



**2011-2012
ELEMENTARY
PARENT STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

**2210 5th Avenue North
Great Falls, MT 59401
Phone: 406.452.5276
Fax: 406.452.8606**

Email: fccs@foothillschristian.org



Foothills Community Christian School is a group of committed Christian parents with a common goal of providing a quality Christian education for the children of Great Falls and north central Montana. The school was organized in 1996, to address the need for community-based Christian education. The school is non-denominational, and opened its doors in September 1997 with pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. The high school began in 2000 growing to a full 9th – 12th grade high school in 2004. The school currently operates under a member nominated board of directors.

Our **academic excellence** is evident in above average testing scores and a high percentage of high school graduates attending college. Many of our students are involved in Bible clubs, teaching younger children through Bible studies and continue to make a difference in our community and world through their outstanding **moral character**. Our **service to others** is apparent in the many hours Foothills' students volunteer by serving lunch at the Rescue Mission or picking up trash in the ditches through the Adopt-A-Highway program. Our Junior High and High School students volunteer over 80 hours each year at the Rescue Mission. One of our high school students decided to continue his service of volunteering by serving lunches to the homeless in the park nearly every Sunday. As you can see, Foothills continues to have a lasting impact on each student through their community service.

We continue to **change lives and build leaders** at Foothills Community Christian School. We thank each family who has entrusted their children to this school. The Board of Directors, administration, faculty and staff are committed to provide a Christian educational experience that seeks to fulfill our Mission Statement.

To facilitate your direction and involvement this year, this handbook has been developed to be used as a guideline and as a tool to help you understand what will be expected. Please call the school office if you have questions or need clarification on school policies.

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Mission Statement

The mission of Foothills Community Christian School is to assist parents by providing a biblically directed education that will instill in students, academic excellence, moral character, and service to others.

Statement of Purpose

Foothills Community Christian School is a community based Christian School dedicated to assisting parents in providing a quality Christian education based upon the authoritative, inerrant Word of God. Our goal is not only to provide a strong academic foundation for college, but also to offer a firm perspective for life. Foothills Community Christian School strives to develop the whole person for the glory of God through a disciplined environment demonstrating God's love. Foothills Community Christian School will equip students to thoughtfully examine every aspect of life through a Christ-centered worldview. The staff will serve as role models through their Christian walk, professional excellence and spiritual growth.

Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God. (II Timothy 3:16 - 17, II Peter 1:21)

We believe there is only one God, eternally existent in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19)

We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15, 7:26), His miracles (John 2:11), His vicarious and atoning death (I Corinthians 15:3 - 4, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9), His resurrection (John 11:25, I Corinthians 15:3), His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19), His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).

We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith alone we are saved (John 3:3, 3:16 - 19, 5:24, Romans 3:23, 5:8 - 9, Ephesians 2:9 - 10, Titus 3:5).

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost - that they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28 -29).

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, I Corinthians 12:12, Galatians 3:26 - 28, Philippians 2:1 - 2).

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (John 7:37 - 39, 14:16 - 17, Romans 8:9 - 14, I Corinthians 3:16, 6:19 - 20).

We believe in the creation of man by God in His own image (Genesis 1:26 - 28, 5:1 - 2, Matthew 19:4, Ephesians 2:10).

Accreditation

Foothills Community Christian School is accredited through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC). The Montana State Accreditation Committee recommended that Foothills Community Christian School be accredited through the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools after evaluating the educational quality of the school.

Doctrinal and Denominational Differences

The Statement of Faith is fundamental to basic Christian tenets and contains those doctrines to which we unreservedly adhere and teach. In order to maintain a clear non-denominational position it is necessary that we remind faculty, staff, parents and students that certain areas are left primarily to the teaching of the home and church.

We desire to remain united in the salvation and love of Christ, avoiding the dissension that may be caused by denominational distinctives. The goals of Foothills are to (1) provide an atmosphere where Bible topics can be discussed freely and openly, where differences will be tolerated and accepted even though we disagree. Equally, it is our responsibility to (2) teach the fundamental truths of God's Word in an authoritative way to impress the importance of these truths. Finally, we wish to (3) strive for unity in such a way that the unsaved community around us sees the love of God in our lives and give us the opportunity to share God's Word with them.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Foothills Community Christian School accepts students of every race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all of the rights, privileges, and programs that are made available to the students of this school. It does not racially discriminate in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic programs or any other school-administered activity or program.

ACADEMICS

Academic Detention

For the student that has problems completing academic assignments, the teacher may assign an academic detention. The student may avoid the detention if the work is completed to the teacher's satisfaction before the detention meets. Academic detentions are not recorded on any permanent record.

Grade Placement and Promotion

The final decision regarding whether a student will pass to the next consecutive grade or be retained rests with the parent. The staff and administration have a responsibility to offer council and professional guidance. The school also reserves the right to indicate on the student's report card that they have been passed with reservation.

In rare cases, parents may believe that their child is capable of "skipping" a grade. The nature of the curriculum is such that a student will miss critical concepts and skills by skipping a grade. A child's maturation, social development, and his/her success in the future must also be considered. Teachers are instructed to motivate and challenge such students. The Administrator and teachers will make such promotion decisions.

Grading Scales

The following grading scale has been chosen by FCCS. All graded classes and subjects will follow this scale unless arrangements have been approved by the administration for special circumstances such as learning disabilities, etc.

- A = 90% - 100%**
- B = 80% - 89%**
- C = 70% - 79%**
- D = 60% - 69%**
- F = 59% and below**

Note: Grading at FCCS is based on both effort and achievement. While some subjectivity is always involved, objective means will be the main factor. Some formal letter grades begin in third grade with fourth grade being the transition for total letter grades in core subjects.

Make Up Work

Although the administration wants to be sensitive to special situations, it will be normal procedure to allow one day for every day of absence plus one day to make up the missed work. For example, if a student is absent Monday and returns to school Tuesday, the work missed is due at the beginning of class on Thursday; student is absent Monday through Friday and returns to school the following Monday, the work missed is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday of the following week. (See ABSENCES section for information about getting any work missed from the teachers.)

Note: Major, long term projects (those assigned for two weeks or more) will be due the original date even if the student is absent a day or two before the due date.

Midterm Grades (Progress Reports)

All fourth through sixth grade students receive midterm grades. Midterm progress reports will be available for viewing through RenWeb on the dates indicated by the calendar. These are averaged grades that indicate the total grade earned to date. These are not permanently recorded. Access to view midterm Progress reports will be denied if the family's account is in arrears or has past due fees.

Parent- Teacher Conferences

Due to the personal and private nature of the information contained on the report cards, FCCS has chosen to set up individual appointments between the parents and the teachers. On the designated day following the distribution of 1st quarter report cards, there will be a conference time set up for parents and teachers to discuss the progress of their student. Please call the secretary and set up an appointment to meet with the teacher. The first parent teacher conference is mandatory for all families. Generally the appointments are 15 to 20 minutes long. There are no formal conferences scheduled after the first grading period. Parents are welcome to get in touch with teachers at any other time that they are not involved with their official duties or their own families. Feel free to leave a message at the office for a return call. Any necessary evening calls should be done early in the evening.

Report Cards

Quarterly report cards are the permanently recorded grades of the student's progress and accomplishments. They will be opened to parents in RenWeb for a one-week period. You will be notified through Footnotes when they are opened. Access to view report cards will be denied if the family's account is in arrears or has past due fees.

NOTE: FCCS accepts responsibility only to give these reports to the custodial parent or guardian. Divorced/separated parents need to make copies and communicate them to the other parties involved.

Standards for Written Work

In keeping with the biblical principle of glorifying God in all that we do, the school has established certain standards for written assignments that all students must follow according to the grade level work that they do. All work is to be done neatly and clearly written. Complete sentences, correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar are encouraged to be used at all times unless otherwise specified by the teacher. Work that does not meet these standards and other teacher assigned requirements will be graded accordingly and/or will have to be redone.

Textbooks

The choice of specific textbooks is recommended by the Curriculum Committee, a subcommittee chaired by the Administrator. The final decision of curriculum choice rests with the Administration.

ADMISSIONS

Admission to Foothills Community Christian School is by application only and based on the following criteria. Acceptance, along with any terms and conditions, is determined by the administration.

1. Christian Faith – Students must come from a family that celebrates biblical values. We require that either a father or mother be born again; that is, be a believer in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. The personal faith of the student is of particular interest to us in the application process. An interview by the Administrator with student and parents is required.
2. Academic Achievement – In consideration of our curriculum, junior high students applying to Foothills Community Christian School must be tested by one of our staff members. FCCS uses the Basic Achievement Test.
3. Personal Character – Consideration of character, citizenship, and especially a student's desire to attend Foothills Community Christian School are important criteria in the admission process.
4. Age Requirement – Students entering Pre-Kindergarten must reach the age of four years old by September 10th. Students entering Kindergarten must reach the age of five years old by September 10th.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The school is very concerned about attendance and punctuality. Missed class time can never be fully reclaimed. Although homework, tests and quizzes can be made up (for excused absences), the benefits of interacting with our staff and fellow students can not be replaced.

Please call FCCS at 452-5276 or email the school office at fccs@foothillschristian.org when your student will be absent. In some cases, knowing of the absence as soon as possible could affect a teacher's plans for the day. If you call before office hours, please leave your message on the voice mail.

Absences

Regular, consistent, school attendance is required by Montana law and accrediting agencies. It is also conducive to high scholastic achievement and is good training for the work God calls us to do. (Psalm 90:17; Proverbs 12:24; Col. 3:23) FCCS expects regular, consistent attendance for all students enrolled. PARENTS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO PLAN TRIPS AND VACATIONS DURING TIMES WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION. All absences will be listed as either Excused or Unexcused. An excused absence will be given for the following reasons:

1. Illness;
2. Medical, dental or optical appointment not able to be scheduled outside of school hours;
3. Bereavement leave due to a death in the family; or
4. Student and/or parent attendance at any school-related event or function
5. In addition, the school administrator has authority to grant an excused absence whenever necessary. Parents simply need to contact the administrator to arrange for an excused absence for reasons that are not listed above.

Ten absences are allowed per semester. The seventh absence will result in the parents being notified that their child is close to the limit of ten absences. After ten missed days per semester, upper level students may lose course credit and have to repeat the class. There may be extenuating circumstances that cause a student to miss more than ten days. In cases such as these a meeting with the Administration may be warranted.

IT IS ESSENTIAL A PARENT NOTIFY THE OFFICE THAT THE STUDENT WILL BE ABSENT FOR EACH DAY MISSING SCHOOL.

Parents **must** call or email the school office no later than 9:00 a.m. on the day the student is absent and a written note must accompany the student when they return to school and given to the school office. If you have more than one child missing school, each one will need a note when returning to school.

State law requires that we attempt to contact a parent whose student is absent if they have not first notified the office in order to determine whether the parent is aware of the situation.

In grades 1 - 6 make-up work is the responsibility of the parent & student. Missed work will not be given out the first day of the child's absence. (The teacher can not use valuable class time to gather material and take it down to the office) The student has as many days as they were absent plus 1 extra day to make up the work that they have missed. (Examples: A student is absent Monday and returns to school Tuesday. The work missed is due at the beginning of class on Thursday. A student is absent Monday through Friday and returns to school the following Monday, the work missed is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday of the following week.)

Unexcused absences are assigned for any reason other than those listed above. In the case of an unexcused absence, the student is responsible for completing all assignments missed. The student has as many days as they are absent, plus 1 extra day to make up the work they missed.

Students are never permitted to leave the school grounds for any reason unless it has been cleared through the office. Permission is given only by request of the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in person, by signed note, or in case of an emergency, by phone

School Entrance and Exit

All students entering the building will use their assigned entrance. PK - 6th grade students with last names beginning with the letters A – K will use the east door for entrance and end of day exiting; students with last names beginning with L – Z will use the front door for entrance and end of day exiting. All Junior and Senior High students will use the northwest door nearest the chapel for entrance and end of day exiting. Visitors please use the main entrance and report to the office. All other doors will be locked on the outside during the school day.

School Hours

School begins promptly at 8:15 for all PK – 6th grade students. Any student arriving before 8:00 must go to “before care”. Perfect attendance is a very commendable but difficult goal to achieve. It demands self-discipline, perseverance, diligence, and self-denial. Future employers are very impressed with records of perfect attendance.

If situations arise where you must leave school (for a scheduled appointment, etc.) arrangements must be made, in writing and in advance, by your parents with the school office. Whenever you leave from or return to school, you must check out or in at the school office.

We do not allow for or tolerate any kind of a “skip day” for any FCCS students. Anyone who attempts to promote, plan or participate in such an activity would face immediate suspension from school and would risk their graduation. We view that kind of activity as being very rebellious, disrespectful to teachers and administrators.

Signing Out

It needs to be understood that the removal of a student from a classroom and the entrance of a student into a classroom are disruptions in some form to the teacher and the class. Therefore, when it is necessary for a student to be signed out for medical, dental, or other proper reasons, the parent should send a note to the teacher informing them of the time that the child will need to be picked up. The parent should then come to the office and sign the child out before leaving. If the student returns to school that day the parent should also sign the child back in upon return. The student is responsible for making up work missed according to the Parent Student Handbook.

PLEASE NOTE: The "end of the day" procedures are crucial to a smooth transition from school to home. Important papers are distributed, materials are being gathered and last instructions may be given. Therefore, we would appreciate your cooperation in not removing your student from class before the designated release time.

Tardies

Students will be considered tardy in the morning if they are not in their seat at 8:15 a.m. All tardies will be listed as either Excused or Unexcused. An excused tardy will be given for the following reasons:

1. Illness; or
2. Medical, dental or optical appointments that can not be scheduled outside of school hours.

(Please note that oversleeping, failing to set an alarm clock and late driver are not reasons for an excused tardy.) IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH INDIVIDUAL PARENT TO GET THE CHILD TO SCHOOL ON TIME. All students arriving late to school must get a tardy slip from the school office admitting them into class.

There is a limit of ten tardies per semester. The seventh tardy will result in the parents being notified that their child is close to the limit of ten tardies. Steps will then be taken to determine the best way to eliminate tardies. Excessive tardies may necessitate additional disciplinary action to help correct the problem.

Withdrawal

Should it be necessary to withdraw a student, the school secretary should be contacted for the proper procedure. The bookkeeper will review the financial status and give a refund if appropriate. Please refer to the Financial Policies section for more information regarding the withdrawal policy. When the school office receives formal notification with parental or guardian signatures, school records will be mailed to the next school. Accounts must be paid in full before any school records (including, but not limited to, report cards and transcripts) are released.

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Bible Classes

Bible is an integral part of the overall curriculum and purpose of our school. For this reason, Bible classes are required of all students. Foothills has chosen the New King James Version of the Bible as the classroom version. This decision is made only on the basis of class drill and for testing purposes. Because of the importance of the Bible, Bible class will be given the same emphasis as any other class as far as grades, homework, and credits are concerned. Emphasis will be given to the concepts and precepts of the Word of God as well as the memorization and factual content required.

Chapel

Chapel will be held weekly on Wednesday morning and/or afternoon. FCCS welcomes attendance of its parents. Occasionally chapels will be at other days or times to accommodate special services.

Because FCCS is a nondenominational school, speakers and groups from many different churches will be utilized along with the talent of our own staff. The Administrator will screen all speakers, performers, etc. in order to maintain a high level of spiritual lessons to be taught. The level and types of chapel will vary due to the wide division of ages involved in Foothills. Occasionally, chapel will be divided due to the nature and content of that particular message. Please note that chapel dress code is mandatory on chapel days.

Church Attendance

Foothills has the purpose of helping Christian parents raise their children in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Because of this, weekly church attendance and membership in a like-minded, scriptural church is expected of Foothill's families. The family and the church are the two institutions that God has set up to carry out His purposes on earth. We teach the students the importance of commitment to a local church and we encourage students to pray for their churches and pastors.

Prayer

It should go without saying that prayer is one of the most crucial parts of Foothills Community Christian School. Much prayer has already been invested and much more is needed. It is essential that prayer for wisdom, discernment, protection, and safety be the first action taken in every situation. Teachers are encouraged to pray in class as appropriate. Every formal meeting will include prayer. Please add us to your church's prayer list, and mention FCCS when you pray with your family.

CONDUCT / DISCIPLINE POLICY

The goal of this section is to outline the expected behavior by students of FCCS in cooperation with parents. Our standards are based on biblical mandates, Christian character, mutual respect and common courtesy. It is the school's expectation that parents and school staff will act as a team where there is clear communication.

Christian Character

It is the goal of FCCS to have students who are a Christ-like model to benefit themselves as well as the community. With this in mind, the Christian lifestyle of the students is based on Romans 14 and I Corinthians 8-10. Lying, cheating, (including plagiarism), stealing, use of/or possession of cigarettes, illegal drugs, alcohol, profane language and immoral behavior is forbidden. A Christian lifestyle cannot confine itself to the school day. It must be a belief and practice. Please be advised that if a student engages in compromising activities, the school, with the endorsement of the FCCS School Board, will take disciplinary action including expulsion.

Mutual Respect

1. Respect for teachers & staff – As a direct authority, teachers and staff are to be shown respect. This is both a biblical mandate and a common courtesy.
2. Respect for students – As a staff, we also accept our responsibility in treating students with the utmost respect and fairness. Should a student feel that a teacher has been disrespectful or unfair, he or she is encouraged to speak to the teacher first.
3. Respect for fellow students – Students should treat one another as brothers or sisters in the Lord.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are permitted in the school building and are available for use under specific conditions. Any cell phone brought into the school by students must be turned off during the school day. This process will avoid questions about text messaging, cheating on tests and assignments, and potential harassment situations. The school day is understood to be from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The one exception for elementary students is that students may also use their cell phone by getting a pass to the school office and making the necessary call in the office.

Violation of this policy will be handled as follows:

1. 1st offense – phone will be confiscated by the teacher and given to the administrator. The student can retrieve the phone at the end of the school day (3:00 p.m.) by coming to the administrator’s office.
2. 2nd offense- phone will be confiscated by the teacher and given to the administrator. The student can retrieve the phone at the end of the next school day (3:00 p.m.) by coming to the administrator’s office.
3. 3rd offense – phone will be confiscated by the teacher and given to the administrator. The phone will be held for a minimum of 24 hours and the student’s parents must come to the administrator’s office to retrieve the phone.

Consistent abuse of this policy and any disrespectful student behavior exhibited during the confiscation of the cell phone will result in other disciplinary action.

Closed Campus

FCCS is a closed campus school. When students arrive at school, they may not leave the school for any reason, unless approved by the administration and parent. Students must sign out and in, at the office when leaving or arriving any time other than the beginning or the ending of the school day.

Discipline

The basic responsibility for discipline resides with the home. Parents will therefore be informed when unusual circumstances needing disciplinary action arise. It is expected that there will be godly parental follow-through should this occur. It is almost impossible to be of any real help to your child unless you are in active sympathy with our disciplinary efforts (Proverbs 19:18, I Timothy 3:4,5,12).

FCCS is dedicated to the training of students in a program of study, activity, and living that is Christ-centered. We appreciate your confidence in asking our staff to assist you in training your child. Discipline is maintained which is firm, consistent, fair and tempered with love. Our faculty maintains standards of behavior in the classroom through kindness, love and genuine regard for their students. However, when disciplinary action becomes necessary, it will be firmly carried out, with good judgement and understanding.

We believe the following biblical principles are important to stress as we work with the students:

- A) **Proverbs 22:6, Hebrews 12:6-8** Discipline is defined as the training process to help young people mature into godly Christians. IT IS NOT JUST A PUNISHMENT SYSTEM. Discipline also involves teaching, nurturing, counseling, training, planning, praying, introspection, and family commitment, all of which are as important, if not more important, than any punishment.

- B) **Luke 10:27** Respect and love are taught throughout the Scriptures as being required by God, both to Himself, to those men and women in authority, and to those on or below our level.
- C) **I Corinthians 14:40** Decency and order are clearly commanded as a priority in the Christian's life.
- D) **Hebrews 13:17** Obedience and submission to God and those in authority should be a given assumption in any system used by Christians.
- E) **James 4:3** Proper motives, not just proper actions, are crucial in the scriptural priority system.
- F) **Deuteronomy 19:15, II Corinthians 13:1**, Hearsay, rumors, or unsubstantiated reports are not a scriptural basis as the sole rationale of any discipline. Teacher observation (or confession) is the best basis for discipline.

Disciplinary Procedures

Students will be encouraged in positive, obedient behavior. If inappropriate behavior occurs, a warning will be given. If the student does not take responsibility and change bad behavior the following consequences may occur (as age appropriate):

- 1.) Time out
- 2.) Restriction
- 3.) Loss of recess or free time
- 4.) Loss of classroom incentives
- 5.) Extra, appropriate writing assignments
- 6.) Conference
- 7.) Sent to Administrator's office
- 8.) Detention/work detail
- 9.) In-school suspension
- 10.) Out-of-school suspension
- 11.) Expulsion (this would go before the school board)

Disciplinary procedures will be communicated to the parent.

NOTE: It is the belief of Foothills Community Christian School that while properly carried out corporal punishment is Biblical, it is the parent's responsibility. The staff, faculty, and administration of FCCS will not spank a child.

If parents have questions, concerns or disagreements regarding disciplinary actions, it will be their responsibility to immediately discuss these questions.

concerns or disagreements with the teacher involved and refrain from bringing their grievance to other parents, faculty, or students. If the matter is not resolved with the individual teacher, the parents can then discuss the matter with the Administrator. Failing a resolution at this level, the matter may be brought before the School Board

Dress Code

The elementary dress code is available at our website: www.foothillschristian.org in the Parents area. It is essential that you follow the specific instructions. While we will not treat dress code violations (except modesty issues) with the same intensity as other violations, we will not allow a student who consistently violates the code to remain at FCCS.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices may not be visible or used from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Electronic devices include but are not limited to iPods, mp3 players, radios, CD players, video games, headphones, beepers, walkmans, or gaming devices. All electronic devices should be turned off and in the student's backpack during school hours.

Violation of this policy will be handled as follows:

1. 1st offense – device will be confiscated by the teacher and given to the administrator. The student can retrieve the device at the end of the next school day (3:00 p.m.) by coming to the administrator's office.
2. 2nd offense – device will be confiscated by the teacher and given to the administrator. The device will be held for a minimum of 24 hours and the student's parents must come to the administrator's office to retrieve the device.

Consistent abuse of this policy and any disrespectful student behavior exhibited during the confiscation of the electronic device will result in other disciplinary action.

Gum Chewing

Gum chewing is not allowed in the school building. Students will receive an appropriate disciplinary consequence at the discretion of the teacher.

Harassment/Bullying

Foothills Community Christian School is dedicated to fostering an environment that promotes kindness, acceptance, and understanding among individuals. Therefore, the school will not tolerate any type of harassment or bullying. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes and other verbal, graphic, or offensive conduct relating to race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin. Bullying is defined as being deliberately hurtful, repeated often over time, and

involves either an actual or perceived power imbalance between the bully and victim. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, physical or verbal aggression (hitting, kicking, taunting, teasing, threatening, ridiculing, etc.), relational aggression (harming or threatening to harm relationships or acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion), and emotional aggression (teasing, threatening, intimidating others). The school also prohibits cyber-bullying (creating websites, instant messaging, e-mails, using camera phones, posting messages on social networking sites like Face Book or using other forms of technology to engage in harassment or bullying). Any of this type of conduct is unacceptable and creates a bad learning environment for all students.

All students share the responsibility for keeping the school environment free from harassment and bullying. Students must report incidents of harassment or bullying to their teacher or the administrator. When the school administration becomes aware that harassment or bullying may be occurring, it will promptly investigate the situation. Any student found to have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion. No adverse action will be taken against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged harassment or bullying.

Relationships

We believe the Christian school is the place where good, caring relationships should be developed among the students. We encourage students to spend time, whenever possible, in an open and non-secretive way, talking and listening to each other. We strongly discourage all girlfriend/boyfriend relationships.

Students may not pair up and seclude themselves in classrooms or other places in the school facility. We do not allow physical displays of affection during school or school events. Holding hands or embracing sessions in school or at school activities are viewed as being indiscreet.

School Rules

In addition to the rules and policies set forth in this handbook, each teacher will have class rules that apply to their class only. Even though you may not see the point of a given rule or agree with it, it is important that you support the teacher so that your child can learn the valuable lessons leading to the understanding that there are:

- 1) different types of leaders, but the authority is still the same,
- 2) that in life, we will have different types of leadership, and
- 3) that the education is the important point.

Several general elementary rules apply as listed below:

- 1) No physical contact, for any reason, except the incidental contact from sports, crowded areas, etc.

- 2) No communication in class without the teacher's permission. This includes notes, talking, codes, facial expressions, hand signals, Morse code, etc.
- 3) Obey all authorities immediately, completely, and with a proper attitude.
- 4) Be on time to all events according to the directions given.
- 5) Have control over your tongue: suggestive language, cursing, using the Lord's name in vain, gossip, lies, mimicking, copying or quoting worldly or crass sounds or phrases, disrespectful words, etc., will not be tolerated. Students should speak quietly in the hallways to avoid disturbing other classes.
- 6) Respect all others and their property.
- 7) All students must have permission when out of class, unless directed otherwise.
- 8) It is essential that we be considerate of the property of others. Students should be cautious not to mark, deface, or otherwise damage FCCS property.
- 9) Foothills reserves the right to modify or add to these rules as it is deemed necessary. Parents will be notified via the Foothills Footnotes and/or email.

Student Bikes /Roller Blades/Scooters/Skateboards

Students who ride bikes to school must park in designated areas. Students are not allowed to ride their bicycles during the school day. **No skateboards, roller blades, or scooters are allowed on school property.** Students riding bikes must wear helmets and park in the racks provided. FCCS is not responsible for stolen bikes.

Threats

Any verbal or written communication that is viewed as intimidating in nature or any physical act that is viewed as aggressive will be viewed as a threat to either students or staff. Threats involving the use or possession of a weapon will be treated very seriously. Disciplinary consequences are at the discretion of the school administrator on a case-by-case basis, but could include suspension or possible expulsion.

Weapons

Weapons are prohibited at school and refer to, but are not limited to, firearms, knives, razors, night sticks, billy clubs, brass knuckles, or any object designed for or used as a weapon. Possession of any weapon at school will result in immediate suspension and possible expulsion. Any of the above items needed for a classroom presentation must be approved by the administration.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Monthly tuition payments are due the first day of each month. Tuition not paid by the end of the workday on the tenth is late and will be assessed a late fee of \$20.00. If the tenth falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the payment will be considered late after the workday closes on the following Monday. Checks that arrive by mail after the deadline will also be assessed the late fee. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the payment arrives on time. Parents whose tuition becomes two months past due will not be allowed to send their children to FCCS until full payment has been made or other payment arrangements have been made with the school administrator or business manager.

Since Foothills is a parent-sponsored ministry, it is crucial that tuition be kept up to date. Our ability to pay our teachers and our creditors directly depends on our receipt of tuition money. For this reason, ANY FAMILY WHOSE TUITION BECOMES TWO MONTHS PAST DUE IS IN DANGER OF HAVING THEIR CHILDREN DISMISSED FROM FCCS. Also, access to view midterm progress reports and report cards will be denied until accounts are brought current.

Suggestions:

- 1) Make payments online via RenWeb if possible
- 2) Make all checks payable to Foothills Community Christian School or FCCS.
- 3) All tuition payments should be mailed or personally delivered to the secretary, business manager, or principal. Foothills cannot be responsible for tuition that is sent in with the student.

Families in Participation

All families are required to volunteer 30 hours or pay a \$300 Opt-Out fee. A Parent Volunteer Credit Voucher form can be accessed through the Parents Area on our website: www.foothillschristian.org. Each family is responsible for writing down their worked hours on the voucher form. Please turn in the form when ALL volunteer hours for the year have been completed. This form must be turned in by June 1st, along with payment for any un-worked hours at \$10 per hour.

Mid-Year Arrivals

If a family arrives mid-year, tuition is pro-rated to the last day of the month of arrival. Registration and enrollment fees are due in full.

Past Due Accounts

School records, including but not limited to mid-term progress reports, report cards, transcripts, and other any other materials or records which are the property of the school will not be released if any amount is past due or unpaid.

Returned Check Policy

Any checks that are returned to FCCS by the bank for insufficient funds will be assessed a minimum service charge of \$25.00. If the check is a tuition payment, and the situation is not cleared by the tenth of the month, it will be considered a non-payment and an additional \$20.00 late-fee penalty will be required.

Withdrawal

To withdraw a student from school the parent must complete the withdrawal form and turn it into the school office. The following payment schedule will be used:

<u>Date Withdrawal Form completed in office</u>	<u>Tuition Amount Due</u>
1 st – 15 th of the month	Tuition for entire month is due
16 th – 31 st of the month	Current month plus ½ of the following month's tuition is due

Any tuition amount that has already been paid, and exceeds the amount due as shown above, will be refunded.

Medical

Emergency Information Card

All students must have current emergency information on file in the office so that the school can reach the parents in the event of an emergency. All information forms must have the name and number of someone that can pick up the student if you can not be reached.

Food Allergies

When sending warm-ups or a cold lunch, please DO NOT send fish, shellfish or peanut products with your student. We have fellow students whose allergies to fish/shellfish are triggered by smell and some with severe peanut allergies.

Illness Policies

Students should be kept home with one or more of these symptoms:

- temperature over 100 degrees
- unusual lethargic behavior
- sore throat or swollen glands
- heavy congestion, cold, or cough
- diarrhea, stomach ache, or vomiting

If a student at school shows these symptoms, they will be isolated and you will be notified to pick them up. If a student is suspected of having a contagious illness we will require them to be taken from school.

Immunizations

The state of Montana requires full immunizations and a specific form of certification. Please contact the school office if there are any questions or if the proper form is needed. Updated immunization records must be on file in the school office prior to the first day of school.

Medication

If your child needs medication at any time during the day you will need to fill out a medication release/instruction form. This form is available in the Parents Area on our website at www.foothillschristian.org. **When you send medication to school for your child, please clearly mark their name and dosage instructions on the medication container.** This applies to all prescription medication as well as over the counter medication.

OFFICE HOURS/PROCEDURES

Change of Address / Phone/Email

Please notify the office immediately of any changes in your home address, email address, or phone number, cellular phones, work location or number, or a change in the person(s) to be contacted if you are not available.

Contacting Students

The school phones are for school business only. However, messages may be left for students as needed. Items such as homework, lunches, books, etc., may be left at the school office and will be delivered to the student.

Office Hours

The school office will be open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Please schedule an appointment if you have a matter that you need to discuss with the Administrator. A scheduled appointment helps ensure his availability to meet with you. Items for the office may be left with the extended care personnel between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. and between 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

Office Procedures

Students are permitted in the school office only for specific school business. Our staff will take care of your business as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Use of School Telephone

The office telephones are not to be used by students except in case of an emergency. Having forgotten books, homework, lunch, or items promised to another student do **NOT** constitute an emergency. Arrangements for changes in rides, going home with a friend, etc., need to be made and approved by parents while the students are at home.

Many students try to shortcut procedures and avoid penalties by calling, therefore permission must be obtained from the office staff before using the phone. If there is an unusual circumstance that may require the phone, please contact the office staff with the specific details for permission.

School Visits

While parents are always welcome to visit their student's classroom(s), they need to call and arrange the visit. This prevents possible distractions, multiple visitors at one time, and prevents broken expectations, such as wanting to see a math class when, in actuality, the class is out for PE.

Because of space availability and classroom distraction, we discourage other students visiting the school. If you desire other students to visit a class, special permission must be obtained from the teacher and administrator. Only out-of-town guests or students interested in enrolling in our school will be permitted to sit in and visit a class. Visiting children should wear dress code attire and abide by school rules.

Visitors must sign in and out at the office and display a visitor's badge while in the school.

TRANSPORTATION

Bicycles

Students are allowed to ride bicycles to school. They must wear helmets and park them in the parking racks. Students are not allowed to ride their bicycles during the school day. Also, **skateboards, roller blades, and any other riding devices are not allowed at school.** FCCS is not responsible for any stolen bicycles.

Car Pools

We encourage the use of car pools, however, we cannot be responsible for any arrangements made by individual parents. All arrangements should be made before school. If someone other than the regular carpool person needs to pick up your child please send a note in with the child clearly identifying the driver. Inform the driver that the school will check the driver's license to verify identify if deemed necessary. Should circumstances not allow for a note, please call the office to communicate the information needed.

Safety

The children's safety is at stake and no family will be allowed to maintain enrollment at FCCS whose driver(s) does not follow safe driving habits and the instructions of the staff. There will never be a reason to justify endangering the health of the students.

Traffic Patterns

PLEASE DRIVE CAUTIOUSLY AS YOU DROP OFF AND PICK UP STUDENTS! Students may cross only at the designated crosswalks at the middle of the street and at each corner.

Drivers must pull over to the side of the road to drop off and pick-up students. Please do not stop in the middle of the street drop off or pick-up students.

MISCELLANEOUS

Birthdays

We welcome the celebration of birthdays, but ask that you contact the teacher well in advance to determine the best method and time to carry out your celebration. Invitations to and arrangements for birthday parties taking place outside of school should be taken care of outside of the classroom.

Child Abuse Policy

It is a state law and FCCS policy to report any suspected child abuse to the appropriate agency.

Closed Campus

FCCS will operate as a closed campus. This means that students are not to leave the school property without following the proper procedures. All campus visitors must check in at the school office with the secretary or administrator.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are conducted at regular intervals as required by Montana State law. When drills occur, it is essential that the students leave the building silently and promptly by the designated route. They are to remain with their teacher during roll call and until the teacher is given the signal to return to class.

Extended Care

Extended Care is a courtesy service offered to parents who need to drop their students off at school before 8:00 or pick them up after 3:15. The fee for extended care is \$2.00 for any time between 7:30 and 8:00 in the morning, and \$3.00 per hour or portion of an hour for time spent after 3:15 in the afternoon. The fee is \$1.50 per hour for any additional children in a family. Extended Care ends at 5:30, so there will be an additional charge of \$5.00 for every additional fifteen minutes for each child that must stay at school. Parents will be billed monthly on their school billing with payment due the first of the month and delinquent after the 10th of the month. Delinquent payments for Extended Care will be cause for removal of those children from the program. There will be no Extended Care on half days or full days off such as parent-teacher conferences, etc.

Extra-Curricular Eligibility

In order to be eligible to participate on any school athletic team, or other extra-curricular activities such as Student Council, students must:

- Be enrolled as a full-time student (4 or more class periods per day).
- Maintain a “C” average or above and may not have any grade of “F”.

Exception: Students that attend a MCAA (Montana Christian Athletic Association) member school (e.g., Treasure State), that does not have enough students to participate in MCAA sports, may petition the FCCS Athletic Director for permission to play on a FCCS team. Permission is granted by the school administrator and/or school board on a case-by-case basis and is valid for only one year at a time. MCAA Board approval is also required. In addition, under MCAA guidelines, FCCS has one home school family that is allowed to participate on FCCS athletic teams under Article V, Section B, Items 4 and 7 of the MCAA Constitution.

Field Trips & Permission Slips

Parents will be asked to sign one permission slip allowing their child(ren) to go on field trips. Your signed permission slip will be kept on file. We will use it for your child(ren) the entire school year for all Great Falls field trips. When a class field trip is scheduled outside of Great Falls, a new permission slip will be sent home.

Foothills Footnotes

Every Monday afternoon the Foothills Footnotes will be available on the school website at www.foothillschristian.org. If you don't have access to the Internet, a copy of the Footnotes will be posted on the school bulletin board across from the office.

Fundraising for Student Trips (Washington D.C., Missions Trips, etc.)

All students who participate in school-sponsored fundraising for student trips will receive equal shares of the profits after all expenses are paid. The profits will be divided according to the number of hours worked by each student. Students will be the beneficiaries of all fundraisers. The student trip leader/coordinator will be responsible to assign adults to help organize and oversee all fundraisers. There are some fundraisers (i.e. pizza lunches) where the parent may work on behalf of their student due to the student being in class. Profits will be divided equally base upon the number of hours worked by the parent.

When appropriate, monies raised by school-sponsored fundraisers for student trips will be kept in a school-supervised account until it is time for payments to be made. Each student will then receive the money they have earned so that it can be applied to the payments that they have due.

Grievance Procedures

Should a situation arise in which a parent feels that it is necessary to go beyond the normal communication lines, then the following procedure MUST be followed.

- 1) Take time to pray and think through the situation. Do not call other parents to "confirm" a school situation. Some of the most damaging rumors start this way. If you believe that the problem is serious enough, immediately contact the people involved. **Please deal with the situation biblically as stated in Matthew 18.**
- 2) Contact the student's teacher to get further explanation or facts if necessary.
- 3) Take time to think and pray through the new information.
- 4) If necessary, express your concerns to the teacher without expecting an immediate result or action. Teachers need time to think and pray also.
- 5) If the first four steps are not concluded satisfactorily, contact the Administrator and explain the situation to him. He, then, will prayerfully help resolve the problem.
- 6) If you believe the problem has not been correctly addressed by the Administrator, then briefly state your concerns in writing and submit them to any School Board member. The Board member will have the item put on the agenda at the next board meeting, or will call for a special meeting if it is deemed necessary. The parent may be required to attend the board meeting. Parents should understand that no decision would be made during the initial presentation. After the Board has heard the concern(s), it will meet to address the issues and determine if any additional action is required.

Lost and Found

Items of clothing, shoes, lunchboxes or books that are left in the locker rooms, lunchrooms or other places in the school will be taken to the lost and found box. The lost and found box will be cleaned out on a regular basis with any unclaimed items being given to charity. Other items, such as jewelry, glasses or items of value will be taken to the school office. All items in the lost and found at the end of the quarter will be put on display. Any items not claimed from the office or lost and found will then be used for the garage sale, given to charity, or thrown out. All labeled items will be returned to the child's classroom.

Lunch Program

Students need to bring their own lunch to school. Microwave ovens are available for “warm-ups”. Milk (\$.50) will be available for purchase every day of the week. Periodically, special lunches will be offered as fundraisers to help various school groups.

Pets

We discourage the bringing of pets to school unless special permission is obtained from the classroom teacher. Please do not let pets out of the vehicles during drop off and pick up times.

Phone Calls to Teachers

The faculty is unavailable during the times that they are in class, during devotions, during faculty meetings, and other school events. Messages may be left on their voice mail or you may email them at the school at any time. Please do not call faculty at home unless there is a serious need. We suggest that students call other students if it is a homework question. If you do need to call a teacher at home, please call early in the evening so that family and bedtimes are not interrupted.

PTF (Parent Teacher Fellowship)

The PTF is here to assist you with volunteering your 30 hours at FCCS by providing you with information on needs and ways you can volunteer through openings on the school bulletin board. Your child’s teacher will also need help with a variety of things so please speak with them. All families enrolled in FCCS are automatically members to the PTF. Volunteers are extremely critical to the success of any organization and Foothills is no different.

Volunteers **must** sign in and out at the office and display a visitor’s badge while in the school.

Solicitation

Since Foothills is an independent school without a sponsoring organization, no sales or fundraising projects are permitted, except those originating from FCCS. A bulletin board will be provided for area churches and ministries to announce upcoming events. All announcements must be cleared and initialed by the administration.

Toys

Because of the many different backgrounds and personal beliefs of the individual families that attend FCCS, we need parents to be careful concerning the toys and other items that they allow their child to bring to school. Unless approved by the teacher, students are discouraged from bringing radios, tape or CD players, mp3's, electronic games, toy weapons, action figures, dolls, or any toy that they are not willing to lose or have damaged.