constituted by the instructor for the purpose of completing the paper or project in question, without other assistance of any sort, except as explicitly authorized by the instructor.

Practically, this means that the following actions will be considered events of academic dishonesty should they be determined to have occurred during the completion of major papers or projects:

- The use of another student's work, without written or verbal authorization of the instructor, in the completion of the paper or project
- The use of any resource explicitly prohibited by the instructor by either verbal or written means in the completion of the paper or project
- The use of any resource designed to provide the student with a grasp of material without having to engage that material firsthand. Examples of such resources include Cliff Notes, Spark Notes, and websites that offer the student professional observations and analysis of, and writing pertaining to, a work
- The act of plagiarism as defined briefly in the FA, Parent/Student Handbook and in more detail in the handouts available from English classes.

### ***The Enforcement of the Academic Dishonesty Policies – Discovery and Determination Phase***

Determination of academic dishonesty can be made by: (1) the instructor of the course in which the violation occurred; (2) A substitute teacher of a course in which the violation occurred; (3) Any FA staff or faculty member. In addition, fellow students may alert staff or faculty members of FA to the possibility of academic dishonesty among peers; however, a determination of such remains a function of official FA staff or faculty. Credible evidence can be obtained through eye witness observations, which indicate that cheating, plagiarism, or other dishonest acts have taken place, as well as written examples of the same (e.g., homework, tests, papers, etc.) Once the instructor has determined that academic dishonesty has indeed taken place, he/she shall inform the proper administrator and, in conjunction with the relevant school officials, shall inform the affected student of his/her discovery.

### ***The Enforcement of the Academic Dishonesty Policies – Appeals Process***

Should a student desire to appeal the determination of the course instructor or other FA staff member, he/she must request in writing a hearing with the Administrator, who will arrange for a conference with the student, one or both parents (or guardians), and the instructor of or substitute in the course. During this conference, all relevant evidence will be presented and examined. Following the conclusion of the conference, an administrator that was not an original party to the case will render a determination in the matter based on his/her assessment of the weight and credibility of whatever evidence is presented for review.

### ***The Enforcement of the Academic Dishonesty Policies – Penalties***

- **Minor Offense:** A student caught or confessing to a first event of academic dishonesty of a lesser nature, including such assignments as homework and quizzes, will receive an un-droppable zero for that assignment, and a report of the event shall be made and included in the student's TeacherEase behavior file and sent home.
- **Major, or Second Minor, Offense:** A student caught or confessing to a second event of academic dishonesty of a lesser nature (see above), or of a major offense, including such things as tests, papers, projects, reports, etc. will be immediately suspended from school for a time to be determined by the Administrator and not allowed to return until a meeting between the student's parents and administration takes place. At that meeting, a determination will be made by the administration regarding any make-up work allowed for the student during his/her suspension. The student will receive an un-droppable zero for that assignment, and a report of the event shall be made and included in the student's TeacherEase behavior file and sent home.
- **Second Major, or Third Minor, Offense:** If at any time during the remainder of an offending student's involvement at FA he/she is again caught or confesses to academic dishonesty as detailed by the FA Parent/Student Handbook, the student is immediately suspended and a recommendation is made to the FA Board for the student's expulsion from academy. If expulsion occurs, this infraction becomes a permanent part of the student's academic record.

## **STUDY HALL POLICIES**

Study Halls are an important aspect of academic life for Logic and Rhetoric students as a result of the rigorous academic load at FA. Study Hall is made available on Fridays and is designed to offer a quiet atmosphere. To facilitate this, the following policies are in place:

- Grammar students enrolled in Study Hall will be expected to sit quietly and work on homework assignments. A monitor will be present to oversee Study Hall.
- For Logic and Rhetoric students, a teacher will be present to assist with homework and answer student questions.
- Study Halls' attendance and tardy records are kept.

## **SPORT PHILOSOPHY & EXPECTATIONS**

We believe that participation in extracurricular activities, especially athletics, provides a good opportunity to encourage Christian students in their relationship with and witness for Jesus Christ. We expect, and will insist upon,

Christ-like character and behavior in all athletes, fans, and coaches. We expect all fans and athletes alike to limit words and actions at sporting events to those that are uplifting, encouraging, and always positive (Eph. 4:29-32).

We expect this to be our behavior toward our children, our opponents, our opposing fans, and game officials, whether “home” or “away”, “ahead” or “behind” We expect every Fortis person in attendance to do what Jesus would, regardless of what the scoreboard says or how our opponents may conduct themselves. Let’s teach our children to think, speak and act in the way Jesus would at our athletic events.

To ensure your child gets the most from his experience in Fortis sports, please make application of the following passages prior to the start of the season:

- **Motivation:** *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*” Philippians 2:3
- **Commitment:** *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches*” Proverbs 22:1
- **Respect for authority:** “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers” Romans 13:1
- **Discipline:** “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things” I Corinthians 9:25
- **Full effort:** “And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” Colossians 3:23
- **Complaining:** “Do all things without murmuring and disputing” Philippians 2:14
- **Boasting:** “Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.” Proverbs 27:2

**Service Projects-** If we “buffet our bodies” only to spend it on ourselves, what good have we done? FA sports teams, under the guidance of coaches/sponsors, attend service-oriented projects throughout the year. Examples include: visiting nursing homes, serving holiday dinners at homeless shelters, volunteering at the ARC of Austin, etc.

As members of a FA sports team, participating athletes are expected to honor the following pledge:

I pledge to keep the following commitments to myself, to my teammates, and to my coaches throughout the entire season. I will be an athlete who diligently practices discipline and self control. I will choose to maintain a positive attitude and follow through with what I have committed, reminding myself that I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me. (Phil 4:13, KJV) I will persevere with excellence in all practices and games and bring glory and honor to Christ Jesus.

And whatsoever ye do, do [it] heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. - Col 3:23-24

## **ILLNESS, IMMUNIZATIONS, MEDICATION AND FIRST AID**

The FA administrative and coaching staffs are qualified to provide basic first aid to students with minor injuries. Injuries that are more serious will result in contact with parents and/or trained medical personnel. Regarding medication, recognizing the need for some students to have prescription medication available during the school day, the following policies exist:

- Medication must be in its original container, with the student’s name on or attached to the container, and kept in the school’s administrative office.
- If a medication must be administered during the school day, whether prescription or over-the-counter, each must be accompanied by a note signed by the parent/guardian giving specific directions for its administration including date, time, dosage, and reason for administration.

- Over-the-counter medications will not be given on a routine basis without a signed note from the child's physician and without signed consent from the parent/guardian
- Texas State Law permits students with asthma to carry and self-administer their own inhalers provided certain conditions are met, including an asthma action plan developed and signed by the student's physician and parent/guardian on file at FA
- Sick children (temperature of 100 degrees or higher) will be sent home from school. For fevers lower than 100 degrees, the parents will be notified to discuss the matter. Students should be free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school
- Students with rashes, infectious conditions, persistent cough, vomiting, diarrhea, or other conditions that may affect other students should not be sent to school until these conditions are mitigated
- In the case of head-lice, the child will be readmitted to the school only after he/she has been successfully treated with the proper lice-killing shampoo and has been cleared by a physician – a report of which must accompany the student upon return to the school
- Students are not to eat anything growing on campus. If a student does eat something picked from any of the campus area, he/she will be sent to the office immediately and his/her parents and respective poison control authorities will be notified immediately.

The State of Texas requires all students to be vaccinated with the exception of those that have obtained an immunization exemption affidavit. For more specific information regarding Texas immunization requirements, log on to [www.immunizeTexas.com](http://www.immunizeTexas.com).

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of severe weather while students are on campus, faculty and staff are prepared to move the students to secure locations within the facilities until the threat has passed. At that time, an assessment will be made regarding the safety of continuing the school day, and whether parents should come to the campus to pick up their children.

In the event of inclement weather preceding a school day (such as an ice or snow storm), which would result in dangerous road conditions, the Administration will post this information on the FA blog home page and if possible, post a voice message on the school's main telephone line. We may also employ an automated call system, in which an urgent or important announcement is simultaneously communicated to each FA family via telephone.

## **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME**

Communication between school and home is vital to success of students at FA. Central to this communication is the FA website ([www.fortisacademyums.com](http://www.fortisacademyums.com)) and blog. It is, therefore, important that FA families be knowledgeable of the internet, as well as the use of e-mail. The website is designed to be the central hub of information for parents, students, faculty and staff at FA.

## **CHAIN OF AUTHORITY**

In any given day, there are dozens of questions and concerns fielded by our administrative staff. At times parents do not know whom to contact to resolve a matter, and by habit go as high up the organizational “ladder” as they can first. This often bypasses the very person with the answers, breaks down the flow of communication, and in some cases rejects the biblical mandate to go directly to the person with whom there is a concern. To mitigate this problem, parents and students are encouraged to follow the “chain of authority” in the following order at FA:

1. Teacher/Coach
2. Principal
3. Head of School
4. FA Board

The more effective the partnership between parents and FA, the more successful we will be in **helping parents disciple college-worthy, character witnesses of Christ for the next generation.**