



# Preschool

Student-Parent Handbook

2023-2024

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### STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

# ABOUT OUR ACADEMY

## Academy Programs

Our Academy currently operates these programs

- 3K-Preschool: A five-day/week program for children 3 years old by Sept. 1. Class hours are from 8:30am-12:30pm.
- 4K-Preschool: A five-day/week program for children 4 years old by Sept. 1. Parents may choose from a four-hour program or a full-day program. Class hours are from 8:30am-12:30pm or from 8:30am to 3:30pm.
- Kindergarten-Eighth Grade: A five-day/week elementary and middle school program. Class hours are from 8:15am to 3:30pm.

## Handbook Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents and guardians of early education students information about the preschool programs here at Sola Fide Academy. Knowing that not all potential questions will be addressed in this handbook, we encourage parents to bring special questions, requests, or comments to our preschool teachers, principal, or pastor.

## Objectives of Sola Fide Academy

Sola Fide Academy exists to provide an education in which Christ comes first in every endeavor by working collaboratively with each family to equip every child to be a productive citizen of God's earthly and heavenly kingdoms.

The above statement is the mission of Sola Fide Academy. In keeping with this mission, the members of Sola Fide Evangelical Lutheran Church and Academy realize the need to provide a Christ-centered education for their children and for other children in the community whose parents want their children to be instructed in God's plan of salvation. These members further realize that a full-time Lutheran school will assist parents in their God-given directives in rearing their children.

Sola Fide Academy has established the following objectives:

- I. Teach the Word of God in its truth and purity.
  - A. Teach the basic Christian doctrine contained in the Word of God.
  - B. Teach God's plan of salvation as found in the Word of God.
  - C. Apply all Biblical truth to the life of the child.

- II. Equip each child with those things essential for a Christian life during the child's time of grace.
  - A. Equip the child spiritually by:
    - 1. providing a Christian environment in which the child can grow in faith;
    - 2. encouraging the child to live their Christian faith;
    - 3. nurturing in the child a love for God's Word and a desire to extend that love to the world;
    - 4. encouraging family devotions, regular public worship and attendance in Sunday School;
    - 5. nurturing in the child a desire to give freely of their time, talents, and treasures for the work of the church in all areas.
  - B. Equip the child mentally by:
    - 1. instructing the child in all appropriate areas of learning;
    - 2. treating each child as an individual in accordance with their academic needs;
    - 3. encouraging each child to use their God-given talents to the glory of God; and
    - 4. providing experiences which help the child meet and deal with problems and challenges of life.
  - C. Develop the child physically by teaching the child to respect the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.
  - D. Prepare the child socially by nurturing in them respect for others, for those in authority, and for the property around them.

The goal of this preschool program is to serve to nurture the children of Sola Fide Lutheran Church, to reach out for the unchurched in our community, and to work with other Christian families in the care and education of their children. We accomplish this goal with the following objectives:

- 1. Assist the parents in teaching their children the truths of God's Word
- 2. Help the children grow in Christian stewardship of time, gifts, and talents
- 3. Help the children learn to share their faith with others, especially their peers
- 4. Help the children develop their intellectual talents through new learning experiences
- 5. Help the children develop emotionally; and to learn to care for and to develop their bodies - the temple of God
- 6. Introduce the children to a school-like environment in preparation for higher levels of learning
- 7. Provide an additional avenue for outreach to the unchurched in our community, especially the parents of preschool children

## Philosophy

God created the world in a perfect state, but the devil, through sin, has entered all of our hearts and struggles daily to rip us out of our Savior's grasp by using our own sinful nature and the temptations of the world around us. It is under these circumstances that we all find ourselves called by God through "The Great Commission" in Matthew 28: 19-20 where he says,

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

As his disciples we strive to faithfully proclaim the message of salvation through Spirit-worked faith in Jesus Christ to everyone around us by our thoughts, words, and actions. This is a very difficult mission.

At SFA, our primary purpose is to use God's Word and his power to help our young people fulfill this mission that God has for them. In the light of the Bible and the mission that God has given to all, we also provide our students with a well-rounded *secular* education to help them better understand and relate to God's creation around them. We do all of this using theories of teaching and learning that have been proven effective by research and experience. We do all this to the glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ to further his earthly and heavenly kingdoms.

## **School Curriculum**

The curriculum and course of instruction for PreK3-8<sup>th</sup> grade is based on the requirements of the state of Georgia, Gwinnett County, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). In order to keep our course of instruction as current as possible and to keep our teaching consistently Christ-centered, the teaching staff attends conferences, summer school, workshops and in-service training. With the best interests of the child in mind, the curriculum is constantly being evaluated, studied and reviewed in order to provide the most efficient, effective Christian instruction possible.

## **Expectations of Teachers**

Teachers are called by our Lord through Sola Fide's Congregation to work with parents in the God-given task of nurturing the children to be faithful followers of Jesus. As the teachers carry out their calling, they gladly and willingly accept the following responsibilities.

Each teacher will:

1. Base all discipline on the principles of the Bible
2. Prepare a written classroom management plan.
3. Have the plan approved by the principal.
4. Show and explain their plan to parents and students.
5. Work closely with parents to implement the management plan.

## **Expectations of Parents**

God has given parents the awesome responsibility of working with the church and school to nurture their children to be faithful Christians. As parents realize and understand those responsibilities, they will help their children learn and live the truths of God's Word.

**All parents are responsible for:**

1. Following the principles of the Bible when working with the teachers in the disciplining of their children.
2. At the beginning of each school year signing a statement indicating that they are familiar with and agree to the policies in the Parent-Student Handbook.
3. Cooperating with the school staff in the overall education process of their children.

4. A parent's failure to consistently comply with these expectations may jeopardize his or her child's continued enrollment at Sola Fide.

### **Additional Ways Parents Can Help**

1. Worship as a family together through church and Sunday School attendance, family devotions, and prayer with and for your child.
2. Encourage your child to attend school regularly when not ill.
3. Attend PTA meetings and assist in fundraising activities.
4. Teach your child self-reliance by encouraging him/her to do things for himself, allowing him plenty of time to accomplish the task.
5. Confer with the teacher about your child, but refrain from discussion in the child's presence.
6. Get to know your child's teacher; work with her concerning any problems that may arise.
7. Take time to listen and discuss your child's daily experiences.
8. Instill in your child a wholesome, respectful attitude toward his/her teacher and classmates.
9. Report any upsetting experiences which may help the teacher to understand the child.
10. Encourage your child to eat a good breakfast, and, if potty trained, to use the restroom prior to coming to class.
11. Ensure your child gets sufficient rest.

### **Parent Concerns**

It is God-pleasing that all who are involved with nurturing our children work together in peace and harmony. Therefore, it is important that there be an orderly procedure to be followed. The steps outlined below must be followed in sequence before the next step can be taken.

1. The parent will meet privately with the teacher or other school person involved. They will discuss the situation and agree on a God-pleasing solution to the matter.
2. If after the initial meeting the matter is still not resolved, the parent will contact the principal and asks the principal to arrange a meeting with the involved parties
3. If the issue is still not resolved the parent can make a formal, written request that the Board for Christian Education be involved.
4. Throughout this entire process it is understood that all parties will act in a Christ-centered manner and with the best interests of all at heart.

# POLICIES

## Admission

Applicants for admission will be accepted in the following order *before* February 28<sup>th</sup>:

1. Children and grandchildren of members of Sola Fide Lutheran Church
2. Existing Sola Fide Academy students
3. Children from families with no church home
4. All other children

After February 28<sup>th</sup>, preschool applicants will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### Registration Procedures:

1. Parents meet with the principal.
2. Parents complete the application questionnaire.
3. Principal and Lead teacher assess the fit of the school and the student.
4. Parents are notified of placement at Sola Fide.
5. Parents complete the enrollment form and pay the \$100 enrollment fee.
  - For early registrants (those who apply prior to February 28<sup>th</sup>,) Sola Fide Academy will notify parents of student placement status by March 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - If space is still available, applications will continue to be accepted after March 1<sup>st</sup>, and placement notification will be made within one week of application.

## Affiliation

Sola Fide Academy is operated and partially funded by Sola Fide Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). Final authority for all decisions of policy and property is vested in the voter's assembly of the congregation. The congregation has delegated the authority of overseeing the operation of the preschool to the Board for Christian Education.

## Age Requirements

3K - Preschool, enrolled children must be 3 years-old by September 1, of the current school year.

4K Preschool, enrolled children must be 4-years-old by September 1, of the current school year.

## Arrival/Dismissal

The school doors open at 7:45, and our classroom day will begin promptly at 8:30. Please have your student to school by this time so class may start without interruption; and please arrive by 8:15 if you would like to talk with your child's teacher. Parents are welcome to park in the

marked parking spaces and walk in children, or use the carpool lane to drop off students so they can walk in independently.

If it is necessary to exit your car, do not park in the carpool lane and stay with your child at all times in the parking lot. Our school serves over 40 families which means there are many cars coming through.

Students may be picked up at 12:30; any student not picked up by 12:45 will be sent to After Care and student account will be charged. Again, parents may park or use the carpool lane. If using the carpool lane, please exit your car and wait for your student on the sidewalk (the side of your car that will be closest to the building). When your child is brought to you, you may help him/her into the vehicle and buckle him/her in. SFA staff is not permitted to buckle in students. This must be done by the adult picking up the child.

During the first few weeks of school, please be prepared with your driver's license as we get to know our parents. Also, please make sure to fully and accurately fill out which adults are allowed to pick up your child and notify these adults that they must have ID for your child to be released to them. Anyone not on the list is not allowed to pick up your child. After initially naming people to pick up your child, changes can be made to the list by notifying a lead teacher, the school secretary, or the principal.

Please note that the elementary and middle school occasionally use the hard surface parking lot for games and activities, other times a stray ball rolls onto the asphalt. Please, please use caution and courtesy when entering and exiting our campus.

If you think your child will have a challenging time with drop off, it usually works best to drop off your child and leave quickly.

## **Babysitting**

Sola Fide Academy staff members cannot babysit for families whose children are enrolled in our school.

## **Before and After School Care**

Before and After School Care is available for students in the 4K program or older.

### **Notification**

In order to provide adequate staffing, please inform the principal or the school office 24 hours prior to using before school care.

### **Before School Care**

Before-school care opens at 7:00a.m. The carpool will not be open; parents must walk in with students and sign them into the program. If not registered for before school care, families must notify Mrs. Lapp prior to 6p.m. (678-474-6686) the day before to use the service. If notification is not made in a timely manner, before school care may not be staffed and therefore not available for use.



## After School Care

After School care is available until 6pm on Monday-Friday. Students not picked up by 3:50 will be sent to after care. Students picked up between 3:50 and 4:00pm will receive a \$3 aftercare charge. Students picked up between 4:01 and 4:15 will pay a \$7 after care charge. Students picked up after 4:15 will receive the full \$14 aftercare charge.

All students must be picked up by 6p.m. Late charges will be applied for students who are not picked up by these times. Please notify the principal and your child's classroom teacher if you are running late for pick up. (One of them will reach out to the after care supervisor. Families who reflect habitual tardiness will be referred to the Board for Christian Education and may result in dismissal from the extra care programs.

In the event that a student is not picked up at the end of aftercare on time, the following fees will apply:

1-10 minutes late      \$10

11+ minutes late      \$25

## Before and After School Care Payment Policy

Families will be charged on a per month basis depending on Before and After School Care use.

All BAC payments will be charged through TADS and will appear on statement with tuition. All applicable late fees will apply according to the agreement with TADS.

## Days of Operation

Care is not offered during school breaks and holidays.

After School Care is not offered on half days.

The half-days during the coming school year are:

Aug 25

Oct 6

Dec 15

Mar 15

May 22

## Board for Christian Education

The affairs of the school are administered by a called principal who is responsible to the Board for Christian Education. This board has given complete responsibility in all academic matters to the principal. The Principal is responsible for regulating the teaching standards for the school.

Policies and guidelines are set by the Board for Christian Education. They are reviewed on a yearly basis for revision and improvement. Any explanation of a guideline or policy may be given at any time by the principal or a board member.

## Child Abuse

The state of Georgia requires Sola Fide Academy to report instances of suspected child abuse to the Department of Family and Children Services in the cases of physical or emotional abuse,

sexual abuse or exploitation, inadequate supervision, or other form of abuse. Although Sola Fide Academy encourages open lines of communication, in an instance of suspected abuse, SFA is required by law to act on behalf of the child and contact authorities without notifying parents.

## Daily Schedule

Each of the lead teachers will set up a daily schedule that includes small and large group activities, movement, music, Bible, snack and lunch, and outside time.

## Discipline

*Discipline* is derived from the word *disciple* meaning "to teach". Therefore, at Sola Fide Academy, we do not think of discipline as punishment, but rather as teaching self-control and Christian attitudes. Teachers will deal with each child in accordance with the teachings of Christ.

Since an orderly classroom is essential for learning, violation of rules will initially be handled by the classroom teacher. Every effort will be made to redirect students and return them to order, but in instances where this is ineffective, teachers are responsible for discipline. Parents should not discuss discipline issues with other parents.

Corporal punishment, humiliation, withdrawal of food, or isolation in an unsupervised area will not be used.

## Dress Code

It can be very fun to dress up your little guy or girl in cute clothing, we advise that you don't do this for school. All the messy stuff you don't want to do at home, we will do here. Paint, dirt, intentional grass stains on paper, we even use tires. Please keep school outfits simple. Save Sunday attire for church. Please keep outfits modest in nature; use shorts under skirts.

The dress and grooming of children shall be that which contributes to their health and safety. We are going to be doing a lot of running and playing; to keep kids safe from avoidable falls and other injuries, children are to wear tennis shoes. Please refrain from sending children in sandals, dress shoes, or cowboy boots.

When cold weather arrives, *make sure coats, hats and mittens are worn*. Outdoor Time is scheduled for each school day and is considered a vital part of our curriculum. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child.

General guidelines:

1. Clothes your child can independently dress after toileting.
2. No long dresses.
3. No sandals, dress shoes, or cowboy boots. (These tend to cause accidents and injuries in the classroom and on the playground equipment).
4. No jewelry such as necklaces, bracelets, rings, or loop earrings.
5. No bodysuits that snap in the crotch, no overalls, no one-piece suits that button, snap, or zip up the back.

6. If students wear a belt, they should be able to open and close it without assistance.
7. All outer garments, i.e. sweaters, jackets, hats, gloves, etc., should be clearly marked with the child's name.

## **Financial Policies**

Sola Fide's Preschool is supported by tuition and through the contributions of the members of Sola Fide Evangelical Lutheran Church who support the work of the preschool as part of the total mission of the church.

Children are enrolled with the understanding they will remain for the full school year or at the discretion of the preschool program. There will be no tuition refund because of dismissal, withdrawal, absence or when the preschool is closed.

### **Payment Information:**

- Registration fees must be paid to Sola Fide before students will be officially enrolled in the Preschool programs.
- Tuition payments will be collected using TADS Tuition Management. Please refer to information on the TADS website regarding policies specific to their company's operation.
- Parents may elect to make ten equal tuition payments, two equal payments, or one upfront lump sum payment. TADS will provide you with the option to pay on the tenth or the twentieth of each month. Irrespective of the payment frequency chosen, the parent is obligated to pay the entire tuition for the year.
- Arrangements for a different schedule of payment can be made with prior approval of the Board for Christian Education. A \$50 late charge will be assessed when payments are missed.
- A current bank rate service fee of \$50 will be assessed on all checks returned for insufficient funds and all automatic bank drafts postponed for insufficient funds.
- If accounts remain delinquent one month after your payment is due, diplomas and report cards will be withheld until payment is made in full.
- Families with accounts delinquent will not be allowed to enroll their children for the next school year until the balance has been paid in full.
- TADS provides a number of billing notification options. Text and email are the most commonly used methods.
- If there is a problem with your account, please speak with the school secretary or the principal.
- Please follow the payment instructions that you receive from TADS. We are using this system with the hope that it will make tuition and billing an easy process.

## Health and Safety

The school is able to provide only the basic kind of first aid in case of an accident. We will use soap and water, ice and band aids. A Boo Boo report or Accident Report form will be sent home to notify you of the incident. If a more serious injury is indicated, parents will be notified immediately and the school will take the usual necessary precautions for the comfort of the injured and the prevention of further injury.

In case of extreme or very painful injury, the school will immediately call 911 and the injured child will be taken to the Emergency Room of Piedmont Eastside Medical Center in Snellville, Georgia. Parents will be notified and told to meet the ambulance at the hospital.

## Inclement Weather

If it becomes necessary to close school for the day, there will be an announcement made over TV Station WSBTV (Channel 2). You may also register a phone number for text-message alerts from the principal. We generally follow Gwinnett County Public Schools, but this is not the case 100% of the time.

## Illness

Students are not allowed to attend school with any contagious symptom such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Fever of 100.4 F or more
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Severe coughing
- Sore throat
- Pink eye or other eye infections
- Open lesions
- Undiagnosed rash

A child sent home with a fever may not return to school within 24 hours unless released by a doctor with a note saying that the student is not contagious. The principal and the classroom teacher are to be notified if a child is diagnosed as having a communicable illness.

Families will be notified when two or more students are diagnosed with one of the above. All play dough is thrown away, and disinfecting procedures are put in place.

## **Learning or Physical Disabilities**

Sola Fide's Preschool cannot meet the needs of all children, especially those with severe disabilities. If the staff cannot adequately meet the child's needs, we will suggest agencies through which parents can receive help.

## **Non-Discrimination**

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

Parents, by signing and completing the application forms, place their child under the rules, regulations, discipline, and religious instruction of Sola Fide Academy.

## **Nutrition**

Sola Fide Academy is committed to teaching our students the blessings and abilities God has given us through our bodies. Therefore, steps are taken to teach students to use nutrition to take care of their bodies.

Students will receive a snack according to the posted snack list. (Final list to be made after receiving notifications of food allergies). These snacks will be served family style, giving students the opportunity to build on their social skills as they talk and work on serving themselves and others food.

It is fine if you would like to send in a special treat for a child's birthday on or near the date. It is encouraged for summer birthdays to be celebrated as a half year birthday on or near the date.

Families are responsible for providing lunches. We provide a microwave oven for warming food. Anything not eaten will be packed back in the student's lunchbox.

## **Outside Time**

We will take every available opportunity to get your child into the fresh air at least once per day. Please send appropriate outerwear for the weather. Due to licensing regulations we can no longer lend or allow children to borrow outerwear from each other. Students who do not have appropriate outerwear will have to spend the outside time in a classroom under another teacher's supervision.

## **Singing in Worship**

From time to time, the students of Sola Fide Academy participate in a Sunday worship with a song they've learned at school. We love having our Academy families join us in worship at the Church. We understand if you already have your own church families with whom you worship, but we'd love to have you.

## **Supply List**

The student supply list is posted online and a hard copy is available if needed.

## Waiting List

Sola Fide Academy is pleased to offer our families and students a low teacher to student ratio. In order to maintain this commitment to academic excellence, we limit the number of students accepted for enrollment into each classroom. This occasionally means that we do not have enough places for families who would like to enroll as the classroom fills. Only students who have been accepted for enrollment and completed the registration process, including payment of the registration fee, are guaranteed a place for the school year.

Once all of the available places for a classroom have been filled, subsequent families may continue to apply. If accepted to register, a family may register its student and be placed on a waiting list.

Registration fees will become due when a student is able to complete official enrollment and begin attending Sola Fide Academy.

## License-Exempt Status

Sola Fide Academy is a license-exempt preschool. Sola Fide has voluntarily held themselves to the standards of accreditation held out by the Association of Christian Schools International. Instead of having semi-annual health and safety spot checks from the state of Georgia, Sola Fide participates in staff training, professional development, and curriculum review that are all subject to accreditation regulations.

## STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Our staff is here to serve not only your child, but your family as well. If questions arise and you need a member of administration, please don't hesitate to contact us.

School office	770-972-1771	office@solafide.com
School Principal Jeremiah Schmiede	770-713-9666	jeremiah.schmiede@solafide.com
School Secretary Dianna Rott	770-972-1771	dianna.rott@solafide.com
Lead PreK4 Teacher Shellie Quintana	770-715-9419	shellie.quintana@solafide.com
Lead PreK3 Teacher Kim Langley	678-447-5231	kim.langley@solafide.com
Pastor Michael Kober	770-880-8585	michael.kober@solafide.com
Board of Education Members Michael Quintana Jake Avitabile Michael Brzezinski		

