



STEPS

CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Sowing To Empower Promising Students

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2022-2023

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our STEPS Christian Academy school community. It is our daily goal to sow into the lives of all our students spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, and physically. We want to see them grow, learn, and utilize skills that will establish a strong foundation for years after leaving us.

STEPS Christian Academy is a school with high standards. As a Christian private school, we reserve the right to deny admission to any student. Further, STEPS Christian Academy reserves the right to ask any student to leave at any time for any reason that the administration believes is in the best interest of the school. This also includes the right not to allow students to return for the following school year.

PHILOSOPHY

STEPS Christian Academy's Vision & Mission

The school was founded to provide elementary school students guidance in achieving academic success, leadership skills, and character development. We aim to glorify God by providing quality, Christ-centered education which challenges students and teachers to maximize their potential so that students are prepared to further their education and meet the challenges of life while becoming productive Christian citizens.

The vision of STEPS Christian Academy is to meet the academic needs of students and help families in planning for a successful future.

The mission of STEPS Christian Academy is to enroll students, PREK3 through 8th grade, and begin the journey of preparing them to be young, ambitious leaders within their homes and communities, through spiritual guidance, academic enrichment, character building, leadership development, supplemental guidance and family support, by fostering spiritual guidance and growth, fostering academic development, preparing students to be informed, caring, productive, and responsible citizens of society; preparing them for higher education.

Our school strives to be one which:

1. promotes the acquisition and application of Biblical knowledge and principles among its students in school and in their every day life
2. provides daily opportunities for students to worship God
3. integrates Bible teaching and shows the love of Jesus in all areas of the curriculum, as well as in discipline, co-curricular and extracurricular activities
4. spiritually prepares students to be trailblazers for what is good and moral as it relates to the Truth presented in the Word of God, the Bible
5. has administrators, faculty, and staff who are excellent Christian role models
6. has Board members who are strong, faithful Christians who serve the school based on God's standards
7. assesses its goals periodically to determine needs and areas for improvement
8. promotes the balance of academics, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and family life
9. utilizes a strong curriculum that challenges students to perform at or above grade level
10. helps students find the joy in learning and maintains a strong academic environment where standards are set to challenge all students
11. offers a wide range of curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs and activities
12. provides counseling services that assist with spiritual, emotional, academic, and social needs of its student
13. provides students with academic and occupational exploration prospects
14. enables students' discovery of their creative abilities, talents and passions
15. evaluates curriculum and instruction to ensure excellence and appropriateness

16. partners with families to monitor areas for improvement and to ensure the success of each child
17. values and encourages effective, efficient, and open communication among administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents using a variety of methods in the promotion of greater involvement in the educational process
18. administers a fair and consistent code of conduct and deals with infractions in a timely and appropriate manner
19. maintains a clean, aesthetically pleasing, safe, and appropriate facility and physical environment that meets the needs of students, faculty, and staff

Statement of School Beliefs

1. Teachers, administrators, and parents share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.
2. The ultimate goal of both STEPS Christian Academy's faculty and student is to glorify God. This goal fosters a desire to strive for academic excellence and to prepare for a life of Christian service.
3. Students need to demonstrate their understanding of essential knowledge and skills by actively involving themselves in solving problems and producing quality work.
4. Students need to apply their learning in meaningful contexts.
5. Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches.
6. Students learn only when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
7. Challenging expectations increase individual student performance.
8. Students' self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and respect among students and staff.
9. A safe environment promotes student learning.
10. Students learn to make appropriate decisions given a supportive and challenging learning environment among themselves and the school's staff.
11. The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

Christian Philosophy

STEPS Christian Academy is sincerely interested in the total life of each of its student - the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development. We aim to teach and set examples in a manner designed to build faith in God and to teach the Bible as the revealed Word of God to man as the only and sufficient rule of faith in practice, and to train in pure Biblical Christianity. Although the school has no power to enforce thought or belief on a student, the school does have the right to control the behavior of the students at school and at school events.

ADMISSIONS GUIDELINES

STEPS Christian Academy is a family-oriented institution. Students accepted for admission to SCA are bound by the standards, regulations, and requirements of the school even at school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds. **All parents and students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the standards, regulations, and requirements of this handbook.** It is strongly suggested that parents lead their children by setting an appropriate standard of compliance. In line with its Christian philosophy, the Academy strongly encourages parent-school communication and cooperation.

To qualify for admission to STEPS Christian Academy, the student and parent must display a willingness to subscribe to the goals, philosophy, disciplinary, and academic standards of STEPS Christian Academy.

STEPS Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or other school administered programs.

Parents of children with significant learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and/or physical challenges who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 service plan should strongly consider if STEPS Christian Academy is the best placement for their child. STEPS Christian Academy does not service IEPs or 504 plans as mandated in public schools, and does not currently supply the resources to manage and implement such plans.

Parents of enrolled students must sign the Parent Confirmation Sheet verifying that they have read, understand, and will support the contents of the Student/Parent Handbook prior to the start of the school year in which their child will be attending SCA.

FINANCIAL POLICY

Pre-K3

There is a one time nonrefundable registration fee of \$225 due at the time of enrollment. Tuition for the 2022-23 school year is \$695 per month which covers all meals (breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack). Each monthly payment is due on the 1st of each month. **If payment is not received by the 8th of each month, a \$35.00 late charge will be imposed.**

Pre-K4 to 8th Grade

There is a one time nonrefundable registration fee of \$225 due at the time of enrollment. Tuition for the 2022-23 school year is \$460 per month. Each monthly payment is due on the 1st of each month. **If payment is not received by the 8th of each month, a \$35.00 late charge will be imposed.**

It is the policy of STEPS Christian Academy that tuition and fees are non-refundable. All fees can be paid via checks, money order, or Zelle (203-745-9408).

Students who have outstanding balances of more than 30 days will not be admitted to class until the account is made current. **If you wish to communicate a special financial situation and request an extension on tuition due, it must be submitted in writing to the school board. The school board is the only authority in granting extension of payment.**

It is the desire of the school board to work with families that experience unforeseen financial problems. Communication from the parents is the first and very minimum requirement in working out an acceptable payment plan. Once an extension agreement is granted, payments must be made in full and on time. The Board reserves the right to use a third-party collection agency to collect past due accounts.

Student Fundraising

Students may only conduct individual fundraising if they are representing established organizations (scouts, charitable foundations, athletic teams, etc.) and have the permission of STEPS administration. Students may not solicit faculty and staff directly, but they may post order information in the office. Distribution of goods is the sole responsibility of the student and/or parent.

Withdrawals and Refunds

If any student is withdrawn from STEPS Christian Academy, at any time during the school year, tuition will be assessed to the end of the month in which the withdrawal occurs. Withdrawal will not be complete until the student's parents or guardian completes a withdrawal form. Tuition and fees will continue to accrue until an official withdrawal date is established.

Late Registration

Any parent/guardian enrolling a student after the first day of classes will be responsible for paying the registration fee at the time of enrollment. Subsequent tuition payments will be prorated.

Extended Care

After care services will be available for the 2022-2023 academic year. After care will be available Monday through Friday from 3:45 to 5:45 pm at a weekly cost of \$75. **There will be a late fee of \$7 for every 15-minute period per child per day. Students must be enrolled in the program to participate.**

Inter-Sessions

We have adopted a year-round calendar. The calendar will follow a 90/30 schedule which means we will be in school during the months of September, October, November, January, February, March, May, June, and July. We will be off during December, April, and August.

During the months of December and April, we will provide child care coverage for the first two weeks at a weekly rate as follows:

Pre-K3 - \$190 per week (breakfast, lunch, and snack included)

Pre-K4 to 8th grade - \$140 per week (breakfast, lunch, and snack included)

Aftercare service will be available and our regular rates will apply.

There will be no inter-session accommodations during the month of August.

Returned Check Policy

If your bank returns a check to the school, a \$25.00 service fee will be added to your account.

Re-enrollment

During the month of February, parents of current students are expected to sign an Intention Statement Form to indicate whether or not their child(ren) will be re-enrolling for the fall.

BACK TO SCHOOL ORIENTATION

We believe that partnership between school and home is essential for our students' success. At the beginning of the school year, a Back to School Orientation provides a wonderful opportunity to gather our school family, refresh previous connections, and establish new ones. It is also during this time that parents will be able to:

- * Cultivate channels of communication necessary between school staff and parents/guardians
- * Meet their child's teacher and drop off school supplies in classroom
- * Take care of any final preparations regarding uniforms, meal plan applications, medical documents, aftercare applications, etc.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

At STEPS Christian Academy, we utilize the Abeka curriculum which provides a Biblical worldview for all academic instruction. The Abeka curriculum is sound, developmentally appropriate, academically challenging, and suited for the spiritual growth of each student.

Our curriculum will be maintained at such a level as to provide quality, in-depth instruction and education to all our students, PreK through 8th grade. Students in all grade levels will be provided with an education equivalent, or superior, to that provided by the public school district in which they reside.

Grading Scale

A+	98-100	C+	77-79
A	93-97	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	60-66
B-	80-82	F	0-59

Standardized Testing

All kindergarten through 8th grade students will be assessed using the Stanford Assessment in the spring of each school year. The data gained from these assessments will serve to guide instruction and gauge each student's academic growth.

Academic Agreement

In the event that a student is experiencing academic difficulties, and averaging below a C, the following steps will be taken to communicate the child's needs to the parents and improve the child's academic performance.

- 1) After evaluation of the Progress Report/Report Card, the teacher will send a letter or meet with the parents explaining the student's weakness or challenge, the steps being taken in the classroom to help the child, and steps that the parents may take at home to improve performance.
- 2) If the student receives two or more D's and/or one F on a report card, STEPS Christian Academy will take the following steps:
 - a) A letter will be sent to the parents from the school administration notifying the parents about the academic difficulties of the student.
 - b) A date will be set for a conference with parents.
 - c) The student will be placed on academic probation. This status will include mandatory tutoring and an academic plan. An Academic Agreement will be signed by the parent and teacher based on the results of the conference.
 - d) The teacher will continue to monitor the student's performance and send weekly reports to the parents.

Retention of a Student

Students who do not make adequate progress in any core academic subject may be considered for retention. However, we believe it should be the collective wisdom and consensus of the staff professionals when a student is retained in a grade. Therefore, in the final marking period of the academic year, a committee will be formed to determine retention. The committee may include the principal, assistant principal, classroom teacher, one other teacher or tutor, and possibly the school counselor/psychologist. Input from the parents will also be considered at this time.

Homework

Homework is an integral part of the school program and will provide for the child the opportunity to develop important skills, such as self-discipline, responsibility, and punctuality. Homework assignments are designed to provide repetition and practice of skills learned in the classroom and review. Other projects are assigned to develop creativity, study skills, and encourage further mastery of subject matter covered in the classroom. Each student will be expected to complete homework assignments **neatly**, **accurately**, and **on time**.

Each teacher will assign homework for practice and reinforcement. No homework should be too time consuming or too difficult for the student. Each student should use an agenda to organize assignments, keep track of due dates for assignments and scheduled tests. Homework will also serve as a means of communication between teachers and parents. Parents should review the assignment notebooks/folders each day to acquaint themselves with what their child is studying. Parents should provide assistance to students on assignments, but the child should do his/her work with a minimal amount of help.

At STEPS, we want homework to have specific purposes. With this in mind, the following suggestions will serve as guidelines for teachers to:

- * Use homework to reinforce new lessons or review material that needs further mastery.
- * Individualize the assignments when deemed necessary. Everyone in the class may not need to review the same material at the same time.
- * When possible, make the assignment as creative and interesting as possible. Some upper school assignments may be a joint project or endeavor of several classes.
- * Homework should not be given as a punishment.

Computers

Students will utilize the computers and other devices as a resource for learning content. It is expected that as students use STEPS computers they will exhibit the highest level of integrity and responsibility with regards to internet safety and wisdom. STEPS computers and/or devices are to be used for school assignments ONLY.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Absences

It is understood that absences from school may be necessary from time to time. On the day of absence, parents must call the school (203-745-9408) between 7:45 and 9:00 a.m. to report their student absent. If the parent cannot call, a written excuse stating the day's absence and the reason should be sent with the student on the day of return.

Students are permitted to make up the classwork missed during their absence. The student may have the number of class days missed, plus one, to complete missed work. For example, if a student misses 2 days of school, he/she will have 2 days plus one more (3 days) to complete the missed work. The work is then due on the following day (day 4).

Tardiness

Please be aware that habitual tardiness is disruptive to classroom instruction. Punctuality is a critical factor in the instructional program of our school. It is expected that parents will help his/her child learn and develop proper discipline and a sense of responsibility as it relates to punctuality. This can be done by ensuring that your child is consistently on time for school. Missing more than one and a half hours of the day because of tardiness will be counted as one-half day absence.

TRANSPORTATION

Currently, parents are responsible for their child's transportation to and from school on a daily basis. If a child is leaving school with another parent, the school must be notified in advance.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival

Our school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. for all students. This means that students are expected to be seated and prepared for the day at 8:00 a.m.

Students may be dropped off at 7:15 a.m. Students who arrive prior to 8:00 a.m. will report to early care. From there students will be dismissed to the cafeteria if they are on our meal plan or need to order/eat breakfast. **At no time will students be permitted to wander the building.**

Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must go to the front office, accompanied by a parent, to complete the sign in sheet. A tardy slip will be given to the student for admittance to their classroom.

Dismissal

Unless enrolled in our after care program, all students must be picked up promptly at 3:30 p.m. Parents who need to pick up children earlier than the regular dismissal time must come to the front office and complete the sign-out sheet. Our personnel will locate your child and summon him/her to the office to meet you. Parents are not permitted to go directly to the classroom.

Children will not be released to a person who is not on the approved contact/pick up list or is a stranger to school staff without prior notification from you.

EARLY AND AFTER CARE

Early Care

Early care begins at 7:15 a.m. Students may not be dropped off prior to 7:15 a.m. There is no charge for early care.

Students arriving prior to 8:00 a.m. report directly to early care. It is not necessary or permissible for parents to take students to the gym/cafeteria.

Students are free to bring breakfast items to eat during early care in the cafeteria. Breakfast is also available for purchase. See the **Meal Service** section for details. Students arriving after 7:45 a.m. will not be permitted to go to breakfast; breakfast service ends at 7:50 a.m.

After Care

After care hours are 3:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

There is a daily charge of \$15.00 for each child enrolled in our after care program. Any student not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will automatically be included in the after care program and will be charged for this service. The after care program ends at 5:45 p.m. If a student is not picked up by 5:45 p.m., there will be an additional charge of \$7.00 for every 15-minute period per child. **After care fees are paid every Friday.** Failure to pay these charges on time could result in denying your child attendance in aftercare.

Feel free to pack a snack for your child to be eaten in the aftercare program. Snacks and beverages are also available for purchase during aftercare. The cost is \$.50 per item.

Students in after care will be given time to do homework. If a student stays after school for an extracurricular activity and is not picked up at the designated time, the student will go to after care until parent arrives. A charge for use of after care services will be incurred. Regardless of age, no student is to roam the school building or property unsupervised.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Discipline of Students

At STEPS we have expectations to which all our students are held accountable. These expectations apply to students while they are on school property, or at school related events off campus. The core of these expectations is as follows:

1. Respect God.
2. Respect STEPS - school personnel and property.
3. Respect self.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children will behave in a manner that will not take away from a safe, orderly, and academically productive learning environment.

For minor incidences, consequences will be issued by the teacher. For major offenses, students may be issued suspension or expulsion by STEPS administration.

At STEPS, we believe:

1. Every teacher at STEPS Christian Academy has the right to teach and every student has the right to learn.
2. One student's choice to misbehave will not be allowed to interfere with the learning opportunities of other students.
3. A student's misbehavior will not excuse him/her from successfully completing the learning objectives.
4. Every situation that calls for discipline is an opportunity to teach expected behavior.

Parents and students are responsible for knowing teacher expectations and procedures. Teachers will communicate with parent about concerns related to their child's behavior choices. Teachers and staff will give opportunities for grace to each student as they demonstrate appropriate behaviors.

Students may be placed on a Behavioral Probation (BP) for level 3 and level 4 offenses. The Behavioral Probation will commence on the day of the offense and will continue for a period determined by the administration. Behavioral Probation requires that the student make immediate and consistent correction to the inappropriate behavior of concern. If there is no noticeable change at the end of the established BP, the parents will be asked to withdraw the student from STEPS immediately.

Discipline will be administered to correct inappropriate behavior, not to punish. All students will be given the opportunity to admit their misbehavior, show remorse, and become a positive influence at STEPS Christian Academy.

In the event of negligent or willful property damage, the student and/or his/her parents will be responsible for the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged property.

Behavior Levels

Level I - Behaviors that DO NOT significantly violate the rights of others or cause a safety issue

Examples of Offenses:

- * Dress code violations
- * Running in the hallway or classroom
- * Getting out of seat without permission
- * Leaving the classroom without permission
- * Refusing to do work
- * Making inappropriate noises
- * Disrespecting property (others' or the school's)
- * Other offenses deemed inappropriate by teacher or other personnel

Procedures and Consequence Framework:

- * Inform student of rule violated
- * Describe expected behavior
- * Contact parent, if necessary
- * Debrief and reteach expected behavior
- * Inform student of appropriate consequence
- * Incident and consequence may be documented in student's file
- * Other appropriate consequence assigned by teacher or administration

Level II - Behaviors that significantly violate the rights of others, cause a safety issue for self or others, and/or chronic level I behavior

Examples of Offenses:

- * Repeated level I behaviors
- * Arguing with teacher or other authority
- * Disrespectful attitude
- * Foul language
- * Instigation
- * Claiming work as own when it has been copied, plagiarized
- * Cheating
- * Lying
- * Theft
- * Threatening statements or actions
- * Use of cell phone or other electronic devices during the school day (taking pictures or videos, texting, calling, etc.)
- * Other offenses deemed inappropriate by teacher or other personnel

Procedures and Consequence Framework:

- * Inform student of rule violated
- * Describe expected behavior
- * Removal of student from situation
- * Contact parent, if necessary
- * Incident and consequence may be documented in student's file
- * Conference with school counselor (as needed)
- * Other appropriate consequence assigned by teacher or administration

Level III - Behaviors that require immediate removal, are chronic level II, and/or require administration involvement

Examples of Offenses:

- * Repeated level II behaviors
- * Fighting
- * Throwing classroom objects at others
- * Making racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual slurs
- * Possessing look alike weapons
- * Deliberate, malicious destruction of school property
- * Bullying, harassment, intimidation - repeated negative actions (electronic, verbal, or physical) against another student or adult
- * Public displays of affection - kissing, holding of hands, hugging, or other displays of affection while on school property or during school sponsored functions
- * Sexual harassment
- * Misuse or inappropriate use of school technology or internet
- * Forgery
- * Inappropriate physical contact of any nature
- * Other offenses deemed inappropriate by teacher or other personnel

Procedures and Consequence Framework:

- * Immediate removal of student from situation
- * Inform student of rule violated
- * Describe expected behavior
- * Conference with school counselor (as needed)
- * Contact parent
- * Incident and consequence documented in student's file
- * 1-5 day suspension (in or out of school) or other consequence as deemed appropriate by administration
- * Student placed on Behavioral Probation

Level IV - Behaviors that require immediate removal and require administration and/or enforcement involvement

Examples of Offenses:

- * Repeated level III behaviors
- * Possessing weapons
- * Assault of staff
- * Use or possession of illegal drugs on school grounds or on/at school sponsored functions
- * Other offenses deemed inappropriate by administration

Procedures and Consequence Framework:

- * Immediate removal of student from situation
- * Inform student of rule violated
- * Describe expected behavior
- * Contact parent
- * Contact law enforcement (as appropriate)
- * Incident and consequence documented in student's file
- * Immediate expulsion of student

Administrative Removal of Students

Students may be suspended from school for up to five days by the school administration. Suspensions may be “in school” or “out of school”. This is determined by the school administration.

The administration or classroom teacher may remove a student from the classroom or school activity without prior notice if the continued presence of the student poses a danger to others or to property, or if the child is choosing to disrupt the educational process.

When repeated offenses occur by the student, and/or there is a lack of cooperation on the part of the parent/guardian, the administration may place the student on probation. The probation period may be any length of time from two weeks to four weeks. Probation is the same as notification of intent to remove a student from STEPS. It may be given for academic or behavioral difficulties.

A student may be expelled for conduct which violates our school's Code of Conduct. Such expulsion is permanent. Expelled students may never reenroll at STEPS.

The following procedures will be followed:

1. Both student and parents are given prior notice of the intent to expel and the reasons for the action.
2. If a student is removed on an emergency basis, the parent will be contacted immediately, and an explanation will be provided.

ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-INTIMIDATION, ANTI-BULLYING

Introduction

STEPS Christian Academy includes the following rules and guidelines for implementation by all staff, contracted personnel, students, and volunteers. Our anti-harassment, anti-intimidation, and anti-bullying policy is inclusive of all stakeholders associated with STEPS. Throughout the policy, the rules apply equally to all stakeholders of STEPS, and not just students.

Goal

The goal of this policy is to provide an educational work environment which is free of harassment of any type. It is our desire to establish a climate which fosters understanding of individual uniqueness, recognizes positive behavior, and promotes a spirit of teamwork/cooperation.

Definition

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is defined as any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act that a student, or group of students, exhibits toward another student(s) repeatedly and, the behavior causes both:

- * mental or physical harm to the student, and
- * is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an environment that is intimidating, threatening, or abusive for the other student

This behavior may or may not be exhibited toward an individual because of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. It could include, but is not limited to name-calling, taunting, hazing, threatening, coercion, intimidating, stalking, sexual harassment, or bullying. This extends to cyber-bullying which uses any means of technology.

Application of Policy

This policy applies to:

- * all activities on school property
- * all activities off school property, but approved for student participation or sponsored by STEPS
- * all activities that are related such as field trips, athletic, drama, speech events
- * behavior enroute to or from school
- * behavior which uses STEPS technology for transmission

Note that aggressive behavior which takes place out of school, but which carries over in a disruptive manner at school may also be investigated with the possibility of disciplinary intervention or action.

Racism

Racism in any form will not be tolerated. Racial slurs, slang, comments or any action that may be construed as derogatory to any race will result in immediate disciplinary action. "I was just joking" is not an acceptable defense. As a Christian school, it is the stated policy to treat all students equally, respectfully, and with the love of God.

Verbal/Physical Threats

STEPS Christian Academy takes the stand of "No Tolerance" concerning one student threatening harm or intentionally harming another student. All types of threatening speech or behavior will be taken seriously. Students should never threaten a classmate or any other person, even as a joke. Students who threaten another person, the property of a person, the school, or the school building in any form will face immediate suspension, and possible expulsion, and the authorities will be notified. Students who violate this policy may be suspended, and possibly expelled, immediately. The length of the suspension depends on the severity of the action.

Reporting

It is important that students or adults report incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying promptly to a teacher or the administration of STEPS. Any report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying needs to be documented. Students or adults may request anonymity. If this is designated, the investigation may be restricted, and discussion with the perpetrator may or may not be possible. The request to remain anonymous may be rescinded within 10 days of documentation.

Investigated and confirmed cases of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be reported to the school board.

Miscellaneous Violations of Anti-Aggression Policy

The staff, administration, or school board will also take appropriate steps to discipline anyone who:

- * engages in retaliation against a person who has made a report, or an allegation or harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- * knowingly reports or files a false complaint of harassment, intimidation, or bullying

Training and Prevention

The STEPS board, administration, and staff will actively engage in instruction and activities with the goal of eliminating forms of aggressive behavior and establishing a climate of respect and responsibility. To this end, STEPS will seek to provide:

- * open communication with students and parents
- * explanations to parents and students regarding student behavior expectations
- * in-service training for faculty and staff

- * strategies to help students know what to do if they experience a harassment, intimidation, or bullying situation

The commitment of STEPS Christian Academy is to review the implementation of the anti-harassment, anti-intimidation, anti-bullying policy and procedures annually.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

STEPS Christian Academy has elected to adopt a dress code to present a professional look for the student. STEPS Christian Academy believes that neatness in appearance leads to excellence in behavior. **The dress code is to be followed at all times while at school or on field trips.**

The school administration may elect to change uniform styles when it is deemed necessary or advantageous to do so.

Uniform Dress Code - PreK3 to Eighth Grade

Girls

Tops - Red Polos
Bottoms - Black uniform pants, skirts, skorts, or dresses
Shoes - Black or brown sneakers
Socks - Black, gray, or brown
Sweater (Cardigan only) - Black

Boys

Tops - Red Polos
Bottoms - Black uniform pants or shorts
Shoes - Black or brown sneakers
Socks - Black, gray or brown
Sweater (Cardigan only) - Black

Sweaters should be plain - no logos or hoodies.

Belts are not required for students in Pre-K3 through first grade. For students in grades two through eight, a black or brown belt must be worn if the uniform requires it.

Uniforms must be clean, free from holes, fit the student properly (not excessively tight or baggy), and neat at all times.

Red polo shirt and gym shirt **MUST** be purchased at www.frenchtoast.com. School code is **QS5HFNS**.

Dress Code for P.E.

Gym shirts, black sweat pants, and athletic shoes must be worn on gym days.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

If a student becomes ill, injured or require medical attention during the school day every effort will be made to contact a parent/guardian. If the school is unable to contact a parent, the office will attempt to contact the emergency contact(s) listed in the enrollment packet. It is expected that students will be picked up within an hour of being contacted.

Please inform the school immediately if there are any changes regarding contact information for yourself or for those designated/authorized to pick up your child.

Illness

For the welfare of your child and others in the school, all children who are sick **MUST** be kept at home. No student should be brought to school while ill. Should your child become ill during the school day, every effort will be made to assist him/her. You will be required to pick up your child if he/she presents any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Runny nose (other than clear drainage from allergies)
- Rash of unknown origin
- Head lice or nits
- Pink, teary, itchy, stinging or burning eyes
- General illness or fatigue which makes it impossible for the student to participate in classroom activities
- Any other symptoms related to COVID-19, example, loss of taste or smell, etc

If a student develops a fever of 100 degrees or higher, he/she may not attend class until their temperature remains under 100 degrees without the aid of medication for 24 hours.

If a student vomits, regardless of the presence of a fever, he/she is not permitted to attend class until 24 hours after the last vomiting event.

If a student has a fever or has vomited while at school, they must be picked up from school within an hour to avoid the spread of disease.

When a child has a diagnosed communicable disease, other parents will be notified by letter while protecting the identity of the child with the condition. The child will be readmitted to school when all symptoms of this illness are absent or with a written statement from the child's doctor that the condition is no longer contagious.

Injury

Should a student become injured while at school, other than minor scratches, scrapes or bumps, the parent will be contacted immediately. If the injury is serious enough to warrant a doctor's immediate attention, an ambulance will be called. For minor scratches and scrapes, a note will be sent home with the child explaining the circumstances of the injury.

Medications

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff: **all medications, prescribed or over-the-counter, must be kept in the nurse's office during the school day. This includes cough drops, antacids, ointments, and other non-prescription medications.** If it becomes necessary to dispense any medication to a student at school, it is the responsibility of the parent to furnish the staff with the following information:

Prescribed Medication

- 1) A medical release form giving STEPS Christian Academy permission to dispense the medication during school hours. The release form must be signed and dated by a custodial parent and doctor. Information on the form will include the student's name, grade, teacher, dosage, physician information and contact phone numbers for the parents.
- 2) Medication must be delivered to the school and retrieved from the school by a parent. **No medication will be accepted from a student.** All prescription drugs must be in the original pharmacy container. The container must be labeled with the physician's name, the name of the medication, the correct dosage to be given, and intake intervals.

Over-the-counter Medication

- 1) A medical release form giving STEPS Christian Academy personnel permission to dispense the medication during school hours. The medical release form must be signed and dated by a custodial parent. Information on the form

will include the student's name, grade, teacher, dosage, circumstances under which medication is to be given, and contact phone numbers for the parents.

- 2) Over-the-counter medications must be delivered to the school and retrieved from the school by a parent. **No medication will be accepted from a student.** All medications must be in its original, unopened bottle. The bottle must be labeled with the student's name and the correct dosage for the student.

No medications will be administered without a medical release form. NO MEDICATION OF ANY KIND WILL BE DISPENSED BASED ON A PHONE CONVERSATION. No student may give medication of any kind to another student.

Feminine Hygiene

Female students who have started their menstrual cycle must provide their own feminine hygiene supplies. If your daughter requires medication for cramps, the protocol for prescription or over-the-counter medications must be followed.

Sanitation Protocol

Teachers and children are expected to wash their hands with soap after using bathroom and before preparing or eating food. Common surfaces are disinfected daily. Toys and other materials in the classroom are washed frequently. Bathrooms and floors are cleaned and disinfected regularly.

Medical Exemptions

Requests for medical exemptions from any class or activity must be submitted to the administration and/or accompanied by a doctor's note.

Covid Policy

Please be confident that the health of our students and staff is our primary concern. Consequently, every effort is being made to ensure that we have a safe and healthy school year.

Please see separate COVID-19 protocols.

WELLNESS POLICY

At STEPS, we will promote the importance of personal wellness to our students. The methods for promotion will include, but are not limited to, flyers, in-class discussions and lessons. Our goal is to help students understand proper nutrition and physical activity practice for optimal living.

Goals

1. Every student signed up for our meal plan will have access to nutritionally balanced meals daily.
2. Every student will have opportunity for a minimum of 45 minutes of physical outdoor activity each day.
3. Every student will be educated in the importance of proper nutrition and physical activity.

MEAL SERVICE

STEPS Cafe provides breakfast and lunch at a monthly cost of \$65.00 per student. A menu will be provided at the beginning of each month. If a student is not enrolled in our meal plan, meals may still be purchased at a daily cost of \$3.25.

Please note, breakfast will be served between 7:15 and 7:45 only.

If your child brings breakfast and/or lunch from home, please ensure that all foods are packed in an air-tight, leak-proof container. **Please note that we are unable to warm up food sent from home.**

Due to allergy, dietary, and health concerns, students are not permitted to share any portion of their meals with another student.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Personal Technology

Cell phones may be brought to school **AT THE STUDENT'S OWN RISK**. STEPS is not responsible for personal technology that is lost, stolen, or damaged. While at school, all personal technology must be **turned off and kept in the student's book bag for the duration of the school day**. If a student does not follow this rule, the technology will be taken and kept in the office for a minimum of one week. If there is a legitimate reason for a student to make a call, the staff can give permission for the student to use their cell phone or allow them to use the school phone.

Parent Conferences, Visits, and Communication

In order to maintain a safe, orderly, and consistent climate for learning, the presence of persons other than contracted and volunteer school staff in the school building is discouraged during regular school hours. If parents need to speak with a teacher, they may call the school office or contact the teacher to schedule a conference.

Upon entering the building, parents and visitors must check in at the front office. Please avoid unnecessary classroom interruptions.

The STEPS staff welcomes a partnership with parents/guardians. Stability is established when there is partnership between home and the school. Often, the lack of communication is at the center of misunderstandings. Communication between staff and parents should be direct, but tactful. At STEPS, we will follow biblical principles for communication as outlined in Matthew 18 when resolving issues or registering a complaint. It is to begin with the school staff directly involved in the situation (usually the teacher), then administration, and lastly our school board. Only policy may be appealed to the school board. Individual discipline decisions are not eligible for appeal.

To contact a staff member by phone, please call the school number at (203) 745-9408. Office staff will deliver the message, and your child's teacher will call at the end of school day. Your child's teacher will also be available to meet with you for conferences.

Change of Contact or Address Information

It is extremely important that we have the most current, viable contact and address information on file for each student for the purposes of emergency and regular communication. In the event that a student and his/her family changes contact (phone and/or email) or address information, the school office must be notified as soon as possible. A change of information form is available upon request.

Recess

Students have outdoor recess every day unless the temperature falls below 25 degrees (with wind chill) or there is inclement weather. Parents must ensure that their children are appropriately dressed for the weather so that this time of recreation can be enjoyable.

Release of Student Information

Student information and records are only released to the custodial parents. In order for student information and/or records to be released to anyone other than the custodial parents a Release of Records form must be filled out, signed

by the custodial parent(s), and submitted to the school office a minimum of two business days prior to releasing the information. The exception to this is formal requests from public or private schools.

Calendar

Our calendar is available on our website and in the school office. A copy is sent to families with supply lists.

Fine for Damaged or Lost Materials

Any school issued materials (books, technology device, etc.) that are lost and/or damaged beyond repair will incur a fine for replacement.

School Day Cancellations

On days when the weather or other circumstances threatens the well-being of students or significantly impedes safe, effective learning, school will be cancelled. As soon as the decision to cancel school is made, we will notify families via EZTexting (our system for sending mass messages) and our Facebook page. We will also notify WTNH News 8 that will provide on-line and on-screen updates.

Birthdays

Your child is allowed to dress down on his/her birthday. All celebrations will be limited to student's classroom only.

Field Trips

Field trips are considered an important part of the educational program at STEPS Christian Academy. All trips are carefully planned to give the students educationally enriching experiences that are not available in the confines of the classroom. Students may be required to complete assignments based on the field trips which will count toward the student's grade. For that reason, participation on field trips is encouraged.

Parents will be notified in advance of any upcoming field trip. Students are expected to dress in STEPS Christian Academy uniform (unless otherwise stated) for all field trips. Students should dress and conduct themselves in a manner that will present a positive image of STEPS.

Pre-Kindergarten

Our goal is to create a warm and nurturing environment that supports learning. We believe that the early years are the most pivotal and the experiences gained during this time will establish the foundation upon which future academic learning will build. **All students entering our Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 programs MUST BE FULLY POTTY TRAINED.**

Please note the following as it relates to our pre-kindergarten program:

- * Folder - please check your child's folder everyday
- * Toys - toys from home are not allowed
- * Change of clothing - occasionally accidents and spills happen. For this reason, your child will need an extra set of uniform in a ziplock bag, appropriately labeled.

Student/Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

We thank you and thank God for allowing us to serve you and your family. We look forward to a fruitful and rewarding year. To that end, at least one parent/guardian must confirm that this handbook has been read, understood, and will be supported by all parties associated with STEPS Christian Academy students.

The acknowledgment signature page (colored sheet) is located with the other enrollment documents. Please sign and return the form when completing your enrollment/re-enrollment process.

PARENT SIGNATURE PAGE

The intent of this handbook is to provide general guidelines to which the students and parents should adhere. In the course of the school year, situations may arise which are not specifically covered in this handbook. The administration reserves the right to exercise its administrative prerogative in responding to these new circumstances.

Please sign and return to school by Thursday, September 1, 2022.

I have read and understand the STEPS Christian Academy Parent/Student Handbook, and I will abide by the rules and regulations stated herein.

Student's Name

Student's Grade

Parent Signature

Date