

Family Handbook

2024-2025



I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.

Psalm 13:6



NORTHDALE
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

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WELCOME

Northdale Christian Academy

Dear NCA Families,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you and your children to Northdale Christian Academy! Every year new families in the Tampa community are entrusting their children to our teachers at NCA. Like the Tampa community, our student population is increasingly more diverse as our academy grows. This brings us joy as we look forward to the day when believers of every nation, tribe, people and language stand before the throne of God in heaven (Revelation 7:9). Every effort of our academy focuses on strengthening our students for this life and that life to come.

We appreciate the confidence you have shown in allowing us to train your children. We eagerly look forward to partnering with you in educating and enlightening the next generation of young leaders.

The administration, teachers, and staff of NCA value excellence in education, and we hold ourselves accountable for a thorough education of the whole child – mind, body, and spirit. Every aspect of our academy conveys dedication to excellence: a safe, structured, and nurturing learning environment, a desirable student-to-teacher ratio, and well-maintained and expanding facilities, just to name a few.

We trust that this handbook will help you better understand our program of quality Christian education at NCA. We encourage you to carefully read and discuss it with your children and welcome the opportunity to answer any questions.

May God bless our continuing efforts with another outstanding year of educating the mind and enlightening the heart!

In Christ's service,

Mr. Dane Mattes
Principal

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A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

Northdale Christian Academy is a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The WELS has a rich tradition of academic excellence in its preschool through grade 12 school system. The WELS has operated highly regarded schools across the United States, the Caribbean, and elsewhere worldwide for over 165 years. Currently WELS churches and associations operate 362 early childhood centers, 284 grade schools, 27 high schools, and 2 preparatory schools across the nation serving a total enrollment of 46,601 students (2022-2023). Northdale Christian Academy is part of one of the largest private school networks in America.

The Wisconsin Synod has provided excellent instructors to these schools by training its own teachers since 1884. Each of our teachers has a minimum of a Bachelor of Science in Education degree. Continuing education for our teachers is also a priority through participation in various in-services, conferences, seminars, and classes. It is gratifying to report that, on average, students attending WELS schools annually tend to outperform their peers by a considerable margin on national achievement tests. We humbly thank God for His blessings upon our schools. Northdale Christian Academy is proud to continue this rich tradition of academic excellence in the Tampa community!

Accreditation

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod School Accreditation (WELSSA) has established the standards for accrediting our school. These standards and the WELSSA Commission have been formally recognized and approved by the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA). NCPSA has established accreditation procedures to facilitate the appropriate application, review, and recognition of qualified and credible accrediting associations serving private schools.

Northdale Christian Academy has received exemplary accreditation. We have proven compliance with WELSSA's educational standards and are a member in good standing. Schools working toward accreditation must complete a comprehensive self-study, host a site visit team of educators outside the school every five years, and develop and implement a school improvement plan to maintain accreditation. The school files an annual report detailing their progress in meeting their goals and staying in compliance with the WELSSA standards.

Standards to be met include:

1. The School's Mission and Implementation
2. The School's Relationship with the Congregation
3. The School's Relationship with the Home
4. The School's Relationship with Students
5. The School's Relationship with the Community
6. The School's Relationship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
7. The School's Plan for Enrolling Students
8. School Climate
9. School Governance & Administration
10. Professional Personnel (Faculty and Support Staff)
11. Curriculum
12. Instruction
13. Student Services
14. Physical Facilities
15. Information Management

Northdale Christian Academy was awarded full accreditation in 2011, 2016, and 2022. The annual School Improvement Plan is available on request from the academy principal.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

As the Bible teaches, “God does not show favoritism” (Acts 10:34). Therefore, Northdale Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, sex, national and 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 and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

PHILOSOPHY

A Christian Academy...

Northdale Christian Academy is dedicated to providing excellence in education for all its students. Our degree-holding teachers are committed to achieving this excellence by maintaining high academic standards; a safe, disciplined, nurturing environment; and proactive home-school communication.

In cooperation with our parents, NCA will provide the knowledge and experience students need to become responsible and caring family members who will be productive citizens and leaders in the multicultural and technological society of the 21st century.

NCA offers a comprehensive and varied curriculum, with all subjects being taught from a distinctively Christian perspective. This challenging curriculum is designed with flexibility to meet the needs of each student as it encourages exploration, critical thinking, problem solving, and sound study habits. The ultimate goal is to cultivate and maximize each student’s unique talents and abilities, so he/she will be well-equipped to serve as a valuable Christian member of today’s society.

Our educational philosophy maintains that each child progresses at an appropriate academic level. To that end our objective is to maintain class sizes of approximately ten students per grade level. Our teachers’ dedication and energy ensures that no child is left behind or falls through the cracks.

At NCA each child’s individual interests are encouraged and rewarded. Our teachers tailor their teaching to challenge each student, not to a class average. The diverse learning environment at NCA provides its students the opportunity to grow as scholars, musicians, artists, athletes, leaders, citizens – and most certainly as Christians – all to God’s glory.

Dedicated to Excellence...

Northdale Christian Academy’s commitment is to assist parents/guardians in the God-given responsibility to “...bring up children in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4) Christian education is Christ-centered education. The Savior and His love for us are at the heart of all we think, do, and say. Parents and teachers alike have confidence in the Lord’s command and promise: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Northdale Christian Academy is a place where children learn to fold their hands and bow their heads and talk to God. It’s a place where the Bible serves as the framework for absolute guidance and truth. It’s a place where love for God and His Word are instilled and nurtured in our precious children. It’s a place to learn Bible stories and apply them to everyday life. It’s a place to mold and shape the hearts and minds of impressionable children for a life of faith. In short, NCA is a place where children grow in their relationship with the Lord on their journey toward Christian maturity.

Academy Establishment and Governance

Northdale Christian Academy was established in August of 2000 under the name Northdale Lutheran School for the first 20 years of operation. School operations continued under the name Northdale Christian Academy (NCA) with the start of the 2020-2021 school year and presently serves students in 3 year-old-preschool through eighth grade. NCA is fully owned, maintained, and operated by Northdale Lutheran Church, a member congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The academy's control and supervision are exercised by the voting membership of Northdale Lutheran Church through its Ministry Leadership Team (MLT) and the appointed Academy Ministry Board (AMB).

MISSION/VISION/OBJECTIVES STATEMENTS

Mission

Northdale Christian Academy assists families by providing an excellent education in a safe, Christian environment.

Vision

Northdale Christian Academy prepares students three years old through eighth grade with a comprehensive educational program. The Biblical viewpoint encompasses all aspects of our academy's ideology through the social, emotional, physical, and academic disciplines. Our qualified Christian teachers partner with families to equip students with the skills to be life-long learners who successfully navigate and contribute as members of a diverse society.

Objectives

The Christian education program of Northdale Christian Academy strives to provide for each child's complete educational welfare and to guide him or her in the maximum development of his or her spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical abilities. Parents and teachers must work together in their common goal of training God's children to walk in His ways. The objectives of the school are as follows:

- Provide daily opportunities to each child to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior through the diligent teaching of God's Word.
- Provide a Christian environment to nurture each student's individual development spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically.
- Nurture the student's spiritual and earthly welfare by means of complete Scriptural education, as well as teaching all secular subjects from the Christian viewpoint.
- Teach students to faithfully use their time, talents, and treasures to glorify God, and provide opportunities for service in the community.
- Offer assistance in Christian parenting for all families.
- Equip students to share the love of Jesus with others through their words and actions.
- Set a clearly defined code of conduct and teach all students respect for rules and others' rights as God's Word directs us.
- Promote opportunities for parental involvement in carrying out NCA's mission.

HOME & SCHOOL COOPERATION

God has given parents the responsibility to "bring [children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Northdale Christian Academy exists to assist parents in that responsibility.

What your family can expect from the faculty and staff of Northdale Christian Academy

The faculty and staff of Northdale Christian Academy will ...

- Demonstrate a strong personal faith in Jesus Christ, a commitment to the teachings of the Bible, and a dedication to the Lutheran teaching ministry.
- Regularly attend church and Bible study.
- Teach God’s Word in its truth and purity.
- Teach all subject matter in light of God’s Word.
- Treat students/parents with love and respect as individuals and redeemed children of God. (Titus 2:7)
- Use their professional expertise to meet students’ spiritual, academic, social, emotional, and physical needs and prepare them for lives of service and for eternity.
- Grow professionally for the benefit of your child and this educational ministry.
- Maintain a safe, Christ-centered school environment.
- Communicate clearly, consistently, frequently, and openly with you regarding your child’s progress and all other academy matters.
- Be prepared for class each day and scheduled parent-teacher conferences.
- Follow the policies outlined in the school handbook as well as other policies developed by Northdale Christian Academy’s leadership and academy board.

What Northdale Christian Academy expects of families

Parents/guardians will ...

- Support the spiritual instruction provided at Northdale Christian Academy.
- Support their children in their studies and assignments for their academic success and spiritual growth.
- Communicate frequently and openly with teachers regarding their children’s progress.
- Treat teachers with love and respect as individuals and redeemed children of God. (Hebrews 13:17)
- Bring problems or concerns directly to the responsible teacher in order to arrive at a solution.
- Ensure that their children are in class and ready to begin by 8:00 (K-8) or 9:00 (preschool) each school day, dressed in accordance with the academy dress code.
- Communicate with Northdale Christian Academy when a child will be absent or tardy.
- Promote their children’s health by providing healthy snacks and lunches and ensuring adequate sleep.
- Make timely payment of all tuition and fees based on the terms of the annual financial agreement.
- Remain informed of academy matters by reading the weekly newsletter and other academy communication.
- Participate in home/academy visits, orientation, and parent-teacher conferences.
- Support the policies outlined in the family handbook as well as other policies developed by Northdale Christian Academy’s leadership and academy board.

FACULTY & STAFF

Administration:

Principal Mr. Dane Mattes
 Pastor Matthew Guse
 Early Childhood Director Mrs. Joanne Mattes

Brad Storm (Academy Ministry Board Chairman)
 Nick Allan (Academy Ministry Board Secretary)
 Troy Goldberg (Academy Ministry Board Member)

Teachers:

Mrs. Joanne Mattes (3K & VPK)
 Mrs. Mary Mosakowski (Kindergarten)
 Miss Aimee Hardman (Grades 1 & 2)
 Mr. Christopher Haring (Grades 3 & 4)
 Mrs. Elizabeth Guse (Grades 5 & 6)

Mr. Daniel Roemhildt (Grades 7 & 8)
 Pastor Guse (Grades 7 & 8)
 Mr. Steve Schroeder (Grades 7 & 8)
 Mrs. Sarah Schroeder (Departmentalized, K-8)
 Mr. Dane Mattes (Grades 7 & 8)

Support Staff:

Mrs. Kallie Mendez (administrative assistant)
Mrs. Jennifer Storm (early childhood aide)
Mrs. Camelia Young (early childhood aide & after school care)

Volunteers:

At Northdale, we seek to develop and maintain a thriving volunteer community. We thank our volunteers for their many and varied services to Northdale Christian Academy. Their work is often done behind-the-scenes and without recognition. They are a blessing to this ministry.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Northdale Christian Academy seeks to educate the mind and enlighten the heart through the timeless truths of God’s Word. Northdale’s curricular framework is balanced and comprehensive. Its design promotes cognitive growth in all of its objectives, activities, strategies, and resources. The curriculum considers the wide range of cultural backgrounds and learning styles of its students, offering flexibility to remediate the struggling student while also enriching the gifted learner. The Northdale Christian Academy student will be fully equipped with the tools needed to succeed in and out of the classroom.

Religion

The main component of Northdale’s religion curriculum is the Christ Light series, which presents both Old and New Testament Bible stories in an exciting, colorful, and memorable way. Each lesson has a key truth that is meaningfully discussed and applied to the children’s lives. This comprehensive curriculum gives students a firmly rooted foundation in God’s Word, equipping them to live as children of God. Memorization skills are enhanced as students commit Bible passages to memory. Every Wednesday morning, the students gather for a brief chapel service in the church. Parents and friends are invited to join the students for this devotion. The devotions will include the collection of offerings for our school mission projects. During Advent (December) and Lent (March/April), chapel services are conducted in a more formal worship service where members of Northdale Lutheran Church are also in attendance.

Language Arts

A clear understanding of the English language is imperative for success in all areas of the curriculum and everyday life. Northdale’s language arts curriculum accomplishes this through its integration of reading, phonics programs, writing, spelling, grammar, and oral expression in a sequential and developmentally appropriate order.

Reading:

Students develop a love for reading through phonics-based instruction that incorporates thematic units of high-quality literature, poetry, short stories, and plays. The curriculum emphasizes listening and comprehension skills while developing the ability to read critically. Each classroom has its own selection of age-appropriate literature along with an extensive school library.

Writing:

Students are taught to be proficient writers in a step-by-step composition process that includes phrases, sentences, paragraphs, reports, letters, poetry, journals, and short stories. Grammar is taught and stressed in all writing lessons. Students are encouraged to exercise their free expression and creativity.

Spelling:

The spelling component of the curriculum develops the sound/spelling connection in language, provides dictation practice, and incorporates and reviews vocabulary words in weekly units.

Oral Expression:

Students develop public speaking skills through experiences in show-and-tell, oral reports, and class presentations.

Mathematics

A thorough mathematics curriculum is critical for success in our ever-changing world. The traditional math approach at NCA gives students a firm foundation in computation, math concepts, problem-solving strategies, and data interpretation. This foundation is constructed through daily instruction and cumulative review. Our teachers incorporate hands-on instructional strategies when appropriate through the use of manipulatives and real-life applications to build mathematical knowledge.

Technology

The development and use of modern technology continue to evolve and shape our lives. To gain proficiency in this technological age, technology education at NCA begins in kindergarten. Students are given the opportunity to develop familiarity with the physical structure and operation of various forms of personal computing devices to supplement cognitive growth. Each classroom is equipped with high-speed Internet access and technology devices (iPads and Chromebooks). Technology is integrated into teacher instruction and student learning in a way that enhances educational learning opportunities.

Science

The science curriculum at NCA leads children to a greater appreciation of the awe-inspiring world in which they live. Through textbook investigation, hands-on experimentation, special group projects, and technology-aided presentations, students discover various aspects of physical, earth, and life science. Special emphasis is placed on developing skills such as observing, comparing, hypothesizing, predicting, measuring, testing, and interpreting.

Social Studies

The scope of study in Northdale's social studies curriculum includes exposure to a variety of social science disciplines: world cultures, values and customs, history, geography, sociology, current events, economics, and civics. Instruction and activities in these areas are structured to help young students develop skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, and reading charts, maps, and graphs. This curriculum aspires to give students the necessary tools to be active, well-adjusted citizens and leaders in today's world.

Music

The NCA music program contains the integrated components of music theory, voice development, and music appreciation. Basic elements such as notation, rhythm, and music terminology prepare the children to read music and explore musical instruments. Students practice note reading and rhythmic exercises through the use of recorders, boomwhackers, xylophones, drums, and other percussion instruments. Vocal skills are developed through pitch exploration, ear training, and daily classroom singing. Students are introduced to famous composers and some of their works. In an effort to showcase the musical talents and accomplishments of our young musicians, several public performances are planned throughout the year.

Art

Concepts such as line, shape, form, color, pattern, design, and composition are developed in an art curriculum that allows children to express their creativity and discover their talents. Young artists learn to value not only the product but also the process. The children also enjoy exposure to well-known artists, their unique styles, and classical works. Other goals include the development of fine-motor skills, improvement of hand-eye coordination, and experiences in collaborative learning. Student artwork is displayed in classrooms and hallways as part of an on-going art fair.

Physical Education

The goals of the NCA physical education program include instruction in the rules, skills, and strategies of team and individual sports; physical fitness and cardiovascular development; practical experiences in leadership, teamwork, and sportsmanship; and development of a positive self-image in a safe, structured environment. Expectations include participation in all games and activities, respect for peers and instructors, proper care of equipment, and cooperation. The PE program is designed to enable each child to achieve success while developing an interest in

life-long physical activity. Participation in PE for students with medical problems or physical limitations will be modified as needed.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Individual Music Lessons

Individual piano lessons are offered during or after the school day by a contracted piano teacher. The cost for this service is \$35 for each 30-minute lesson. Individual guitar lessons are offered during or after the school day by a contracted guitar teacher. The cost for this service is \$25 for each 30-minute lesson. Payment will be made through your TADS account. For more details or to sign up for lessons, please contact the office (813-961-9195 or office@northdalelutheran.org).

Theater Program

Students with an interest in acting have a variety of opportunities within the theater program to develop their talents both on and off the stage. Our annual spring musical production is the centerpiece of the theater program.

Athletics

In our athletic program, our coaches encourage students to develop personal commitment, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Northdale Christian Academy offers organized after-school athletic programs including flag football, basketball, soccer, and track and field to help young, aspiring athletes learn the rules and develop their skills. Active participation in athletics strengthens friendships, enhances team-building skills, improves coordination and strength, and promotes physical well-being. The children ultimately learn to view sports competition as both fun and rewarding. Dates and times are released seasonally. As NCA grows and expands, the athletic program will also increase, thereby offering additional sports in years to come.

After School Clubs

As our school grows, we seek to provide additional opportunities for all students to develop their interests and use their God-given talents. We are eager to explore additional opportunities for after school clubs that will allow students to do so. After School Club programs are approved on a case-by-case basis by the principal.

FACULTY

The dedication, professionalism, and training of any school's faculty are determining factors in assessing the degree of excellence of that educational institution. To facilitate the exceptional academic quality for which NCA was established, classroom teachers possess at minimum a Bachelor of Science in Education degree and are required to maintain or pursue state and ministry certification. Additionally, in order to ensure staff expertise in a broad sphere of disciplines, teachers are encouraged to earn advanced specialist degrees in areas of interest, attend professional development seminars and workshops, or seek enrollment in a post-graduate program at an accredited university.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Respect and educational purpose characterize the classroom environment at Northdale. The NCA code of conduct promotes responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. This learning atmosphere is relaxed but orderly – a place where instruction can take place and the satisfaction of academic accomplishment can be experienced.

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE

In keeping with Northdale's mission to develop Christian character and instill self-discipline, faculty and staff members strive to clearly communicate all school rules and classroom guidelines regarding student conduct. These rules and guidelines are shared with the parents at the start of the school year. Conformity to these rules is expected at all times, whether in the classroom, on the playground, elsewhere on the school campus, or any school-sponsored event. Students are expected to follow these rules out of love for God, respect for their teachers, and consideration for their fellow students.

The staff is responsible for the children left under their care each day. The principal and teachers use their discretion whenever discipline is deemed necessary. Parents can rest assured that all discipline is carried out in the spirit of Christian love by teachers who genuinely care about each child. Discipline comes from the word "disciple" – to teach. Discipline is a way of teaching children to make proper choices. Discipline, then, is viewed not as punishment, but loving correction. No form of physical, corporal, or emotionally abusive disciplinary measures are used at any time.

Discipline is administered for the following unacceptable behaviors and may lead to detention, suspension, confiscation of material, and/or other disciplinary action:

- Being disrespectful, rude, or disobedient to school personnel
- Using inappropriate, vulgar, or obscene language
- Stealing or possessing items not belonging to you
- Violation of dress code
- Failing to complete assigned school work
- Excessive tardiness
- Cheating on tests or homework
- Harassment of fellow students
- Vandalizing/defacing school property (parents will be financially liable)
- Leaving class/school without permission
- Skipping class
- Being out of class without permission
- Attitude and examples which are detrimental to the welfare of other students
- Gambling
- False pulling of fire alarms (fee may be incurred)
- Possession of toy guns, knives, radios, electronic games, iPads, cell phones, or any other electronic equipment, or possession of illicit substances. Cell phones or other devices brought to school should be given to the teacher for safe keeping at the beginning of the day.

Disciplinary Procedures

In the event that a student fails to observe the NCA Student Conduct and Discipline Policy, a discipline process is initiated as follows:

1. The infraction is brought to the student's attention.
2. The incident is documented by the teacher.
3. By means of personal counseling, the teacher and student work together to achieve resolution. This may result temporarily in extra duties or the loss of privileges for the student. Whenever consequences are administered, they will be consistent, logical, and motivated by love for the child.
4. Parents may receive a phone call, hand-written note, or email message from the teacher indicating concern for the student's behavior and inviting parental involvement.
5. Ongoing infractions may result in student conferences with the principal and/or pastor.
6. A teacher or administrator may request a parent conference in which behavioral issues are identified and solutions are discussed.
7. A student can be placed on probation for repeated violations. The student will remain on probation until the next marking period.

8. A student may be suspended for continued violation of school rules. The types and quantities of violations are taken into consideration. A suspension may be 1-5 days and may be served at home or in the school as directed by the administration.
9. If a student persists in his/her lack of cooperation as indicated by an unwilling spirit, rebellious behavior, or unacceptable attitude, the parents will be asked to withdraw the child.

Parents with questions or concerns about disciplinary actions should address them to the principal. The principal will then decide on the proper course of action, whether that is through counseling, scheduling a meeting with the teacher, or a referral for other counseling or therapy services.

As disciplinary situations arise, we will approach our concerns with prayer and Christian love, always seeking to arrive at peaceful and proper solutions that are in the best interests of the child.

Disciplinary procedures for unacceptable/inappropriate behavior by students may include, but are not limited to:

Classroom teachers may discipline by:

- Warning/counseling
- Time out
- Loss of privileges
- Recess or lunch detention
- After school detention
- Referring students to administration

Students referred to administration may be disciplined by:

- Warning/counseling
- Detention
- Parent conferences
- Action taken will be based on the severity of the offense and in accordance with the physical development of the student involved. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - In-school suspension
 - Out-of-school suspension
 - Probation
 - Loss of privilege to take part in extracurricular activities
 - Legal action (court)
 - Recommendation for alternative school

Bullying

Definition:

An imbalance of power: Children who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity – to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people. This behavior is repeated consistently over a period of time. (Bullying is malicious behavior and involves more than joking behavior between friends or a child with a strong personality.)

Repetition:

Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying may involve, but is not limited to, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, obscene gestures, cyber-bullying or other verbal or written misconduct. Cyber-bullying includes the following misuses of technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images, or website postings (including blogs

and social network sites). This definition includes students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.

This policy prohibits bullying that occurs:

- On school premises before, during, or after school hours.
- On any vehicle used as part of any school activity.
- During any school function, extracurricular activity, or other school-sponsored event or activity.

Reporting Complaints:

Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the school immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the principal, pastor, or faculty member.

Disciplinary Action:

Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, expulsion, and/or notification to the appropriate authorities. This disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the discretion of the administration.

False reports or accusations of bullying also constitute a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate disciplinary action.

Anti-Harassment Policy

Northdale Christian Academy is committed to providing a positive and productive learning environment free from sexual or racial harassment. Sexual or racial harassment shall not be tolerated in the school. Harassment of students by employees, other students, or others having business or other contact with the school is strictly prohibited.

All forms of harassment are prohibited at school, on school property, and at all school-sponsored programs or events. Harassment may result from verbal or physical conduct or written or graphic material. Harassment may include, but is not limited to: verbal harassment or abuse; pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks to a person with sexual, discriminating, or demeaning implications; unwelcome touching; or suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning a student's grades, participating in extracurricular activities, etc.

All victims of harassment and witnesses of such harassment are encouraged to report the incident immediately. Reports should be made to the principal, pastor, or faculty member. An investigation by the principal is required in order to resolve the problem. If a person's alleged behavior is found to be harassment, that person will be subject to discipline under the employee or student code of conduct.

After-School Detention

It is important for students to accept responsibility for their actions. The purpose of after school detention is to correct minor behavior problems. Detention notices are communicated with parents/guardians directly.

In looking at a student's past behavior and facts of an incident, the principal may assign a different penalty. The number of days of detention will increase for repeated offenses. The principal, after consultation with the teacher, has the final decision for disciplinary action. School community services may be substituted for detention in some instances.

Detention will be assigned for the following infractions – as deemed necessary:

1. Habitual refusal or failure to do homework.
2. Habitual refusal or failure to do classwork.
3. Infractions of the teacher's code of conduct and classroom policy.

4. Excessive tardiness.
5. Failure to abide by school policies and procedures (dress code, etc.)

After school detentions will be served from 3:15-4:15 PM as needed. Please note that students not picked up at 4:15 PM will be signed into the After School Care Program. Detentions take precedence over any extra-curricular activities.

Disciplinary Probation

Under certain circumstances, a student's behavior may warrant a more severe disciplinary intervention. Probation is intended to serve as a formal and serious warning to the student and his/her parents. During the probationary period the student will be focused upon improving conduct. It is also a period during which a student violating academy rules is subject to further disciplinary action. At the discretion of the principal, probationary status may include one or more sanctions such as restriction of participation in academy activities and/or other privileges.

Conditions:

- A student can be placed on probation for repeated violations of academy rules.
- Student progress will be reviewed periodically.
- Disciplinary probation can be started at any time during the school year.
- Parent cooperation is expected in monitoring concerns.
- Duration of the probationary status will be a minimum of one marking period.
- Both student and parents must meet academy requirements.
- Student failure to improve conduct may result in a recommendation for alternative schooling.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

In-School Suspension (ISS) – The principal may institute an ISS for discipline purposes. The student will be placed in a physical setting where there will be appropriate supervision by a designated person. Any disruption by the student in this setting will result in the student being sent home.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) – The principal may suspend any student from attendance at school or any school-related activity on or off campus or from attendance at a specified class or classes.

The final authority to expel a student from Northdale Christian Academy rests with the Academy Ministry Board.

Documentation

NCA will use the approved form to document discipline occurrences. Parents will be notified of such cases. In extreme cases, a student may face suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the principal in consultation with the Academy Ministry Board. All such forms become part of a student's permanent file.

Categories of Offenses

3rd Level Offenses (Zero Tolerance): The Academy Ministry Board has established a zero-tolerance policy for serious offenses involving or related to the following:

1. Drugs
2. Alcohol
3. Assault (defined as a physical attack with the intent to inflict physical harm)
4. Bomb threats
5. Destruction of school property
6. False fire alarms
7. Possession of any type of weapons
8. Any other offenses as determined by the principal

The consequences of the above violations will result in immediate parent notification followed by mandatory out-of-school suspension (defined as a period of time the student must remain away from school) or expulsion

from Northdale Christian Academy. Final determination for an expulsion from Northdale Christian Academy is given by the Academy Ministry Board.

2nd Level Offenses: Major offenses that are serious acts of misconduct, which include but are not limited to the following:

1. Misuse of school property
2. Disorderly conduct
3. Defiance, disrespect or profanity directed at a NCA teacher, employee, or student
4. Fighting, aggressive behavior (defined as physical aggression that leads to harm)
5. Physical mischief
6. Theft
7. Plagiarism or Collusion
8. Pattern of continuous disruptive behavior
9. Academic dishonesty
10. Any other offenses as determined by the principal

The above violations will result in parent notification and mandatory in-school suspension (defined as a period of time the student will be removed from the classroom and placed in a designated detention area) or out-of-school suspension (defined as a period of time the student must remain away from school).

1st Level Offenses: Other acts of misconduct that interfere with orderly classroom procedures, academy functions, extracurricular programs, approved transportation, or a student's own learning process will be subject to a range of consequences determined by the classroom teacher. When 1st Level Offenses become habitual, the behavior is considered a pattern of continuous disruptive behavior as found under 2nd Level Offenses.

Students may be disciplined for engaging in other objectionable conduct even if the conduct is not outlined above.

Plagiarism and Collusion

Plagiarism may be defined as the appropriation of passages, either word-for-word, or in substance, from the writings of another and the incorporation of those passages as one's own written work offered for credit. It is always assumed that the written work offered for credit is the student's own unless proper credit is given to the original author by the use of quotation marks, proper citations, or other explanatory inserts. The copying of reports and homework, or the unchanged use of essential ideas or conclusions of such work, as well as improperly cited use of other themes, books, or pamphlets are all examples of plagiarism.

Collusion may be defined as collaboration with another person in the preparation or editing of notes, themes, reports, or other written work offered for credit unless the instructor specifically approves such collaboration in advance. Examples of collusion include extensive use of another's ideas for preparing a creative assignment and undue assistance in the preparation or editing of written materials. Charges of plagiarism and collusion are considered 2nd level disciplinary offenses.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

Appropriate Procedure for Parent or Student Concerns

Northdale Christian Academy's administration, teachers, and school staff work very hard to maintain an environment that nurtures academic excellence for our students. Differences of opinion need not create a divisive relationship between school and home. For the sake of the children, there is a mutual benefit if these differences can be resolved through communication and understanding.

To work towards this common goal, the following procedure is used to resolve issues and concerns (in keeping with directives from God's Word found in Matthew chapter 18).

- Maintain a calm and respectful attitude that will set a tone where real listening can occur and understanding can emerge.
- Step 1: The first attempt to deal with a concern related to a classroom situation needs to take place between the student and the teacher. Please encourage your student to speak to the teacher before or after school, or during other available times, to resolve a concern.
- Step 2: Parents or students with grievances or concerns regarding general school policies or procedures should set up a meeting with the principal to discuss these items of concern. The administration will then decide on the proper course of action; whether that is through counseling, scheduling a meeting with a teacher, or referral to other therapy or counseling services. Concerns regarding your child's academic performance should be brought to his/her classroom teacher through a scheduled appointment.
- Step 3: If the matter is between the home and the principal, a conference with the principal is the appropriate starting point. If satisfaction is not accomplished, then the matter may then be referred to the Academy Ministry Board.

Addressing Concerns to the Academy Ministry Board

When issues or concerns about the operation or policies of the school arise, and you have not received a satisfactory resolution after following the steps listed above, we ask that you inform the principal of your desire to meet with the Academy Ministry Board. Arrangements for a meeting with the board chairman will be made in as timely a fashion as possible.

HOME - SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

NCA desires to build a culture where parents and teachers join hands as partners in providing the finest education possible for the young people entrusted to our care. To that end, the NCA staff is committed to maintaining open channels of communication with the parents and/or guardians of our students. Families are encouraged to proactively reach out to the child's classroom teacher, principal, or pastor with any questions, comments, or concerns they may have throughout the school year. The following list outlines some of the important tools designed to promote efficient and effective home-school communication.

Teacher Home/Academy Visits

Teacher home/academy visits occur in the weeks prior to the start of the school year. The purpose of the home/academy visit is to help teachers, parents, and students develop relationships with one another and present classroom expectations, procedures, and goals. Home/academy visits are conducted for all children except those who may remain with the same core teacher for a second year in a row. Visits are held in the student's home or at NCA.

Back to School Orientation

In early August, parents are expected to attend a family orientation to discuss the academy's philosophy, policies, procedures, and any updates from one year to the next. Families are encouraged to drop off classroom supplies. Classroom visitation and a question-answer session provide parents with helpful insights and information they will need for a successful school year.

Student Progress Reports

Parents are encouraged to consult regularly with their child's teacher regarding academic and behavioral progress. Parents may monitor grades online at any time. Upon request, a written progress report will be provided to the parent at the midterm of each quarter.

Parent-Teacher Consultations

Mandatory Parent-Teacher Consultations will take place at the midpoint of the first and third quarters. These consultations are 20-minute sessions and include a discussion of the child's academic progress, attitude, behavior, and interaction with students and school staff.

Teacher Availability

If at any time during the school year parents have questions concerning their child's progress or behavior, they are encouraged to contact the teacher and arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. The teachers will make every effort to return your contact no later than the following business day. Teacher email addresses are available on our website.

Classroom Visitation

Parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom with the approval of the classroom teacher. 24-hour advance notice is required to properly plan for this visit and ensure that legal rights are honored. We will do our best to honor these requests, but parents are asked to recognize that it may not always be possible. Parents may also participate in field trips and other special academy-sponsored events.

Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in volunteering at Northdale Christian Academy. Parents have the opportunity to sign-up to assist in and out of the classrooms. Please contact the principal or your child's teacher if interested.

Each volunteer is required by Florida law (SB 1712) to have taken a training course in Ethical Student Conduct. Northdale Christian Academy uses a program entitled *Protect My Ministry* which includes a background check component in compliance with this state law. All volunteers are required to complete the background check (updated every three years) and Child Safety Training course (updated every three years) before any volunteer activity can begin.

The Hurricane Watch & Weekly Teacher News

The Hurricane Watch is NCA's primary way of keeping families informed. This weekly newsletter is delivered via email, text, and posted online. Families need to sign up for text messages via *Remind* or by contacting the office. Hard copies are available upon request and will be sent home in Monday folders. Parents are encouraged to read it in order to stay informed about scheduled events, upcoming activities, and other informative news. Educational news items, parenting tips, and highlights of student work are also included.

Each teacher sends home a weekly update (included with *The Hurricane Watch*) that informs parents of curriculum units being introduced, projects students are working on, areas of school work where parents can assist their children, and/or upcoming events. Additionally, student work is saved and sent home at the time specified by your child's teacher, so that parents are aware of their child's overall performance. Parent comments or questions are always welcomed.

Website

The academy website (www.NorthdaleChristianAcademy.org) contains helpful information for both current and prospective families. Families are encouraged to become familiar with the resources available on our website.

Bible Teachings Course for Parents/Guardians

All parents and/or guardians are invited and encouraged to attend a basic Bible teachings course conducted by the pastor. The class is held in the evening (weekly sessions) during the fall and spring.

ADMISSIONS GUIDELINES

Northdale Christian Academy is open to all children in the community. Families interested in our early childhood program (3 and 4 year old preschool) should consult the early childhood handbook for admissions guidelines including age requirements. Children should be five years of age by September 1 to be considered eligible for kindergarten. Exceptions to the September 1 deadline may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Northdale

Christian Academy practices a non-discrimination enrollment policy. Occasionally students may have special needs that the school is unable to meet in an acceptable way. In such cases the school will assist a family in finding alternate education solutions for their child.

In order for a student to be admitted to Northdale Christian Academy, the following must take place:

1. Parents submit the Northdale Christian Academy Application form.
2. The principal arranges a meeting with the parents to explain NCA's education program/student expectations.
3. The following records are submitted for NCA review:
 - a. Three years of official transcripts (current school year to date and previous two school years)
 - b. Three years of attendance records (current school year to date and previous two school years)
 - c. Standardized test scores
 - d. Discipline records
 - e. Any other current psychological, social, educational, or medical information, including information from other agencies or sources
4. The Student Recommendation Form will be completed and submitted to the school.
5. A placement assessment will be administered by Northdale Christian Academy.
6. The Academy Ministry Board will review all applications for enrollment.

Results of these combined evaluations determine eligibility. Upon acceptance, parents complete the online enrollment form and registration fee along with submitting their child's updated immunization, health examination records, and a copy of the child's birth certificate. Contact the office for more information.

Because Northdale Christian Academy maintains high standards and expectations, conditions of continued enrollment or re-enrollment are based on student achievement, attitude, and parental support. Additionally, any enrolled student may not promote teachings or beliefs contrary to Scripture as confessed by Northdale Lutheran Church, Northdale Christian Academy, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Enrollment/Re-enrollment

Enrollment (registration) opens in January and continues into the summer. A preferred enrollment period is granted to current academy families, their siblings, and members of Northdale Lutheran Church. Open enrollment will follow based on availability. Enrollment/re-enrollment is conducted online. Families without online access or the ability to print any necessary documents may request assistance by contacting the office. Registration must be completed prior to the start of the school year.

Probationary Enrollment

Northdale Christian Academy believes a positive and constructive working relationship between the academy and a student's parents/guardian is essential to the accomplishment of the academy's spiritual and educational mission. The academy accordingly reserves the right to enroll new students on a probationary period to ensure compatibility and agreement with the academy's purpose. This probationary period applies for all new students and is outlined as follows:

- A mandatory parent-teacher conference will take place around the midpoint of the first quarter. The purpose will be to assess how things are going and what steps may need to be taken for the student to continue enrollment at Northdale Christian Academy. A plan of action with an acceptable timeline will be established for these steps to be completed.
- Another mandatory parent-teacher consultation will be held as a follow-up to the established plan and timeline. The student's enrollment status will once again be reviewed, and a determination will be made of whether Northdale Christian Academy is an appropriate educational setting for the child. The Academy Ministry Board holds final authority over the decision to dismiss a student. If dismissal from the school is deemed to be the best course of action, Northdale Christian Academy will support the family in finding another educational placement.

Special Needs Scholarship

The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) allows Florida families to have a choice in the education of their child. Children qualify for FES-UA by displaying an educational or physical disability. FES-UA students are given a matrix number (504, 251, 252, 253, etc...) with the needs of the disability increasing with the matrix number.

Northdale Christian Academy accepts students with the FES-UA Scholarship with certain restrictions:

1. Typically only students with matrix numbers of 504, 251, 252, or 253 will be considered.
2. The academy principal must receive a copy of the student's IEP or 504 plan.
3. The principal, appropriate classroom teacher, and AMB will meet to determine if/how we can accommodate the recommendations on the student's IEP. Any resources needed may result in additional fees for the family.
4. The principal will meet with the prospective family and discuss the decision of the AMB.
5. If accepted, the family and principal will work in conjunction to arrange for any outside resources (i.e. Hillsborough County ESE, Therakids therapy services, etc.).
6. A parentally placed private school student with a disability does not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended.
7. In some cases, the FES-UA surpasses the amount of tuition and fee costs of Northdale Christian Academy. The academy may make use of private or small group tutors who work directly with FES-UA students. Excess funds may be used to meet the cost of the tutoring services.
8. In some cases, the FES-UA does not cover the full tuition of Northdale Christian Academy. Families are responsible for the remaining balance.

Parents/Guardians of FES-UA students are required to budget funds from the FES-UA to cover the tuition, fees, and potential tutoring expenses as outlined in the financial agreement. Any remaining balance beyond what the FES-UA covers will become the responsibility of the family. NCA will charge the FES-UA account of each scholarship recipient on a quarterly basis.

Step Up for Students

Step Up for Students is a scholarship funding organization which administers the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO), Florida Tax Credit scholarship (FTC), and Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA, special needs-based) programs. Northdale Christian Academy participates in these scholarship programs. All scholarship programs are "once in, always in" meaning recipients do not need to requalify each year after the initial award. Families are required to annually submit renewal forms to Step Up for Students in order to continue making use of these scholarship opportunities.

Parents/Guardians of FES-EO and FTC students are required to authorize quarterly electronic payments to NCA through their Step Up for Students online account. Scholarship families will receive email notifications from Step Up for Students when it is time to process these payment authorizations. It is imperative that families monitor their email accounts for important information from Step Up for Students and Northdale Christian Academy.

Parents/guardians of FES-UA students (special needs scholarship) will be invoiced quarterly for tuition and fees. Scholarship families will receive email notifications from Step Up for Students when it is time to process these invoice authorizations. It is imperative that families monitor their email accounts for important information from Step Up for Students and Northdale Christian Academy.

TUITION & FEES

Northdale Christian Academy is a non-profit organization. Tuition fees are needed to maintain our faculty, facilities, and offer the level of educational excellence that is part of our philosophy of education.

Specific information pertaining to registration, tuition, and other fees and schedules is established yearly and included in the enrollment forms and on our website. General guidelines are as follows:

- A registration fee is paid at the time of enrollment to secure your child's placement. This fee helps cover the cost of classroom materials and textbook expenses. It does not cover the costs of field trips, lunches, uniforms, or athletic fees.
- Before the start of the school year, a signed tuition contract (financial agreement) is required by parents and/or legal guardians.
- Three tuition payment plans are available: annually, bi-annually, or monthly. Any tuition bill less than \$1,000 is due by August 15. Exceptions will be considered upon request.
- TADS, a third-party tuition management system, is used for application, enrollment/re-enrollment, and collection of tuition and other payments. All families will set up their account for automatic payment via bank account, debit, or credit card.
- All payments are non-refundable.
- Tuition payments are due the 15th of every month.

The procedure for delinquent accounts is as follows:

- 5 Days Delinquent – A TADS automated message is sent alerting the account holder when the payment is three days past due. Access your TADS account to make immediate payment. A \$50 late payment fee will be applied when the account is five days past due. Additionally, a \$50 returned payment fee may be applied if TADS is unable to process a regularly scheduled payment with the provided method of payment.
- 30 Days Delinquent – The principal or his designee will inform the parent/guardian of the past due balance and the student(s) will be suspended until the account is made current.
- 40 Days Delinquent – The student(s) enrollment will be discontinued due to non-payment. In order to re-enroll, the family will need to complete the admissions process.
- The Academy Ministry Board will consider extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis.

Should a student withdraw from Northdale Christian Academy, records for that student will not be released until all payments have been made in full. Northdale Christian Academy will not enroll any students for the current year until all balances from the previous year have been paid in full. Tuition is to be paid in the current school year.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

- Northdale Christian Academy office hours are from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM.
- Classes begin promptly each day at 8:00 AM and conclude at 3:00 PM.
- Parents are asked to use the designated drop-off/pick-up area in the front of the academy building (or preschool) for students' morning drop off.
- Parents may park and walk up to the school and/or classrooms to drop off or pick up their child(ren). Individuals entering the building at any time are asked to be respectful of the needs of students and teachers as they may be preparing for the school day or engaging in other educational activities.
- Classroom doors open each morning at 7:30 AM.
- Students who dropped off between 7:00-7:30 AM will be placed in Before School Care (main academy building).
- At the end of the school day, students will be dismissed from their classrooms beginning at 3:00 PM. Teachers will supervise this dismissal time.
- 3K - 2nd grade will dismiss starting at 3:00 PM.
- 3rd - 8th grades, and families with multiple children, will dismiss starting at 3:10 PM.
- Students who are not picked up by 3:20 PM will be placed in After School Care.
- Children will not be allowed to walk home from school without parent approval.
- NCA maintains a closed campus. Children may not leave the academy campus of their own volition at any time during the school day. Academy policy and the safety of our children dictate that the teachers know where the children are at all times.

Families may arrange for special situations where a community after-school program is utilized (Northdale Community Center, YMCA Youth and Family Center, etc.). The family may work with the principal to determine transportation solutions.

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is both a right and responsibility of the parent and student. NCA recognizes that consistent school attendance is essential for academic success and that all absences affect learning. Therefore, a comprehensive student attendance policy has been developed to meet the following objectives:

- Improve student achievement and close gaps in student performance.
- Identify attendance patterns to design attendance improvement efforts.
- Know the whereabouts of every student for their safety.
- Verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance.

In accordance with Florida law and scholarship program requirements, NCA has established the following attendance policies. 17 full-day absences during the course of a school year will result in a mandatory review by the principal, classroom teacher, and Academy Ministry Board to determine possible grade retention or discontinuation of enrollment. All absences are cumulative. Chronic illness and family emergencies that extend beyond the total number of absences allowed will be considered on an individual basis by the administration.

In the event of an illness or emergency arising during the school day, a student should proceed immediately to the office/lobby for assistance and permission to leave the school. It must be recognized that the school is responsible for the student's whereabouts from the time he/she enters school until he/she departs and, unless otherwise notified, the school assumes the student is attending classes as scheduled.

Half-Day Absence:

Students who arrive at school between 8:30 and 11:30 AM will be issued a half-day absence.

Full-Day Absence:

Students leaving school before 11:30 AM or arriving at school after 11:30 AM are issued a full-day absence.

Students must be in school the entire day to participate in extracurricular activities. Exceptions are made for pre-approved scheduled appointments. Records of communication pertaining to school attendance will be documented for future reference. Individual student attendance records will be maintained by classroom teachers and filed in our student information system.

Reporting Absences

The academy office or classroom teacher must be notified by phone or email no later than 8:30 AM if a student will be absent from school. If a student is absent and the school has not received notification from a parent or guardian, the school will attempt to verify the absence. Failure to contact the office on the day of an absence may result in an unexcused absence.

Tardiness & Arriving Late

When a student arrives after the beginning of the school day, students must check in with their homeroom teacher before going to class. Students who arrive late may be required to wait in the hallway so as not to disturb the classroom during opening devotion.

Students are expected to be on time and have transportation arrangements that will guarantee their punctuality.

- Students will serve an after school detention after every fifth tardy per quarter. There will be a \$26 charge per student for each tardy detention served.

- Excessive tardiness (more than 10 in one quarter) will require a meeting with the administration, which could result in grade retention or dismissal from school.

Leaving Early

Students leaving early must check out with their homeroom teacher. The office staff will call the student out of class when the parent arrives. Whenever possible, NCA requests that every effort be made to schedule appointments during non-school hours or on days when school is not in session. Parents should seriously consider all of the educational, social, and psychological pros and cons of habitually removing their children from school early.

Truancy

Any student who is absent from school without parent permission or NCA knowledge for three consecutive days in one year is considered truant.

Make-Up Work

Teachers will require students to make up and receive a grade for tests and assignments missed during absences. Students have one day to make up work for every day of an absence. Students are required to make up work for all absences, truancies, or suspensions. In general, teachers do not provide work in advance for planned absences. Exceptions may be made in certain situations. We appreciate the support of our parents and guardians in helping our students complete make-up work.

Release of Students

- 1) Students are permitted to leave school only in custody of an individual listed on the student's *Pick Up Authorization Form*.
- 2) At the end of the school day students are released at a specified time and place and are expected to go directly home. Parents/guardians must notify the school regarding any change in the student's normal transportation.
- 3) Parents are expected to inform the office or classroom teacher of an early release.
- 4) Unless there are unusual circumstances, it is expected that the child will remain in school until the end of the school day.
- 5) Car riders should be picked up promptly at the designated time in the designated area (see *Arrival & Dismissal* for additional information).

Church Attendance

The Bible says that faith comes from hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17). God's Word also instructs us to "not give up meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25). Knowing God's attitude towards hearing his Word, attending church and Sunday school on a regular basis is a very important part of a child's spiritual growth and training. Children are encouraged to attend church and Sunday school regularly with their families. Students attending Christian churches other than Northdale Lutheran Church are encouraged to regularly attend their home church.

DRESS CODE

The Dress Code at Northdale Christian Academy contributes to the health and safety of the student, fosters a positive educational environment, promotes positive academy spirit, and serves as an outreach tool. Academy uniform purchases are made through the Ideal School Apparel online store: <http://www.idealschoolapparel.com>.

Uniforms for School Days and Out-of-School Events

What is the uniform for Northdale Christian Academy?

- All students will wear the uniform polo shirts available through the online store.
- If students choose to wear long sleeves inside the building, it must be the uniform jacket available for purchase through the online store.

- On Fridays, students have the option to wear a NCA activity shirt. The activity shirt is a t-shirt with the academy name and logo available through the online store. The activity shirts may also be worn on field trips or other events in place of the uniform polo shirt. Students are required to wear uniform bottoms on Fridays.
- Boys may choose pants or shorts while girls may choose pants, shorts, skirts, or skorts. All bottoms will be khaki or navy blue in color and a style similar to what is offered in the online store.
- Girls are permitted to wear uniform polo dresses available through the online store.
- Closed-toed shoes will be worn and securely fastened to the feet.

How should the uniform be worn?

- Shirts will be tucked in.
- All pants, shorts, skirts, and skorts will be secured at the waist. Shorts must be worn underneath skirts and dresses. Girls may wear plain navy blue leggings under dresses, shorts, skirts, or skorts.
- Hair will be clean and neatly groomed. Any hair dye used should reflect naturally occurring hair color. The general appearance of a student should reflect neatness and good personal hygiene.
- All articles of clothing should be marked with the student's or family's name.

What is not allowed in the NCA dress code?

- Cargo-style shorts or pants are not permitted.
- Sweatpants, yoga-style materials, and athletic shorts are not acceptable for bottoms.
- Mini-skirts and short shorts are not permitted. Hemlines will be no shorter than mid-thigh.
- Excessively tight fitting clothing is not acceptable.
- Clothing that is torn, frayed, or stained will not be allowed.
- Crocs, flip-flops, shower shoes, skate shoes, or similar type shoes are considered unsafe and therefore unacceptable.
- Hats and other head coverings will not be worn in the building.
- Excessive jewelry is not permitted. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.

Uniform-Free Days

Occasionally the students will be allowed a Uniform-Free Day during which students will be allowed to wear something of their choosing in accordance with what is appropriate for a young Christian person.

- Tank tops, spaghetti-strap tops, sleeveless tops, and exposed midriffs are not permitted.
- Spandex, stretch, yoga, or any excessively tight bottoms may not be worn as outer clothing.
- Mini-skirts, mini-dresses, and short shorts are not permitted. Hemlines will be no shorter than mid-thigh. Pants must be ankle length and not drag on the floor.
- Bottoms may not have printing on the backside.
- All pants, shorts, skirts, and skorts will be secured at the waist.
- Clothing that is torn, frayed, or stained will not be allowed.
- Excessively tight fitting clothing, such as leggings, are not acceptable without shorts or skirts worn over the top.
- Closed toed shoes will be worn and securely fastened to the feet. Crocs, flip-flops, shower shoes, skate shoes, or similar type shoes are considered unsafe and therefore unacceptable.
- Hair will be clean and neatly groomed. Any hair dye used should reflect naturally occurring hair color. The general appearance of a student should reflect neatness and good personal hygiene.
- Hats and other head coverings will not be worn in the building.
- No excessive jewelry. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.

NCA staff reserves the right to use discretion in judging the appropriateness of student dress code compliance.

Spirit Dress

Certain times throughout the year may be designated as academy spirit days along with the annual academy spirit week. During these times students may be allowed to dress out of the normal uniform dress code following the daily theme and the uniform-free guidelines.

Dress Code Violation Consequences

In all cases, students whose personal appearance is not in accordance with these guidelines will not be allowed to participate in school day activities until appropriate attire has been obtained. The student may receive a half or full-day absence due to dress code violation depending on the amount of classroom time missed. A dress code violation form will be used to document offenses.

- 1) First offense:
 - a. Notify parent/guardian
 - b. Change of inappropriate attire
- 2) Second offense:
 - a. Notify parent/guardian
 - b. Change of inappropriate attire
 - c. Disciplinary action
- 3) Third offense
 - a. Conference with parent/guardian
 - b. Change of inappropriate attire
 - c. In-school detention

EXTENDED CARE

Before School

Northdale Christian Academy provides supervised care for enrolled students before school beginning at 7:00 AM. Students may use this time to read, review assignments, or eat a light breakfast (provided by the parents). Students are escorted to their respective classrooms at 7:30 AM. The cost of the program is \$3.50 per child, per day. Billing will be completed at the end of each week.

After School

Northdale Christian Academy provides supervised care for enrolled students after school from 3:20-6:00 PM. It is designed to provide children of working parents, or those who have a late afternoon commitment with a safe, caring, and enriching environment. The cost of the program is \$7.00 per hour per child. A late pick-up charge of \$1 per minute will be assessed for every child not picked up by 6:00 PM. Failure to pick up a child by 6:30 PM without notification may result in appropriate authorities being contacted. The program supervisor will make reasonable attempts to contact the child's parent or guardian prior to contacting the authorities. Families will complete appropriate registration materials and agree to the rules and policies of the program. Charges will be processed at the end of each week and applied to your TADS account.

The extended care schedule provides opportunities for homework completion and/or other class projects, outdoor play, puzzles and board games, group activities, videos, and quiet time. Extended care is only available on days when school is in session. After school care is not provided on days when school is dismissed at noon (first day of school, last day before Christmas break, and last day of the year).

FIELD TRIPS & OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

- Field trips and other off-campus activities are scheduled for the educational, mental, and physical development of the students.

- Careful thought goes into planning each activity to ensure its educational value and the safety of the children. These trips are planned as a supplement to our curriculum; therefore, all students are expected to participate in field trips. Attendance is taken and recorded accordingly.
- Some experiences require additional fees to be paid by the family. Parents/guardians are asked to contact their child’s teacher if the payment becomes a financial hardship. Other arrangements will be made.
- In situations where students are unable to attend, teachers will provide replacement experiences or assignments that meet similar curricular objectives.
- Parents must sign an academy activity/field trip permission slip for each field trip to which students will be driven.
- Parents/volunteers will serve as drivers for such trips when necessary. Drivers are asked to secure each rider with a safety belt and booster seat if necessary, and take every precaution to ensure the safety of the children. Drivers are not to place any students under the age of twelve in the front seat of the car that is equipped with a passenger-side air bag.
- All drivers are required to provide evidence of his/her driver’s license and proof of insurance.
- All drivers and chaperones are required to complete the *Protect My Ministry* course and sign the *Volunteer Covenant Code* before participating in any field trip or academy activity.
- Information and cost for each trip will be sent home in advance.
- Each school activity will be supervised by the classroom teacher(s).
- All activities will be age-appropriate.
- All students are expected to abide by the student code of conduct.

STUDENT PROGRESS & ASSESSMENT

Assessing student progress is a critical element of the teaching process. Accurate evaluation of learning directs and guides teaching. Teachers engage in daily on-going assessments of students’ understanding and proficiency as the basis for choosing and moving into the next instructional sequence.

Student Progress Reports

Parents are encouraged to monitor grades online or check with their child’s teacher regarding academic and behavioral progress. Upon request, a written progress report will be provided to the parent/guardian at the midterm of each quarter.

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home and available online at the end of each quarter. Please consult with the teacher if you have any questions concerning the report. Report cards become part of a student’s cumulative record.

Grading

Preschool through 4th grade use the following grading scale with a standards based report card:

Key	Description <i>(Student friendly definition in parentheses)</i>
Exceeding 4	Student consistently shows evidence of above grade level understanding. <i>(I can do this. I can apply what I’ve learned. I can teach this to others)</i>
Meeting 3	Student consistently meets grade level expectations. <i>(I can do this by myself)</i>
Approaching 2	Student sometimes meets or needs minimal support to meet grade level expectations. <i>(I can do the easy stuff. I still need help with the hard stuff)</i>
Beginning 1	Student rarely meets or needs heavy support to meet grade level expectations.

	<i>(When I have help, I can do some of the work)</i>
Cannot Assess 0	Student has not met grade level expectations due to incomplete classwork or excessive absences.

The percentage/letter grading scale for grades 5-8 at Northdale Christian Academy is calculated as follows:

100%... A+ (4.00)	84-85... C+ (2.33)	Below 70... F	Exceptional/Always	E
96-99... A (4.00)	80-83... C (2.00)		Satisfactorily/Regularly	S
94-95... A- (3.67)	78-79... C- (1.67)		Needs Improvement/Sometimes	N
92-93... B+ (3.33)	76-77... D+ (1.33)		Unacceptable/Seldom	U
88-91... B (3.00)	72-75... D (1.00)		Incomplete Work	I
86-87... B- (2.67)	70-71... D- (0.67)			

Promotion

The promotion of each student from grade to grade is based upon the student's satisfactory achievement of required class work. A child will not be retained without previous consultation with the parents. Promotion is based on achievement standards the school has established and the God-given abilities of the student.

Graduation

Northdale Lutheran Church celebrates Christian Education Sunday each year as a way to reflect on the blessings that God brought through Christian Education in the past school year. Christian Education Sunday also serves as graduation for the 8th graders. The principal and Academy Ministry Board chairman will present diplomas to the graduates during the Sunday service. Preschool and kindergarten students will be recognized separately during an end of year program. Parents and family members of the students are expected to attend.

Standardized Testing Program

Students in kindergarten through eighth grade participate in the standardized testing program. NCA uses the results of these standardized tests to determine curricular strengths and weaknesses as well as modify instruction to meet the needs of students. The tests are one of many ways that we assess student progress. Families receive a report of the test results and a parent-teacher consultation may be scheduled to discuss the results. Northdale Christian Academy uses the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test produced by the Northwest Education Association. Testing is conducted three times during the school year: three weeks after the start of the year, three weeks after Christmas break, and three weeks before the end of the school year. The tests compare our students with national averages using percentiles and other measures.

STUDENT RECORDS & PRIVACY

Northdale Christian Academy adheres to the regulations in the 1974 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All scholastic records of a student maintained by the school are confidential. Scholastic reports, which contain only objective student data, will be kept permanently. Upon request to the principal, with a 24-hour notice, parents (or legal guardians) of students have the right to inspect their children's records. Transcript release requires the signature of the parent/guardian. Records will be held until all outstanding payments are completed.

Academy Photographs

A professional photographer will take academy pictures each year. The family may purchase pictures if desired. A parent consent form is provided during enrollment before the school year which gives NCA permission to use digital photographs of students for promotional use. Keeping the students' safety in mind, the staff will use caution before posting or using pictures or videos of academy events. Please speak to the principal or your individual teacher if you have any concerns.

GUIDANCE & COUNSELING

In today's changing society, children benefit from extra guidance during their formative years. To help them cope with the issues associated with growing up, NCA takes a guidance and counseling approach in addressing many of the concerns that come up with students. This approach focuses on the needs of students from a Christian perspective, addressing the typical concerns, questions, and choices they face today. They will learn interpersonal, relationship, and problem-solving skills. Our goal is to enhance spiritual, personal, social, and academic growth. While the primary goal is to help students learn more effectively and efficiently, an added benefit is that it will ultimately make academy life more satisfying and rewarding.

HEALTH & SAFETY

First Aid and CPR Certification

All NCA faculty and staff are CPR and First Aid certified and meet American Red Cross and American Heart Association recommendations. Knowledge obtained through these courses permits NCA faculty and staff to be ready to handle emergencies due to sudden illness or injury to students.

Health Examination Forms

Students in kindergarten, seventh grade, and all new students to Northdale Christian Academy are required to have a physical examination. Standard Florida Department of Health forms (DH 3040) are available at your pediatrician's office and need to be appropriately completed, signed, and submitted to NCA before the first day of classes.

Immunization Records

Every new student must present proof of immunization, including dates of immunization and date of most recent tetanus shot. All students are expected to keep current and inform the school of subsequent immunizations in accord with state law. Standard Florida Department of Health forms (DH 680) are available at your pediatrician's office and need to be appropriately completed, signed, and submitted to the school before the first day of classes. This requirement is in keeping with the Florida Compulsory School Immunization Law, 232.032. Students are not permitted to attend school without a copy of this record; therefore, this form must be returned to school before the first day of classes.

Emergency Medical Forms

Northdale Christian Academy uses TADS, a third-party service for management of admissions and enrollment. Part of the annual enrollment process is the review of contact information in case of a medical emergency. An emergency medical form is kept on file for each student.

Accidents

All minor accidents – cuts, scratches, bumps, and insect bites are given first aid treatment. Major accidents are recorded with the office. Administration is informed and parents and/or emergency contact person is notified of injury. If your child suffers a serious injury, procedures as outlined in the Safety Response Plan will be initiated. The school will call 911 followed by the parents, provide first aid until help arrives, and determine who will accompany the injured student to the hospital. An accident report form will be completed describing the nature and extent of the injury. All head injuries will be reported to parents.

Medications

All medications must be dispensed and kept in the academy office.

Daily Medications:

Daily medications administered at school require the completion of the Northdale Christian Academy Authorization for Administration of Medication form. This form needs to be completed annually. At the end of the school year or when the medication has been discontinued, the extra medication should be picked up by the parent. Any medication left at the end of the school year will be properly discarded.

Discretionary Medications:

Tylenol, Advil, or Tums (or generic substitutes) must be supplied by parents/guardians and may be administered at school with written permission from a parent/guardian. This permission is written on the Authorization for Administration of Medication form which is kept on file in the school office and is filled out by the parent/guardian at the beginning of each school year.

Self-medication:

Special arrangements will be made if a student is self-medicating.

Other important medication guidelines:

- Only prescription medication will be administered at school. Only medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration will be accepted for administering at school. All medications must be brought to school by the parent or guardian.
- Approved medication must be delivered to the school in the container in which it was purchased or dispensed.
- The medication label must indicate the student's name, name of medication, directions, physician's name, dosage (amount) and time (frequency).
- If the medication requires equipment for administration (cup, spoon, or dropper), the parent is responsible for supplying the articles labeled with the student's name.

Student Illnesses and Contagious Conditions

Students who have been diagnosed with illnesses such as the flu, a fever (100.4° F or greater), or any other contagious condition must be symptom-free for 24 hours without the aid of medication prior to returning to school. Students who are absent due to a contagious condition or any other medical reason, are strongly encouraged to provide appropriate documentation in the event absences become excessive and approach the allowable limit as described in the attendance section of this handbook. Extended absences of four or more consecutive school days need to be validated with appropriate medical documentation. With exceptions as provided by law, any student or staff member who suffers an infectious condition will be removed from the premises until certified by a physician or health care professional to be non-infectious and able to return to school.

Lice

In the event that lice and/or lice nits (eggs) are suspected or discovered on any student(s), the student will be immediately removed from the classroom and sent home. While we understand how difficult it is to rid the hair and scalp of all the eggs related to lice, we must also recognize how easily it can be spread. For this reason, an email will be sent home to parents while keeping the names of those involved confidential. If your child is sent home with lice and/or nits, they will be allowed to return to school when a verbal or written confirmation is given to the school that a treatment plan is in place.

Exemption from Participation in Physical Education Classes

A student may be exempted from the regular physical education program with a written request from a licensed physician.

Safety Response Action Plan

A Northdale Christian Academy Safety Response Action Plan has been formulated in the event of an external threat to its students, teachers, staff, and/or physical campus. This multi-hazard evacuation plan shall encompass, but not be limited to, evacuations for fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, other hazardous storms or disasters in which serious bodily injury might occur, hostage siege, terrorist activities, and bomb threats. The plan is reviewed annually and

updated as needed. The Safety Response Action Plan will assist teachers, academy administrators, and others in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergency incidents on academy grounds.

Emergency Evacuation Drills and Reporting

In compliance with state regulations, evacuation fire drills are performed once a month and twice in the first two weeks of the school year. Tornado and code red (lockdown) drills are practiced once per year or at administrative discretion. For the safety of all, detailed drill procedures are shared and periodically reviewed in each classroom.

Emergency School Closing

In most cases, Northdale Christian Academy will follow the direction of the Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) in terms of school closings or late starts. In situations where the safety of our students is not at risk and the continuation of the normal school day routine is deemed beneficial, Northdale Christian Academy reserves the right to continue regularly scheduled school days. In such a case, the decision to deviate from the plan of the HCPS will be made by the AMB. If Northdale Christian Academy is to be closed due to an emergency such as inclement weather, notification will be made via text message and email. If students must be evacuated during the school day, NCA will follow Hillsborough County evacuation procedures.

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse

The principal, pastor, and teachers of Northdale Christian Academy are required by law to report incidents of suspected sexual, emotional, physical, or other abuse and neglect to the proper authorities. Under this law, parents are not notified of the report.

HOMWORK

Homework is a valuable part of the educational experience that supports or reinforces material taught in the classroom. Generally, students in grades K-2 have limited homework. Students in grades 3-4 can expect an average of 15-30 minutes per day. Students in grades 5-6 can expect an average of 30-45 minutes per day. Students in grades 7-8 can expect an average of 45-60 minutes per day. Homework generally consists of ongoing projects and unfinished daily classwork. Homework is healthy when it:

- Reinforces skills taught previously in the classroom
- Prepares students for new information
- Promotes creative thinking and independent research
- Communicates with parents the ongoing classroom learning
- Instills a sense of responsibility and personal accountability
- Helps to develop productive study habits and self-discipline

Parents should help their child set aside a quiet place and regular time for study each evening. Additionally, parents are encouraged to monitor their child's homework using the academy assignment notebook (grades 5-8). Scheduling a quiet reading time and limiting screen time will also help to improve overall school performance.

Parents who find that their child consistently has no homework, spends an inordinate amount of time on homework assignments, or is experiencing difficulty should feel free to contact his/her child's teacher.

LUNCH & SNACKS

It is important that the academy be kept clean and picked up throughout the lunch period. Faculty and staff members provide lunch supervision. Students are expected to help keep the area clean.

- Students may either bring their own lunches or purchase a commercially prepared hot lunch on scheduled days. Students who bring food from home are encouraged to pack healthy lunches and snacks.
- A commercially prepared lunch is available Monday - Friday through School Eatery. Lunches are ordered by the parents directly through School Eatery.

- Ordering lunches is optional, and the costs of lunches are not included in the tuition and registration fees. Billing for School Eatery lunches is done directly with School Eatery according to their guidelines. Additional information is available on our website.
- Neither microwave ovens nor refrigerators will be available for student use. Students bringing lunches from home will be responsible for the safe storage of that lunch.
- Snacks are allowed during morning breaks and recess.
- Soda, carbonated, or caffeinated beverages are not permitted.
- If a family orders a delivered lunch outside of School Eatery, they are responsible for ensuring that it is delivered in a timely manner in order to minimize disruption to the school day.

Parties

Many parents like to bring refreshments on their child’s birthday. This may be done with prior approval from the classroom teacher. Because of time and space constraints, birthday celebrations at school should be kept short and simple and cannot be spontaneous. Arrangements must be made with the classroom teacher at least one day in advance. Additionally, if invitations for parties are handed out at school, everyone in the class must be invited. Invitations will be handed out at the end of the school day or at the teacher’s discretion.

FACILITIES & PROPERTY

Curriculum and Instructional Materials

Students are expected to show proper care of all academy-owned materials (both print and electronic). Curriculum and instructional materials are furnished by the Academy Ministry Board, and all students must assume full responsibility for the care of materials issued to them.

- Materials are issued by the teacher and must be returned to the same teacher upon completion of the school year or upon withdrawal from NCA.
- Responsibility for curriculum materials rests with the student to whom the materials are issued.
- The full replacement cost will be collected for lost, destroyed, or unnecessarily-damaged materials (both print and electronic).
- Loss of curriculum materials due to theft or other circumstances is the family’s responsibility and may result in replacement charges. If the materials are found and returned, the school will issue a refund to the family.

Class Size Guideline

The Academy Ministry Board and principal will make every effort to maintain student to teacher ratio in each of the classrooms. In multi-grade classrooms, the AMB has set the student to teacher ratio maximum of 22:1 (16:1 in the smaller classrooms).

Lost and Found

All lost and found articles will be taken to the lobby and put in the lost and found drawer. Items that are identified will be returned to their owners. At the end of the school year, all items that have not been retrieved will be donated to a local charity.

Visitors

1. Visitors must receive approval from the principal 24 hours in advance to observe in the classroom. Advance notice is required to properly plan for this visit and ensure that legal rights are honored.
2. Teachers cannot stop classroom activities to hold parent conferences.
3. Students cannot arrange for their friends or relatives from other schools to visit NCA at any time without the approval of the principal in advance.

Telephone Use

1. Students, except with permission from the faculty or staff, will not use the academy telephones.

2. Only emergency messages will be taken for students.
3. Students will not be called from class to the telephone except in emergency cases. Parents will be requested to provide emergency information to the student's teacher or principal.

Cell Phones and Wearable Technology

NCA requires all cell phones be powered off and stored in the teacher-designated area while on campus (including dismissal and extended care). Wearable technology may not be connected to the internet or used for communication. Students will not have access to cell phones during the school day, and any parental contact with a student should be made through the office phone. A telephone is available for student use in the office with teacher or administration approval. Cell phones will be returned to students at the end of each school day.

Personal Property and Electronic Devices

1. Personal electronic devices (i.e. computers, tablets, smartphones, music players, radios, or electronic games) or any unnecessary devices deemed potentially disruptive will not be allowed at NCA.
2. Students bringing any electronic devices for a class project must make arrangements with the teacher or principal for safekeeping.
3. Students in extended care will not be permitted to use personal electronic devices as listed earlier.
4. Devices that are e-reader specific (function only for reading various forms of literature) will be used at the discretion of the teacher during the school day and during the extended care program.
5. The school does not accept responsibility for personal electronic devices or personal property of any kind.

Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in confiscation of electronic devices or personal property, and students may be subject to disciplinary action.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy (TAUP)

Technological resources, including computers and other electronic devices, with or without internet access, provide a unique opportunity to enhance instructional methods, appeal to different learning styles, and encourage exploration and individual creativity. It is the goal of Northdale Christian Academy to provide those resource opportunities to the students and staff.

With the use of technological tools comes attached a list of expectations and requirements. The TAUP covers various areas of student expectations and requirements, ranging from aspects of Christian conduct and etiquette to compliance with governmental laws.

The TAUP covers the following information:

1. Rules and requirements for hardware and software
2. Appropriate internet usage
3. Student safety
4. Privacy and intellectual property
5. Disclaimer
6. Consequences
7. Chromebook/iPad usage

The TAUP and Chromebook/iPad policy are available on the school website (NorthdaleChristianAcademy.org/documents/) and in the school office.

Chewing Gum

To keep our church and school neat and damage-free, gum chewing is not allowed on the school grounds before, during, or after school.

PARENT-TEACHER TEAM

The parents and teachers have a unique partnership in the team concept of educating children. Northdale Christian Academy has created a Parent-Teacher Team (PTT) as another aspect of the partnership we share. The PTT holds quarterly open forum meetings to discuss upcoming events, fundraising opportunities, and educational opportunities/enhancements. All NCA parents are invited to participate in the open forums.

Student Fundraising

Student fundraising is defined as student solicitation and collection of money for any purpose including collection of money in exchange for tickets, papers, or any other goods or services. Student fundraising is permitted only when all funds obtained through fundraising (less any necessary expenses incurred for the purchase of products or goods sold) are used for academy purposes or for an activity connected with NCA. Any such fundraising efforts must be approved by the principal.

TUTORING

Paid tutoring for students desiring additional help is available after 3:30 PM. Teacher availability is subject to a number of variables including extracurricular obligations, academy responsibilities, etc. For this reason, all tutoring requests should be made by contacting the principal, and he will assist you in finding an available instructor who will best meet your child's academic needs. The cost for tutoring is \$40 for each one-hour lesson, and the payment will be collected through the family's TADS account.

STUDENT SINGING PERFORMANCES

Music is an important part of the curriculum at Northdale Christian Academy. On days when students do not attend regular music class, singing takes place in the classroom during Devotion, Religion class, Chapel, and various other times throughout the day. On a monthly basis throughout the school year students are scheduled to sing for a Northdale Lutheran service, program, or community function. Often these songs are religious songs which give the students a chance to share God's Word with friends and family.

Students and their teachers spend many weeks and months learning these songs, memorizing the words, and practicing the music to perform. It is encouraged, therefore, that every member of the class be present for every scheduled performance. When all members of the class or group are present, the students are able to perform to the best of their abilities and give praise to God for the talents he has given them. It is requested that all student absences from singing be excused with the classroom teacher.

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