



# FIRST IMPRESSIONS ACADEMY PRESCHOOL POLICY HANDBOOK 2023/24

## Values, Vision and Mission

Welcome to FIA! Since as far back as I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher. My career took me to various schools and gave me the opportunity to teach a variety of grades and academic levels. Although teaching was amazing, the settings and lack of imperative core values were missing. I was not willing to give up on my dream; however, I refused to be a part of something that was broken. I had a vision and I made it my mission to create a school that encompassed all of the components that make learning and teaching successful.

First Impressions Academy combines small class sizes along with experienced, degreed educators that have a talent for teaching and a passion for education. We use differentiated instruction to guarantee that each child is being taught at their level. A well thought out structured learning environment has been constructed to invite students to learn at their own pace. Goals and objectives are tiered; and we use an assortment of curriculum to ensure progress in each subject area. Arrays of assessments are implemented to measure growth daily. The FIA staff takes pride in our parent communication and collaboration; we promote participation and value the educational partnership that is shared while your child attends FIA.

At First Impressions Academy we feel that preparing your child academically is simply part of our mission. Our caring teachers and staff focus on teaching the entire child. We do this by instilling confidence in our students and building on their strengths. The family environment that FIA creates gives the children a sense of comfort and security. We want our students to have a positive image of school, and view education as a success in their lives. Good character traits are practiced and instilled; and our zero-tolerance policy makes for a peaceful and happy educational experience. We strive to ensure that every child reaches their highest potential!

## Staff Contact/Communication Information

All First Impressions employees can be reached at [firstimpressions@rocketmail.com](mailto:firstimpressions@rocketmail.com), unless otherwise stated by your child's teacher. Simply put your child's teachers name in the subject line. Please feel free to contact your student's teacher or Administration by telephone, email or in person to discuss any questions you may have. If in person, please make sure that it is not during class hours, or during pick up and drop off; this is a safety rule. Teacher's attention needs to be focused on the children when they are in our care.

## Withdrawal & Change of Schedule

When you register, you are registering for a year-round school with traditional holidays. If your child is in the *Preschool class or Kindergarten Prep class*, please note that you may withdraw from school before April 1<sup>st</sup> with two weeks written notice; you may take your child out sooner, however tuition is still due for the two weeks. After April 1<sup>st</sup> there will be a 500.00 early termination fee (April through July). If you would like to modify your schedule, please understand that it can only be done at the time of request, if there is space available. This process may take a while; if in this time you would like to withdraw your child until your desired slot opens up, two weeks' notice will need to be given in writing. Please keep in mind that this change may take months before it can go into effect. If you plan to leave after April, you have two options. You may pay the early termination fee or pay out the rest of the year based on the schedule that your child is registered for (whichever is less).

## Snack/ Hot Lunch

Snack time is offered each class day. FIA **does not** provide snack for any students. You may provide them with snack; however, it may not be candy or soda. Please note that any items that you bring in may not contain **ANY KIND** of nut. Please feel free to bring in snacks for your child's birthday! If you would like to come in to celebrate, please give your child's teacher at least 48 hours' notice.

Hot lunch menus are provided for all students in the full day preschool program, lunch bunch and all grades K-8<sup>th</sup>. Hot lunch menus are posted at the beginning of each month and order forms are sent home every two weeks. Please provide at least 24 hours' notice for a lunch order.

## Dress Code Policy

FIA **requires all** students to abide by the Dress Code Policy. The First Impressions Academy dress code is designed with neatness, modesty, simplicity, and efficiency in mind. Slovenliness will simply not be accepted, because sloppy dress leads to sloppy work habits and sloppy thinking. **Preschool students** may dress in casual wear with closed toed shoes or sandals with straps attached to the back of the heel.

## Tuition policy

Tuition is due on the first of the month or the first class that the child is scheduled to attend in a new month for all preschool students. Each day that tuition is late a 5.00 fee will accrue (this includes weekends). A 30.00 fee will be charged for any funds that are returned. You are responsible for tuition when your child is absent, and we are open. This is for any reason including illness, vacations etc. You are also responsible for tuition involving inclement weather closings.

## Behavior Expectations

FIA's educational goals are most successfully attained in a structured and safe environment –In which no student is allowed to disrupt the learning process of others. FIA expects students to develop and use self-control and personal responsibility as a core character value. We will use discretion concerning age appropriate behaviors and will work with families to correct/improve any behaviors that are affecting the classroom. Any family who does not cooperate with this expectation will be asked to withdraw from school.

Parents are expected to use decorum and courtesy when on school property. They will address all employees, other parents and all students with reserve and in a polite and professional manner. Raised voices, threats, interference with instruction or school activities will warrant removal from the school property by civil authorities. Severe problematic behavior incidents will result in restrictions from school property and possible expulsion of entire family. We ask that if there is any issue that you feel needs to be addressed, please bring it to our staff and/ or administration. Do not in any case complain to other parents without registering necessary complaints with the teacher or administration following the principle of good character. We expect your full cooperation to keep doctrinal controversy out of the school and ask you to support the school with a positive attitude.

## Parent Cooperation

FIA is a PREP school that assists each child in meeting their highest potential. In order to accomplish this, external services may be recommended in order to help your child reach their age appropriate skill set, either behaviorally, socially, and/or academically. If your child is recommended for any services or testing to include, but not limited to Speech, OT, Etc. and you do not follow through with the testing or services, you will not be eligible to register the following school year.

## Health Policy

Preventing the spread of disease begins with careful observation. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, please follow these instructions:

If your child's temperature is above 100.4 orally or 99.4 under the arm, the child should stay home until they are fever-free for 24 hours without medication. Alternatively, a doctor may provide a note stating the child is not contagious and may return to the center.

If the child's temperature is 99.0-99.8 degrees with any of the symptoms listed below, or if any of the symptoms marked with a (\*) are present, the child should stay home.

- o \*Diarrhea, defined as two or more loose, watery bowel movements within a one-hour period.
- o \*Reddened eyes with a discharge or crusted eyelids (requires doctor's note to return)
- o \*Nausea and/or vomiting.
- o \*Rashes in any form on the face or abdomen
- o Earache (sometimes indicated by the child rubbing or pulling at the ear)
- o Sore and reddened throat, possibly with a raspy cry, other problems required the child to stay home may include:
- o Lice – A small, gray/white insect on the scalp. Usually accompanied by eggs attached in groups. Child may return as soon as treatment has begun.

## School Closings

We follow Cumberland County schools' closings initially but may not stay closed the same length of time depending on the circumstances. We **DO NOT** follow their delay schedule or their early release. We will announce all closings via email/ FIA Facebook page and through teacher's correspondence. Also visit WRAL closings for updates. There is no reimbursement for weather

## Car Loop Policy

In an effort to keep pickup and drop off efficient, we ask parents to please have your child unbuckled and ready with bag and water bottle in hand when the teacher opens the door at drop off. At pickup, we ask parents to please move up to a parking spot or pull out of the lot and park on the side of Nexus Court to buckle your student in their car seat. Do not get out of your vehicle to open doors or buckle/unbuckle your child. FIA Employees are not allowed to buckle a student in their seat. Please DO NOT pull around another parked vehicle that is in the car loop line and use extra caution and courtesy while in our car loop and with addressing our staff and other FIA families. Please share this with any person who are responsible for picking up and dropping off your student.

## *The FIA Way*

Thank you for being a part of the First Impressions family. The staff at FIA will assist each student in reaching their highest potential. Each child is different, behaviorally, socially, and academically, therefore their highest potential will also look different. Whether due to nature or nurture, we acknowledge that each child is unique and therefore their ability to learn is also just as unique. Communication is imperative to me and at FIA you may hear things that you would not hear at another academic institution. With over 21 years in education and a variety of degrees in child psych and special education, I am a firm believer that it takes a village and sometimes that village includes additional testing, services and/or resources for a child to reach their own personal best. I also believe that each child is entitled to be taught in their least restrictive environment, that does not only mean that children with special needs should learn among their peers if they are capable, but it also means that a student should not have their education interrupted by another child's behavior whether intentional or otherwise.

FIA is built on tradition and was created to provide a fair and equal education to all children whose parents allow them this opportunity. We focus on education and character. We are non-denominational (not to be mistaken for Atheist) I am Catholic and have a beautiful relationship with God, but I do not see how that relates to education. We celebrate all things...Hallmark loves me ;) Life is short, and I will spend it creating all the core memories with all the students' lives' I am lucky to teach. FIA is a legacy for me and I love to share my family traditions with yours. We will have egg hunts; we will have Santa (I am NOT trying to convert you) I am sharing with you. Please share your traditions with us.

I have seen the world change so much since I started teaching, in both positive and negative directions. It is my goal to maintain consistency in all that is good in this world. FIA will teach science and SS; subjects will not be modified to fit social situations or beliefs.

FIA is a huge part of my family and who I am. There are many things here that represent my past. The names of the buildings, our mascot as well as our school colors. In addition, so are some of our policies. "All great things come in time", "If you get everything now you will have nothing to look forward to." These are some phrases my mom use to say; FIA will preserve youth and innocence. We do not allow "boyfriends" or "girlfriends," cell phones are not allowed on a student at any time (they must be stored, with staff once a student arrives and will be handed back right before they leave), we do not ignore cursing, or unkindness and we teach children conflict resolution; a rare commodity these days. On the reverse side, we do not label all things "bullying," although there are times this may be the case; there are many times kids can say mean things, or older kids can seem to be bluntly unkind; we will always fix these issues, but we will also view them from a non-biased perspective.