

15 THINGS EVERY TFA PARENT MUST KNOW

We are delighted to provide a brief summary of key items from the Parent/Student Handbook this year. These guidelines are designed to facilitate understanding and teamwork between home, church, and school. They don't define who is and who is not a Christ-follower. They are not a measure of one's Christian faith. When someone makes a mistake, we will not judge their relationship with Jesus. Similarly, when certain behaviors require consequences, we will not describe those administering the consequences as "unchristian" or "unkind" for following through as outlined in the handbook and as agreed to by the school and parents.

Spiritual Formation and First Things First

Our theme this year is *First Things First* (Mt. 6:33). We have a clear plan for assisting the home and the church in developing strong character and teaching every student to follow Jesus personally. The Executive Director for Spiritual Formation aligns our resources to equip every student to Know the Truth (Head), Love the Truth (Heart), Live the Truth (Hands), and Walk in Truth (Habits). Biblical Worldview Integration is an essential part of the curriculum. Our goal is for every student to look more like Jesus as a result of attending TFA.

Curriculum Design and Class Size

TFA chooses textbooks and resources that match our stated curricular objectives and are of high educational quality. Our teachers guide instruction, the textbooks do not. When elements of a secular textbook conflicts with our Biblical worldview, we embrace that as a teachable moment. Outstanding teacher quality and curricular alignment are the secret to our multi-year Blue Ribbon qualifying test scores, not class size. Class sizes are based on student dynamics and teacher profile, not local public school standards or local independent school norms.

Admission Philosophy

Students enroll from Christian and non-Christian families. The expectation of our Pastor, Dr. David Uth, is for TFA to continue serving as a lighthouse for the Gospel. The school follows a Purpose Driven Enrollment Framework when reviewing student applications. Those who support our Great Commission philosophy, Traditional Family Values, are College-Preparatory Focused, and who desire their students to be trained as Servant Leaders may be enrolled. Students may be admitted at all grade levels at any time of the school year.

Parent Expectations

We have a positive campus culture rooted in clear expectations and mutual trust. In the unlikely event that a parent disrupts the positive culture by failing to support the school as outlined in the handbook and in this document, they may jeopardize the continued enrollment of their child. Some examples of unacceptable parent behavior include hosting a party where alcohol or drugs are present, treating school personnel with disrespect, failing to support student discipline measures outlined by the school, incessantly spreading negativity within the parent community by criticizing and complaining, inhibiting the work of professional educators by being unduly involved in the daily operations of the classroom/school, refusing to follow the conflict resolution process regarding school policy and/or personnel concerns, and treating other parents or students with disrespect.

Church/School Communications

We enjoy a wonderful relationship with our founding church. FBCO has empowered the the Head of School to lead The First Academy. The School Board sets policy and oversees the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Head of School leads the daily operations of the school with the assistance of the Senior Staff. When TFA issues are brought to FBCO, they will be directed back to the Head of School for resolution as outlined in the handbook.

Student Safety and Restricted Areas

The school works diligently to provide a safe and secure campus. We ask students to follow restricted area guidelines and avoid being in any place on campus without adult supervision. Restricted areas include, but are not limited to, parking lots, PSAC, Field House, gym, athletic fields, buildings during lunch, classrooms, and FBCO.

Student Behavior Expectations Apply 24/7

We view our students as community leaders. As such, they are held accountable for their behavior 24 hours per day, seven days per week while enrolled at TFA. If a student's behavior violates handbook standards or negatively impacts the reputation of FBCO or TFA, suspension or expulsion may be result. Student discipline is always confidential and will not be discussed with anyone other than the parents of the child(ren) involved.

Cell Phones and Social Media

Student cell phones are to be kept in lockers during the school day and must be turned off. Social media posts will be handled as if the student stood up in class and spoke the words or showed the image that was posted. The consequence for unacceptable posts begin with In School Suspension but may escalate to dismissal or expulsion. This applies to all students, 24 hours per day, seven days per week while enrolled at TFA.

Communication and Conflict Resolution

So as to provide a healthy work-life balance, employees are not expected to respond to messages before 7:00 am or after 7:00 pm or on weekends so that they can focus on their own families. While disagreements between employees and parents rarely occur, we ask that when it does the conflict resolution process start with only those directly involved and follow the process outlined in the handbook. School employees are required to resolve conflicts and solve relational/discipline problems in person with students and parents rather than by email or text.

Disciplinary Consequences for Race Related Incidents

We appreciate the work of our Diversity Council. This multi-racial group oversees all race-related discipline issues, including social media. Upon confirmation of the facts, any racial language, images, or behavior that is insensitive, hostile, offensive, or intimidating will be brought to the council for a disciplinary recommendation.

Athletic and Arts Concerns

We are grateful for our coaches/directors and student athletes/artists. We see student participation in the arts/athletics as a privilege, not a right. If conflict happens to arise, it should first be brought to the coach/director before anyone else is involved. If the matter remains unresolved, the next steps in the appeals process will include the Fine Arts Director or Athletics Director, Assistant Head of School for Advancement, and then the Athletics/Arts Appeals Committee. Coaches/directors are required to resolve conflicts in person rather than by email or text.

Drug and Alcohol Prevention

Helping students make wise choices is of paramount importance at TFA. To that end, we have created guardrails to protect students. Students who drink alcohol in any amount or use illegal drugs of any type while enrolled at TFA (on or off campus, before or after school) will be disciplined as outlined in the handbook. The school reserves the right to randomly administer drug tests or require ongoing drug testing at any time. Law enforcement resources may be used for drug prevention purposes at the discretion of the Head of School. These guardrails are to assist students in resisting temptation and to give them another reason to say "no" if pressured to make poor choices.

Suspension, Dismissal, Expulsion, and Student Searches

While such difficulty seldom occurs, the school may suspend, dismiss, or expel a student when it deems necessary, with or without parent approval. A School Board approved appeals process is outlined in the handbook because we believe there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors (Prov. 15:22). The Executive Director for Spiritual Formation will create a restoration plan following a multi-day suspension, dismissal, or expulsion. To ensure the safety of the school community, student lockers, storage areas, backpacks, and purses may be searched without prior notice if school leaders believe illegal, dangerous, or prohibited items are contained.

Subjects to Avoid

TFA was established for the purpose of educating students in a Christian atmosphere with Christ-centered instruction. We wish to remain clearly focused on the Gospel, the non-negotiables of our Statement of Faith, and avoid the theological fringe issues and the political banter that tends to divide us rather than unite us.

Successful Students

The most successful students at TFA have historically been the ones whose parents resisted the urge to hover over them and keep them from learning the valuable lessons that social struggles, academic challenges, athletic disappointments, fine arts frustrations, and unpleasant disciplinary consequences provide in the school setting. The parents of resilient students focus on preparing the person, not preparing the path.