

2022-2023



STUDENT

HANDBOOK

There's A Genius In Every Child

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HISTORY

In 1989, the Fort Walton Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church organized a small Adventist school. The facility was located in the Fort Walton Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church's initial church building, teaching grades one through eight. In 1995, the Fort Walton Beach School was closed. The school reopened in the new church building in 2005 as the Emerald Coast Christian School.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Emerald Coast Christian School is part of the largest church operated Protestant school system in the world. The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates forty colleges and universities, including three medical schools which offer recognized graduate degrees. This school works in harmony with policies of the Southern Union Board of Education and the Gulf States Conference.

MISSION

The Emerald Coast Christian School exists to *show* children *Jesus*, *nurture* their love for Him and others, *teach* them to think, and *empower* them to serve.

SEVEN CARING HABITS BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS SCRIPTURE VERSES

Supporting Proverbs 12:14, 27:9

Encouraging Proverbs 12:14, 25:25

Listening Proverbs 8:33-34, 18:13, 19:20

Accepting Ephesians 1:4-7, 1 John 2:6, Romans 5:8

Trusting Proverbs 13:17, 24:26, 25:13, 1 Corinthians 13:7

Respecting Romans 13:8

Negotiating Differences Proverbs 6:1-5, 15:18

EMERALD COAST CHRISTIAN FACULTY SCHOOL STAFF

Principal	Charmaine Francis	850-243-1910
Grades 1-8	Charmaine Francis	850-243-1910
Home and School	Ruben Martinez	850-774-5328
School Board Chairperson	Cindy Nickless	850-496-2089
Set Up Scholarship	Melissa Martinez	850-774-5341

Pastor Shane Davis, Fort Walton Beach SDA Church	808-977-2834
Mr. Ron Stearns, Treasurer	850-642-0411
Mr. Garry Page, Safety Officer	850-716-0481
Mr. Harold Sanders, Grounds	850-217-6494
Mr. Orlando Robinson	850-420-6600

CHURCH INFORMATION

Fort Walton Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church

119 St. Mary Ave. SW

Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

850 243-1970

Email: shane.m.davis@hotmail.com

Pastor Shane Davis

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

It is with great pleasure that I write to welcome you and your student(s) to this school year at Emerald Coast Christian School. I hope that your summer has been filled with fun family activities. How quickly summer concludes, and our thoughts turn to eagerly preparing for the commencement of another school year. This is always an exciting time of the year!

Emerald Coast Christian School provides exceptional education for all our students. Our goal is to not only provide the academic rigor necessary for our continued success, but we also strive to bring students to the knowledge of a loving God and Jesus as their personal Savior.

To our students, I ask that you reflect on your goals and make every effort not only to pursue personal excellence but also to demonstrate your perseverance and integrity. Know that I am here to support and encourage you as you explore different possibilities and grow as learners. Remember that with these opportunities, comes both a personal and collective responsibility to be supportive of one another. I will count on you to treat others how you want to be treated-with respect. A school that aspires to greatness can expect no less.

Serving as principal at Emerald Coast Christian School is as great an honor as it is a responsibility. I believe that the foundation of our future accomplishments will be found in the power of our combined efforts and in the power of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord bless you.

Sincerely,
Charmaine Francis, *Principal*
cfrancis@gcsda.org

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Emerald Coast Christian School! Emerald Coast Christian School is a Seventh-day Adventist church-operated school which offers grades one through eight. The school was established to provide young people with a thorough training for service in the practical duties of life and to promote a reverence for God. Classes are kept small to affect a more personal working relationship between the teacher and student.

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook were developed by the operating board and presented to help you become acquainted with our school. The policies and procedures are subject to change at the direction of the School Board.

We believe that the ultimate purpose of education is to help each student develop mentally, physically, socially and spiritually:

The objective of the school is to provide an environment in which the student's desire to learn is stimulated. The Bible and nature are two great educators and will play a major role in the curriculum.

Our physical bodies are the dwelling place of God. We stress health and hygiene, organized play for all students, physical culture and calisthenics exercises, and work activities in which emphasis is placed on sharing responsibilities and using energy in a practical way.

The school will encourage students to make mature decisions and participate socially in a proper and Christian manner by setting standards and rules, and providing supervised group scholastics, play, and field trip activities. Learning and accepting responsibilities of good citizenship will help each student participate successfully in the world.

Bible standards will be upheld in all activities and curricula. The spiritual needs of each student will be of special interest of the teaching staff.

Success at Emerald Coast Christian School will be directly proportional to the effort each student and parent(s)/guardian puts forth.

ACCREDITATION

Emerald Coast Christian School is nationally accredited through the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, and is acknowledged as a charter member of both the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA) and the Council for American Private Education (CAPE). All public schools and all other Seventh-day Adventist schools and academies recognize the credits from our school.

In the Gulf States Conference, the state of Florida has also granted the Accrediting Association for Adventist Schools (AAA) its approval for the accreditation of its schools. The Gulf States Conference is one of eight conferences in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Southern Union Conference has established a co-accreditation process and agreement between AAA and SACS (Southern Association of College and Schools).

PHILOSOPHY

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes God as the ultimate source of existence and truth. In the beginning, God created in His image a perfect humanity, a perfection later marred by sin. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's character and purposes can be understood as revealed in nature, the Bible and Jesus Christ. The distinctive characteristics of Adventist education, derived from the Bible and the inspired writing of Ellen G. White, point to the redemptive aim of true education: *to restore human beings into the image of their Maker.*

While God presents His infinitely loving and wise character as the ultimate norm for human conduct, human motives, thinking, and behavior have fallen short of God's ideal. Education in its broadest sense is a means of returning human beings to their original relationship with God. Its time dimensions span eternity.

Adventist education seeks to develop a life of faith in God and respect for the dignity of all human beings; to build character akin to that of the Creator; to nurture thinkers rather than mere reflectors of others' thoughts; to promote loving service rather than selfish ambition; to ensure maximum development of each individual's potential; and to embrace all that is true, good and beautiful.

An education of this kind imparts far more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person - physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Working together, homes, schools, and churches cooperate together

with divine agencies in preparing learners for responsible citizenship in this world and in the world to come. *

The Emerald Coast Christian School is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian school. Because of our beliefs, we prohibit students from engaging in any sexual conduct/activity, including same-sex relationships. We have chosen to define sexual conduct/activity to include anything that advocates for, promotes or supports the homosexual lifestyle in any forum, including in social media. Sexual conduct/activity also includes any consensual sexual behavior that occurs before marriage, such as sexual intercourse, public displays of affection, intimate contact, homosexuality or behavior that exhibits a same-sex relationship, pornography, and actions (for example, spending the night with someone of the opposite sex), that may lead to situations of temptation, regret and immoral conduct.

*This statement is the general philosophy for all schools of the Southern Union Conference and Gulf States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

GOALS

- To keep Christ before all students while in worship, study, work, and at play.
- To maintain in the school a spiritual atmosphere in which prayer, worship, and doing the will of God will be, in the eyes of our students, the ideal and accepted pattern of living.
- To lead students to make a commitment to the service of their God, their church, and their fellow man.
- To help all students achieve a Christian philosophy of life as well as acquire the knowledge, attitude and skills necessary for a Christian character.
- To promote social, cultural, emotional, and physical growth.
- To develop a sense of self-worth along with skills in interpersonal relationships
- needed for meeting the responsibilities of family membership, and
- respond with sensitivity to the needs of others.
- To develop an understanding of multi-cultural diversity and historical heritage, and a working knowledge of governmental processes, while affirming a belief in the dignity and worth of others and a responsibility for one's local, national and global environments.
- To adopt a systematic, logical approach to decision making and problem solving based on a body of scientific, mathematical, and historical knowledge within the context of a biblical perspective.

REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND STANDARDS

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in all of its church-operated schools, admits students of any race and does not discriminate on the basis of handicap, sex, race, color, or national origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities which are available at the school. It is the school's policy to admit students of any race or ethnic origin to all rights and privileges pertaining to use of facilities, as well as participation in school activities.

ADMISSION POLICY

Admittance as a student to Emerald Coast Christian School is subject to the approval of the school's operating board. The board may dismiss students for cause at any time.

The privileges of the Emerald Coast Christian School are not limited to Seventh-day Adventist church members. Christians from all denominations are welcome provided they show due respect for the Word of God, maintain a reverent attitude during religious exercises and observe the regulations of the school.

Seventh-day Adventist schools have not been established for the purpose of offering extreme special education. The school does not provide enrollment to students whose special educational or physical needs cannot be met by its existing programs, services, or staff.

Students will not be admitted to the first grade unless they have reached the age of six by August 15, or be admitted to kindergarten unless they have reached age 5 by August 15. Any deviation from this must be approved by the Gulf States Conference office of education. To be eligible for admission, children must be physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially mature to carry work at the prescribed level.

The School Board reserves the right to refuse admittance to any child, and to dismiss any child whenever it deems such action is necessary for the welfare of the child or the school.

Required Admission Forms

A completed application form

A physical examination is required for any student who is entering the school for the first time. All immunizations are required to be kept current and a copy of the immunization record will be required. It is highly recommended that students have annual eye and physical examinations.

Students without current immunization records, or a medical or religious exemption from the Okaloosa County Health Department, will not be allowed to attend school until these requirements are met.

Certified copy of the birth certificate.

Student interview with Teacher and/or Head Teacher.

Previous school records - including teaching recommendation forms.

Proof of payment of registration fees and first month tuition signed by the school treasurer.

ADMITTANCE TO FIRST OR SECOND GRADES

Florida law (Section 1003.21) requires that students entering first grade meet the age requirements unless transferring from another state or country. Age must be verifiable by means of a birth certificate at registration.

Students must be at least:

- six (6) years old by September 1 to be eligible to register for first (1st) grade.
- seven (7) years old by September 1 to be eligible to register for second (2nd) grade.

Students who have not previously attended school but who meet the age requirements listed above must take an admission test before being enrolled in first or second grade if the child:

- Did not attend an accredited kindergarten.
- Did not attend a private kindergarten program licensed by the Florida Department of Education; or
- Were home schooled without the approval of the Okaloosa County School District

ADMITTANCE OF NEW OR TRANSFER STUDENTS

Admission into the school program at grade level will be based on:

1. Interview with student/parent by the teacher or administrator,
2. Proper completion/availability of all required documents (i.e. application, report card, immunization records, etc.), and
3. Student data from previous school (if applicable).

Students transferring must have no outstanding account from previous schools and must provide satisfactory scholarship and citizenship recommendations from their former school. Satisfactory records of physical and mental health must be provided or made available. A physical exam is required, or evidence of a physical exam completed during the current school year. Achievement tests may be required for acceptance before final consideration.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Emerald Coast Christian School offers excellent educational opportunities for each student. However, it does not have the equipment or professional staff necessary to provide programs of special education and is unable to admit student who have serious mental, physical, or social handicaps. Such students should be enrolled in a school having personnel and resources to meet their needs more effectively.

PRIVATE HEALTH INFORMATION

Student health information will be stored and accessed in accordance with federal HIPAA act of 2003. Health documents, including student medical forms and Consent to Treatment forms, will be filed on-site in a separate unlabeled drawer or locked cabinet. For off-site activities, Consent for Treatment forms will be placed in a small secured box or file and given to the authorized person for each activity (which may or may not be the driver of each vehicle). People in the following positions will have access to the health/authorization forms: principal, administrator, classroom teachers, and School Board designee(s). Health information will not be released to any institution or person without written permission of the parent or legal guardian.

PHYSICAL EXAMS AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

A current physical examination is required to be on file for all students. A physical examination is required once in early education and in the seventh grade. Students entering Emerald Coast Christian School for the first time must submit a current physical examination prior to the first day of attendance.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

It is the purpose of the Emerald Coast Christian School Board to keep enrollment charges as low as possible and still cover costs. Because of this, payments to the school must be made promptly.

Application and registration fees are due at the time of registration and are non-refundable and non-negotiable. There are no discounts on tuition or registration. However, when financial aid is necessary there is money available in the ECCS Worthy Student account. Application for assistance must be submitted at the yearly registration.

Tuition charges are based on 180 school days. Typically, tuition charges distributed to 10 equal payments. Tuition charges are based on 1/10th of the yearly charge for each partial/ complete month the student is enrolled in school. Tuition is to be paid in ten equal payments unless other arrangements are made. The tuition does not include registration and application fees. The first tuition payment is due by the first day of school. Parents are encouraged to pay registration fees in June and/or July prior to the August due date. The second tuition payment is due in September and the last payment is due in May. Monthly tuition payments are to be paid by the first of each month.

Unpaid, delinquent, accounts will be subject to late fees, interest charges, and additional penalties, including but not limited to students being asked to stay home until the account is paid and the involvement of a collection's agency.

For a current listing of tuition charges and registration and application fees, please contact the school office at (850) 243-1910.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Student accounts will be reviewed monthly.

- Students with outstanding accounts at the end of the month will be asked to remain at home until satisfactory arrangements are made with the School Board.
- If an account is past due for more than 60 days, the account may be turned over to a collection's agency.

Students will not be permitted to register for school until any delinquent accounts from a previous year have been paid. Final report cards, diplomas, and transcripts are released only upon the final settlement of the student's financial account. Any school requiring records for a student whose account is not paid in full will be notified of this.

VISITATION POLICY

Parents are always welcomed to visit classes and observe our school program. In order to accommodate families and minimize interruptions, the following procedures have been adopted:

All visitors must sign in upon arrival.

If only visiting to observe, parents and families are asked to limit their visits to two class sessions.

Visitors are also asked to refrain from requesting a conference or personal information about their child at this time. We do not allow other school aged children to visit who are not enrolled in our school unless prospective students or arrangements have been made with the principal/head teacher.

TRANSPORTATION

Emerald Coast Christian School does not offer busing. Parents will need to make their own arrangements for students to arrive on time for classes and for their prompt pick-up upon dismissal each day. Some families may wish to form carpools.

Field trips are a valuable enrichment to the learning program and often require that parents and other willing adults volunteer their time and vehicles in order for the students to participate in the wide variety of activities the school could not otherwise schedule. In order to utilize a volunteer driver/vehicle, the vehicle must

be insured at a minimum of \$250,000/\$500,000/\$50,000 for bodily injury and property damage.

ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL HOURS

For all grades, school begins at 8:30 a.m. and closes at 3:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Friday.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

We follow the Okaloosa County guidance for inclement weather and school closings. However, the Emerald Coast Christian School CAT team is to make the final decision about school closure when applicable.

In the event of an emergency (e.g. snowstorm, fire, staff illness/injury, etc.), it is the policy of Emerald Coast Christian School to comply with the same emergency procedures of Okaloosa County School District. Please check the Okaloosa County web site or the local morning news.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The administration reserves the right to evaluate and excuse absences if circumstances warrant. Class work may be made-up. A hand-written excuse, signed by the parent or guardian, stating the specific reason for the absence, must be turned in within three days after the absence or it will be recorded as unexcused. Excused absences include sickness, medical appointments, and death in the family. To ensure security, we ask/require that parents/guardians notify the school if the student is to be absent.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Because our school is highly time dependent and we must prepare our students to function in it, we can only hope to educate students who are in class. Interruptions caused by tardiness are a serious drain on effective teaching time; class attendance is of great importance. Class work missed for an unexcused absence may not be

made up. Any student who has 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days is classified by the state as "habitually truant" and will be reported to the state.

TARDINESS

A student not in his or her classroom at the designated time for which class starts will be counted tardy. A tardy cannot be more than 45 minutes; tardy of more than 45 minutes will be counted as half a day absence. After five tardy, the student will be considered absent for one full day.

Excessive absences and/or tardiness will result in a School Board review with the possibility of dismissal or denial of future enrollment.

MAKE-UP WORK

Work missed during an excused absence is due two school days after the last school day the student was absent. For example, an absence on Monday means make-up work is due no later than Wednesday. Likewise, absences on Thursday and Friday mean make-up work would be due no later than Monday of the next week.

APPEALS for WAIVER

If a student has more than five days of unexcused absences per semester, their case will automatically go before the School Board, conducted at the end of each semester. All absences must be documented, for an appeal to be considered. The School Board will review the parent's request for an attendance waiver on an individual basis.

DRESS CODE AND UNIFORM POLICY

The dress and appearance standards of Emerald Coast Christian School exist as a guiding principle aimed at moderation, comfort, and practicality. The importance of a school dress uniform is believed to contribute to the development of student identity through non-external factors. The following is the uniform policy for Emerald Coast Christian School for all grades.

As a general principle clothing should be decent, modest, clean, appropriate, comfortable, fit properly (not oversized or too tight), worn appropriately, hemmed, and free from holes, patches, or frays.

Shirts

- Uniform shirts are solid long-sleeved or short-sleeved polo shirts in red, white, or navy blue.
- Shirts should hang near the lap when seated, if not tucked in.

Bottoms

- Long uniform pants must be solid khaki (tan), black or navy blue.
- Solid shorts khaki (tan), black or navy blue of the same colors may be worn.

Girls may choose to wear solid khaki (tan), black, red, or navy-blue jumpers, skirts, or polo-collared dresses. These must reach the top of the knee.

Shoes

- Closed-toed, rubber-soled dress shoes or tennis shoes may be worn.
- Tuck-in/Belts
- Shirt tuck-in is encouraged, but not required.
- Belts are encouraged, but not required.

Accessories

- Please remember that jewelry is not part of the dress code.
- Jewelry may be confiscated by staff and retrieved by the parent. Watches and hair barrettes are acceptable.
- Physical Education
- Grey shirt, blue shorts, and tennis shoes.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Students are expected to pick up and clean up after themselves during lunch. Lunches are to be eaten in the assigned eating area or out-of-doors in the assigned

eating area. Students should cooperate with teachers/supervisors regarding lunch and clean up.

Parents should plan ahead to provide the student with nutritious, balanced lunches/snacks. Unclean meat (pork, shellfish, etc.) and caffeinated drinks are not permitted. Carbonated drinks and concentrated sweets are discouraged.

Studies have shown that sugar tends to decrease the attention span and increase physical restlessness; and for this reason, desserts and beverages containing sugar should be limited.

Students will not be allowed to leave the school grounds at lunch time unless accompanied by a parent and approved by the teacher with prior notice.

BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

The teachers look forward to celebrating special occasions with the students. However, in order to avoid their becoming a hindrance to the total learning process and overall school program, it is expected that anyone planning to have a school party or provide a special treat to eat will have made prior arrangements with the school staff.

The school does not celebrate, commemorate, or sanction holidays with pagan origins, such as Halloween. In lieu of Halloween or other pagan holidays, the school and board members encourage alternative activities that are wholesome, recreational, and service to others.

Anyone wishing to plan an alternative activity should review the party or celebration plans with the principal or School Board prior to the event to obtain guidance in order to ensure the party or celebration is consistent with these guidelines and to acquire approval.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service is an important aspect of character development. Regularly scheduled service opportunities are part of the curriculum.

ASSEMBLY AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Students in grades 1-8 will meet together at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, for devotional time. Visiting pastors, youth speakers, music groups, faculty and students may be scheduled to present at this time. General announcements will be made at the end of the devotional. Occasionally this greeting time will provide opportunity for extracurricular activities to be discussed. This meeting time is as important as any other regular class session. All students are expected to be in attendance.

One week each semester may be set aside for special meetings with spiritual emphasis. Prayer is frequently offered before each class and there may be discussions on religious topics in any class throughout the day.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are rented to students for their use during the school year. Books are to be kept clean and handled carefully. Students may be required to cover textbooks and will be required to pay for abused, lost, or damaged books. Workbooks and other supplies required for each grade level are included in the registration fee and tuition and are purchased by the student.

LIBRARY

Books are available for students to check out with library cards that will be created and stored for each student in the library. Students are expected to keep books in the condition in which the books were when checked out and return books when due. Books should be returned to the designated return area and not the library shelves. Student accounts will be charged \$10.00 for each book that is damaged or not returned by the end of the school year.

SCHOOL HEALTH AND SAFETY

ASBESTOS

Emerald Coast Christian School is in compliance with county and state regulations pertaining to asbestos testing and removal.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

Teachers will not diagnose a health condition or give any internal medications, including aspirin, except as indicated in the following statement:

Any student, who is required to take medication during the regular school day, as prescribed by a physician, may be assisted by the student's teacher if the teacher has the following:

1. A written statement from the physician detailing the time schedules, amount, and method by which such medications are to be taken.
2. A written statement from the parent or guardian of the student indicating the desire that the school assist the student in the matter as set forth in the physician's statements.
3. The medication must be delivered to the school in the original container bearing the pharmacy's label. The label must contain the name, place of business of the vendor, the serial number, the date of such prescription, the name of the person for whom such drug is prescribed, the name of the member of the medical profession who prescribed the drug, and bear directions for use of the prescribed medication
4. Parents who wish their child to have access to Tylenol or Children's Tylenol may provide the medicine to the school office with a note from the parent stating permission for use. The medication must be in its original container.

VALUABLES

Students are advised not to bring sizeable amounts of money or other valuables to school. Items should be properly labeled before arriving at school. Emerald Coast Christian School is not responsible for lost items.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

GRADES

The following system is used in grading and in computing the student's honor points:

A	Excellent	4.0
A-	Excellent	3.7
B+	Above Average	3.3
B	Above Average	3.0
B-	Above Average	2.7
C+	Average	2.3
C	Average	2.0
C-	Average	1.7
D+	Below Average	1.3
D	Below Average	1.0
D-	Below Average	0.7
F	Failure	.59
I	Incomplete	
P	Pass	
W	Withdrawal	

Decimal percentages will be rounded to the nearest hundredth.

HONORS

3.5-3.75 GPA Honor Roll

3.76- 4.00 GPA Principal's List

REPORT CARDS

Grades for the first and third quarter will be given to the parent at the Parent/Teacher Conference. The semester and year-ending reports will be mailed. Diplomas, transcripts, and final grades are released upon parent or school request, when final financial obligations are cleared.

CONDUCT

Emerald Coast Christian School is a school based on cooperation and commitment to Jesus Christ, we expect every student to abide by the following code:

- I will be respectful, responsible, and prepared.
- I will act in a safe manner.
- I will do all I can to foster an atmosphere of cooperation and trust.
- I will respect others, the environment, and myself.

CONDUCT REFERRALS

Infractions will be noted with a citizenship referral, which may include teacher-student meeting, teacher-student-principal meeting, or teacher-student-parent meeting.

A general example of a citizenship referral is as follows:

Classroom misconduct

Repeated dress code infractions

Social misconduct

Unsafe behavior

Language (inappropriate/insinuations)

Leaving campus without permission

Insubordination/lack of cooperation Dishonesty/cheating

Vandalism

Irreverence

Fighting/intimidation

Bullying

For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” means any physical act or gesture or any verbally, written or electronically communicated expression that a reasonable person should expect will have the effect of:

1. Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property; or
2. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to his/her property; or substantially disrupting the instructional program or the orderly operations of the school; or
3. Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, hostile educational environment for the student who is bullied.

A student accused of bullying will be separated from other students until there is some resolution.

The staff and board reserve the right to use its discretion in dealing with each problem as it arises, recognizing that each situation is unique and deserves special attention. Any or all steps may be skipped if the offense is serious enough or warrants such action.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is the removal of a student from classes or school activities for disciplinary reasons. Suspension may be on or off campus at the discretion of the administration. A student will not be allowed to reach the suspension level two times for the same type of offense. In lieu of suspension, the parent will be asked to withdraw the student from school.

The following behaviors may result in suspension:

- Bullying/Threatening, attempting, and/or causing physical injury to another person.
- Committing or attempting to commit theft or burglary or knowingly receiving stolen property.
- Disrupting school activities or willfully defying the authority of school personnel.
- Engaging in excessive contact or other activities with sexual intent.
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to school or private property.
- Repeated failure to abide by school policies.
- Dishonesty, including, but not limited to, forgery, plagiarism, and cheating on academic work. (Students caught cheating will receive a zero on the assignment with no ability to make up the assignment.)

- Practice of occult or satanic rituals
- Intentional activities which directly undermine Christianity or Seventh-day Adventist beliefs
- Participation in gang activities (including wearing of gang symbols, tagging).
- Smoking, drinking, illegal drugs on or at school/school activities, use or possession of drug paraphernalia.

Suspension will not exceed ten (10) consecutive school days. A student will not be suspended for a total of more than twenty (20) days during a school year. If a student reaches twenty (20) days suspended during a year they will be asked to withdraw.

Appeals of a suspension may be requested of the school office. Appeal requests must contain a parent signature within three (3) school days from when the suspension is assigned the student. Appeal attendees should include but not limited to the principal, School Board representative, the teacher, a parent of student involved, and the student.

EXPULSIONS

Expulsion is removal of a student from the school program for at least one full semester for disciplinary reasons. Students will be recommended for expulsion for any of the following behaviors:

- Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense.
- Possession of any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object (of no reasonable use to the pupil) at school or at any school activity.
- Possession or unlawful sale or distribution of any controlled substance including alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco.
- Burglary or extortion.

In addition, a student may also be recommended for expulsion when:

- Repetitive misbehavior: other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct.
- Due to the nature of the circumstances, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others.

Expulsion is an action of the School Board. Students will be suspended until a School Board hearing convenes (not more than ten (10) school days). The parents

of the child involved will be invited to the hearing. Students withdrawn before the expulsion hearing cannot be expelled without special School Board Action.

Appeals to an expulsion decision should be addressed to the Superintendent of Education, the Gulf State Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

PROCEDURES /APPEALS

The school administration may advance an infraction consequence depending on severity of the offense. The administration follows guidelines, which enable equitable consequences and appropriate response to the extent of misconduct. When the administration believes suspension or expulsion is warranted, an investigation will take place. Students involved will be given the opportunity to present their account of the incident. After the facts have been gathered, if the behavior warrants suspension or expulsion, the parents will be notified and asked to remove the student from the campus immediately. In the case of expulsion, the student will be suspended until the School Board can be convened for the hearing. Parents have the option to withdraw a student from school before the expulsion hearing is held. The student and his or her parents or guardians may be present at the expulsion hearing; any disruptive behavior may forfeit the right to attend. Suspension may be appealed to the administration for review. Generally the student will remain suspended until the review is conducted. If the suspension is not upheld, the remainder of the suspension is removed, and all records of the suspension shall be removed. If the Emerald Coast Christian School Board votes expulsion, the student will not be eligible for re-admission to Emerald Coast Christian School for at least one full semester.

GOVERNANCE POLICY

By registering at Emerald Coast Christian School, the student and his/her parents or guardian agree to comply with the rules and regulations as published by the school. All regulations adopted by the faculty and announced to the student body have the same force as those published and remain in force throughout the year, both on and off the campus.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

When a situation arises that needs clarification or resolution, the required grievance policy, follows the Biblical model of Matthew 18 for resolving differences between individuals:

1. Address the situation with the teacher/staff member.
2. Address the situation with the teacher and the principal.
3. Address the situation with the Board Chairperson, who may involve the Executive Board.
4. Address the situation with the School Board as an agenda item (be certain to plan accordingly with the principal and/or Board Chairperson).
5. Conference with the Office of Education.

These steps are important and are to be followed in order. Honest resolution will be sought at each level in an effort to eliminate problems thus dissolving the need to appeal to the next stage.

Contact information for the Executive Board members are listed at the beginning of this handbook.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Emerald Coast Christian School is committed to providing a school environment free from sexual harassment for all students. Incidents of harassment should be reported in accordance with these procedures so that school authorities might take appropriate action. Students who sexually harass others are subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Employees who engage in sexual harassment are subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Definition: Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance or request and other conduct of a sexual nature, which is offensive. It can be spoken, written, or physical behavior. It includes offensive pictures, graffiti, jokes, and/or gestures.

If submission to offensive sexual conduct is made a condition of academic status, progress, benefits, honors, or activities, it is prohibited sexual harassment. Sexual harassment also occurs when the offensive behavior or material creates a hostile school environment.

Reporting Procedures: Students believed to have experienced sexual harassment shall report the incident to school authorities as soon as possible. If the harassment is between students, the student shall report the incident to the classroom principal/teacher in grades 1-8. The student may also report to the pastor or board chairperson.

If the harassment comes from an adult, the student should report directly to the principal or the board chairperson. The Superintendent of Education of the Gulf State Conference should be contacted if communication to the fore mentioned parties is not possible or appropriate.

Several principles should guide the school in appropriately responding to a sexual harassment complaint:

1. Take the complaint seriously. Investigate privately and keep notes.
2. The investigation and response should be age appropriate.
3. Discipline should fit the behavior and the age of the offender. Progressive discipline should be used unless the first offense is of a serious nature.
4. Educating the students regarding sexual harassment is the cornerstone of prevention.

Be in conformance with local laws and agencies.

Sexual harassment is sometimes categorized legally into two categories, quid pro quo and hostile environment. Of the two, quid pro quo is considered the most serious but both types should be taken seriously. Quid pro quo is where sexual favors are requested or demanded in return for benefit. A typical example would be where a teacher gives an "A" to a student in exchange for sexual favors. Hostile environment is where jokes, pictures, comments gestures, or stares create a school environment that is hostile and offensive to the victim. A school example of this is where classmates tease a child who is less physically developed.

Complaints of sexual harassment should be investigated promptly and confidentially. Corroborating evidence is helpful in determining the truthfulness of the complaint. False accusations occur and are themselves a form of sexual harassment.

Appropriate discipline can range from education and teacher counseling to expulsion. Often it is advisable to get the perspective of an adult of the same gender as the victim when evaluating the seriousness of the event. The response should fit the behavior and be age appropriate.

For instance, a joking remark that is an isolated event could be handled by a teacher: talking to the offending student, explaining the significance of the remark, and asking the student not to repeat the remark.

On the other hand, offensive touching is much more serious and in some cases is a criminal offense reportable as child abuse. Suspension and possible expulsion may be the appropriate response.

Adult to student sexual harassment is more serious and calls for a stronger response. Sometimes retaliation, overt or subtle, is used against the victim. The offender should be warned this will not be tolerated.

At times, no clear determination can be made as to the truthfulness of accusations. In those cases, if the reported behavior is not extremely serious the suspected offender should be told such behavior, if it occurred, is offensive and will not be permitted.

After the investigation and response, the victim should be informed that appropriate corrective action has been taken and the victim is encouraged to report any further events.

MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

Electronic entertainment devices are **not** to be brought to school, **nor taken** on field trips. This includes but not limited to handheld gaming devices and MP3 player. (These items will be confiscated if this rule is violated and returned to the parents at the end of the day).

Cell phones must be turned off during school hours. Violation of this policy will result in the cell phone being confiscated and returned to the parent(s) at the end of the day. If cell phones are confiscated more than **three** times in a semester, the student may be prohibited from bringing a cell phone to school.

Educational software programs have been installed to complement the academic curriculum. Students are not to bring personal software programs to load on the school's computers, nor can they legally copy any program from the computers and take it home for personal use. These activities, referred to as "pirating," are a violation of copyright laws and are punishable by law.

Internet access will be monitored and limited. Students will not be allowed Internet access unless they and their parents have signed an Internet Use Agreement.

Emerald Coast Christian School reserves the right for teachers and staff to monitor and restrict Internet use when necessary. No food or drinks are allowed around the computers.

TELEPHONE USE

Students are not to use the phone for personal calls except in emergencies and with staff permission. In the event a student receives a call, he/she will be called out of class only in an emergency case.

Please understand that telephone calls to a student or teacher during the school day are an interruption to the learning program and can take the teacher out of the classroom where he/she cannot adequately and safely supervise the students.

GENERAL RULES

To promote safety and an atmosphere for learning and spiritual development, the following rules will be enforced:

- There will be no gum chewing allowed at school.
- There will be no running or shouting in the school building.
- Students will avoid the appearance of evil, including acting, playing, pretending, or joking in such a way as to arouse the concern or suspicion of any student, staff, or visitor on campus.
- Every student is expected to go outside for recess when the weather permits unless the student has a legitimate written excuse. Students should come to school with appropriate clothing for recess activities.
- The parking areas will be off-limits from the time students arrive on campus until the time they leave.
- Teachers will instruct their students on safety measures to take in the event of a natural disaster (i.e. fire, earthquake, or tornado). Drills are held at regular intervals to test these instructions and plans. It is essential that students pay careful attention to all instructions given and that they conduct themselves in a calm, quiet, and orderly manner during these drills, and particularly during an actual emergency.

Any rule, regulation or policy stated by the school authorities—teachers, principal or the board—will have the same enforcement affect as that stated in this handbook. In the case of major changes or revisions, written notification will be given to the parents/guardians and constituents.