



**SOUTH DADE ACADEMY**

**Student/Parent Handbook  
2024-2025**

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## Introduction

**South Dade Academy** is a special and unique place for students. Here, you will develop essential academic, work, social, emotional well-being, and self-sufficiency skills that will enable you to be successful in life, on the job, and in your continuing education.

## Non-Discrimination Policy South Dade Academy

Enrollment will not be denied to any eligible applicant based on sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability. The academy will also not discriminate in its pupil admissions policies or practices, whether based on intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or any other basis that would be illegal if used by any private school.

## Admission Information

### *Enrollment*

Applications are accepted any time of the year at South Dade Academy. All registrations are done in person through appointments. To complete your enrollment application, you must submit copies of the student's birth certificate, a photo ID for both the parent/ student, withdrawal, and official transcripts from the previous school. You will be scheduled for orientation once you have submitted your enrollment application and required documentation.

### *Fees*

The tuition fee is \$22,500.00 per year.

Option payments

1. Self-pay
2. Apply for the Step Up for Students scholarship.
  - a. [Stepupforstudents.org](http://Stepupforstudents.org)

### *Student Immunizations*

All new students must submit a copy of their Immunization Records within the first 14 days they are enrolled. Students attending school violate Florida law if:

- A student's immunization record is not on file.
- The student still needs their initial Measles, Mumps, or Rubella (MMR) vaccine and their initial dose of the DTaP vaccine.
- The student still needs their initial dose of the Polio vaccine.

Suppose the school has not received a student's Immunization Records by the 15th day of enrollment. In that case, the student will be released from school and will not be able to attend until they can acquire their medical records from their last school of attendance or primary physician or until they can prove that they have begun the immunization process and have received at least one dose of DTaP/DPT/DT, MMR, Polio, and Hepatitis B. A student who has been released for not submitting a copy of their Immunization Records will be counted as an unexcused absence while the student is not attending school.

### ***Re-Enrollment***

Students who withdraw from South Dade Academy during a school year and want to enroll again will re-enroll according to the previously outlined enrollment process. Any variation to this process requires the Assistant Principal's approval.

Re-Enrollment dates: March-June

### ***Annually Required Documents***

As set forth by the administration, parents must provide the school with the required documentation before the beginning of each school year.

## **Attendance Policy**

The parent/guardian fully understands that all scholarship funds received will be utilized to pay the school's annual tuition, and the parent/guardian will only pay the school with scholarship funds. The school has accepted this as the only tuition payment form and will NOT charge the parent/guardian any further tuition costs unless the parent/guardian breaches the agreement with the school. The parent also fully understands that to remain eligible for the scholarship.

**The student must be in attendance in person for at least ten days each quarter.**

## **Student Responsibilities**

### ***Code of Conduct***

South Dade Academy recognizes that a positive learning environment cannot occur without maintaining order and discipline conducive to learning. Its Code of Conduct is intended to standardize procedures and guarantee every academy student's rights.

Students at South Dade Academy are required to know the school Code of Conduct. Students are expected to accept the consequences when they do not follow the rules. The student's attitude toward the rules of the academy is critical. "An explanation of the responsibilities of each student about appropriate dress, respect for self and others, and the role that appropriate dress and respect for self and others have on an orderly learning environment" was signed into law and effective July 1, 2011. The new law provides penalties for students who wear clothing that is exposed to underwear or body parts in an indecent or vulgar manner. Finally, the law includes adherence to the dress code and code of student conduct as a condition for participation in extracurricular activities.

Corporal punishment is not permitted. No employee should threaten, inflict, or cause unreasonable, irrational, or inappropriate force upon a student. Good sense and judgment should always prevail. The rules of the Code of Conduct apply to any conduct that occurs:

- On school grounds during the school day or immediately before or after school hours;
- On school grounds at any other time when a school group is using the school; On or off school grounds at any school activity, function, or event.

### ***Dress Code & General Guidelines***

Please remember the following dress code guidelines:

- No hats, caps, sunglasses, bandanas, gang, alcohol, or drug paraphernalia/symbols/clothing are allowed in the school. (The only exception is for religious purposes.)
- Pants must be worn at the waistline.
- Please wear school-colored shirts, pants, and closed-toed shoes. Bedroom slippers, pajamas, flip-flops, or slides are not permitted.
- Short skirts, bedroom slippers, pajamas, flip-flops, and slides are prohibited. Individuals may wear a decorative head scarf; however, satin shower caps are not permitted.

**All students who attend South Dade Academy – Must adhere to the dress code policy as stated.**

*The Principal or Assistant Principal may make exceptions to the dress code based on physical disability or other conditions.*

## **Behaviors and Range of Corrective Strategies**

(Parent/guardian may follow up with a police report. The administration does not give out information unless police request for records to follow up on the investigation)

### ***Level 1 Behaviors***

Level 1 Behaviors are acts that disrupt the orderly operation of the classroom, school function, and extracurricular activities, such as:

- Confrontation with another student
- Cutting class
- Disruptive behavior
- Failure to comply with class and school rules.
- Inappropriate public display of affection
- Possession of inappropriate items or materials for an educational setting as determined by the administration.
- Repeated use of profane or crude language (general, not directed at someone)
- Unauthorized use of wireless communication devices as determined by the administration.
- Violation of dress code

### **Disciplinary Action**

- Speak with Student
- Parent/guardian contact
- Student, parents/guardians/staff conference (If necessary)
- Offer participation in a counseling session related to infraction

- Detention or another Board-approved in-school program
- Revocation of the right to participate in social and extracurricular activities.
- Replacement or payment of any damaged property (if appropriate)

### ***Level 2 Behaviors***

Level 2: Interfere with learning and the well-being of others, such as:

- Academically cheating
- Confrontation with a staff member
- Defiance of school personnel
- Distribution of items or materials inappropriate for an educational setting as determined by an administrator.
- Failure to comply with previously prescribed corrective strategies.
- False accusation
- Fighting (minor)
- Forgery (Written Misrepresentation)
- Harassment (non-protected categories)
- Instigative behavior
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Petty theft (under \$750.00)
- Possession of and use of tobacco products or smoking/vaping devices
- Prohibited sales on school grounds (other than controlled substances)
- Slander
- Use of profane or provocative language directed at someone.
- Vandalism (minor)

### **Disciplinary Action**

- Parent/guardian contact
- Student Conference
- Corrective Strategies from Level I
- Participation in counseling sessions related to the infraction.
- Refer to an outside agency/provider.
- School-based program that modifies the student's inappropriate behavior or promotes positive behavior.
- Home Suspension (1-10 days with

- regional approval for severe or chronic infractions)

### ***Level 3 Behaviors***

Level 3 Behaviors: endanger health and safety, damage property, and cause severe disruptions to the learning environment, such as:

- Assault/Threat against a non-staff member
- Breaking /Burglary
- Bullying (repeated harassment)
- Disruption on campus/Disorderly conduct
- Fighting (severe)
- False Activation of Fire Alarm System
- Gambling
- Harassment (Civil Rights)
- Hazing (misdemeanor)
- Improper Activation of Fire Extinguisher
- Possession of simulated weapons
- Possession or use of alcohol, unauthorized over-the-counter medications, drug paraphernalia, controlled substances, and anything that alters mood or is used for mood.
- Sexting or any Sexual misconduct to another student or Staff
- Technology and Computer Related Offense as determined by administration.
- Threat/Intimidation
- Trespassing
- Vandalism (major)

### **Disciplinary Action**

- Parent/guardian contact
- Student Conference
- Assignment to an Alternative Educational Setting or Home Suspension (1 - 10 days)
- Corrective Strategies from Levels I & II
- Suspension
- Expulsion

***Level 4 Behaviors***

Level 4 endangers the health and well-being of others and damages property, such as:

- Battery (Physical Attack) against a non-staff member
- Grand theft (over \$750.00)
- Hate Crime
- Hazing (Felony)
- Intent to sell and distribute alcohol, unauthorized over-the-counter medications, drug paraphernalia, controlled substances, and anything that alters mood or is used for mood-altering.
- Motor vehicle theft
- Other major crimes/incidents
- Robbery
- Sale and distribution of alcohol, unauthorized over-the-counter medications, drug paraphernalia, controlled substances, and anything that alters mood or is used for mood.
- Sex offenses (other) (including possession and distribution of obscene or lewd materials)
- Sexual Assault
- Technology and Computer-Related Offenses as determined by the administration.

**Disciplinary Action**

- Parent/guardian contact
- Expulsion

***Level 5 Behaviors***

LEVEL 5 acts of misconduct and violent actions that threaten life, such as:

- Aggravated assault
- Aggravated battery against a non-staff member
- Armed robbery
- Arson
- Assault/Threat against employees or persons conducting official business
- Battery (Physical Attack) or Aggravated battery against employees or persons conducting official business.
- Homicide
- Kidnapping/Abduction



- Making a false report/threat against the school
- Other major crimes/incidents
- Possession, use, sale, or distribution of firearms, explosives, destructive devices, and other weapons
- Sexting
- Sexual battery
- Technology and Computer-Related Offenses as determined by the administration.

**Disciplinary Action**

- Parent/guardian contact
- Expulsion

## **Academics**

### ***Curriculum***

The curriculum combines academics, life skills preparation, workplace instruction, and experience. Students work on individualized programs. Each student works on an individualized computer program and completes independent work to earn credits for graduation and pass any mandatory testing. Students can also access electronic educational software programs and the Internet for academic lessons and vocational exploration. (Academic Honesty is necessary when using these resources.)

Students receive an Individual Academic and Career Plan based on their academic needs and vocational/employment plans. The Cap Advisor works with each student to assist with job placement, vocational opportunities, and educational advancement.

### ***Grading***

Each student is required to complete weekly academic activities on the computer.

- One course per month
- 5-7 quizzes a day
- Students must receive 60% or better to master the courses. For Honors, students must receive 65% or better, and advanced placement courses must receive 70% or better.

In addition, workshops and third-party agencies that require workbooks and resource materials are **MANDATORY** for students to complete.

### ***Grade Levels***

Unlike traditional high schools, South Dade Academy has no grade levels. However, from time to time, we must designate a grade equivalent for a student for various administrative purposes. The academy's registrar will determine the grade level. Student credits from former high schools do transfer to South Dade Academy.

**Note:** An official transcript has a raised seal. Students must have official transcripts to enroll and graduate from South Dade Academy.

## **Student Records Policy**

South Dade Academy allows access to records of document release, as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. In compliance with FERPA, parents have the right to inspect student records. Parents must submit their request to inspect student records in writing to the principal to allow him/her to schedule a reasonable and appropriate time and date for the parent to review the record.

Records will be provided for parental inspection only under the direct supervision of the principal or his/her designer. South Dade Academy must comply with the parent's request for inspection within forty-five days. Copies of records will be provided only as required under FERPA.

Parents have the right to request corrections to student records. Requests for corrections must be submitted in writing to the Principal/Director in a letter that includes the basis for such correction. Parents have the right to respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records. Parents also have a right to obtain copies of the documents or make other arrangements where circumstances would effectively prevent the parent or student from exercising the right to inspect.

Parents, students eighteen or older, and former students of the same age have the right to ask a school to change any information in the student's records that is considered incorrect, deceptive, or infringing upon the student's privacy or other rights.

## **Medication Administration**

No medication, including asthma inhalers, will be administered by the staff at South Dade Academy. However, under FS 1002.20(3)(h), students can use a metered dose or dry powder Asthma Inhaler to alleviate or prevent asthmatic symptoms. In addition, FS 1002.20(3)(i) permits a student to carry and use an epinephrine auto-injector to treat anaphylaxis (an intense allergic reaction), aka epi-pen. To have either an inhaler or an auto-injector, written approval must be obtained from the student's physician and, if the student is a minor, from the student's parent or legal guardian.

The physician's written approval must include the following information:

- The name and address of the student.
- The school in which the student is enrolled.
- The name and dose of the medication contained in the inhaler or auto-injector. The name of the drug and the dosage to be administered.
- The times or intervals at which each drug dosage is to be administered; The date the drug is to be administered.
- The date the drug administration is to cease (if applicable).
- Acknowledgment that the prescriber has determined that the student can possess and use the auto-injector appropriately and has provided the student with training in adequately using the auto-injector.
- Any severe adverse reactions should be reported to the prescriber and one or more.

- Phone numbers at which the prescriber can be reached in an emergency and special instructions for drug administration by the student.
- Instructions outlining procedures if the medication does not provide adequate relief.
- Adverse reactions may occur to a child for whom the medication was not intended, who uses the medication, and any other special instructions.
- If the student is a minor, South Dade Academy must have the above-stated documentation provided by the physician and parent or guardian to allow a student to use an asthma inhaler, epinephrine auto-injector, or any other necessary self-administered medication.

At South Dade Academy, we are committed to ensuring the safety of our students.

Therefore, a school employee will promptly request assistance from an emergency medical service provider whenever a student is administered epinephrine at a private school or an activity, event, or program sponsored by the school or in which the school participates. This request for medical assistance applies to whether the student self-administers the medication.

### **Drug-Free School**

Under Federal Law, South Dade Academy prohibits the use, possession, concealment, or distribution of drugs by a student on school grounds or in the school building. Drugs include alcoholic beverages, steroids, dangerous controlled substances as defined by State statute, or any substance that could be considered a "look alike." Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from South Dade Academy.

### **Weapon-Free School**

South Dade Academy is also a Weapon-Free School. No student at any time, for any reason, shall knowingly possess, handle, transmit, or use any object which can be considered a weapon in or on the property of South Dade Academy or at any South Dade Academy-sponsored activity held away from school property. Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from South Dade Academy.

### **Bullying, Harassment, and Hazing Policy**

South Dade Academy's policy is that all its students, administrator(s), educators, and staff have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from bullying, harassment, or hazing in any form. The school will not tolerate bullying, harassment, and hazing of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment, and hazing is prohibited. Students who engage in bullying, harassment, and hazing are subject to disciplinary action, including counseling, suspension, or expulsion from school.

Bullying, harassment, and hazing are conduct that disrupt both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. It is essential to change the social climate of schools and the social norms about bullying, harassment, and hazing. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment - administrators, educators, staff, parents or legal guardians, and students. The purpose of the "Bullying, Harassment and Hazing Policy" is to assist in the prevention of and response to acts of bullying, harassment, and hazing.

This policy applies not only to students, administrator(s), educators, and staff who directly engage in the act of bullying, harassment, and hazing but also to students or school administrator(s), educators, and staff who, by their conduct, condone or support another student's act of bullying, harassment, and hazing.

The misuse of technology to tease, intimidate, defame, threaten, or terrorize a student, administrator, educator, staff, volunteer, or visitor by sending or posting e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs, also may constitute an act of bullying and harassment regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off school property and with or without the use of school resources.

This policy applies to any student, school administrator, educator, or staff member whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying, harassment, and hazing that interferes with or obstructs the school's mission or operations or the safety or welfare of the student, other students, or administrator(s), educators, or staff subject to the conduct.

## **Internet Safety Policy**

The school considers the use of technology as a privilege and an essential part of its overall curriculum. The school will occasionally assess whether specific technology uses align with school policies for students and employees. However, the school does not guarantee that the technology resources will meet every user's requirement or that they will be error-free or uninterrupted. The school reserves the right to monitor and log technology use, user file server space utilization, and specific network usage for maintenance, safety, or security purposes. Additionally, the school will educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interactions on social networking websites, chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response.

## **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

(Adapted from the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida).

1. Our school values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to achieving these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.
2. Our primary concern is the student and the development of the student's potential. Therefore, employees will strive for professional growth and seek to exercise the best professional judgment.

***To ensure the well-being of students, our instructional personnel are expected to:***

1. Make reasonable efforts to protect students from conditions that may negatively impact their learning, mental or physical health, and safety.
2. Avoid unreasonably restricting a student from independent action in pursuit of knowledge.
3. Refrain from denying a student access to diverse points of view.
4. Refrain from intentionally suppressing or distorting subject matter relevant to a student's academic development.
5. Avoid intentionally exposing a student to unnecessary embarrassment or discomfort.
6. Not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
7. They should refrain from harassing or discriminating against any student based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and make reasonable efforts to protect each student from harassment or discrimination.
8. We are not exploiting the student-teacher relationship for personal gain or advantage.
  - a. They are expected to keep personally identifiable information obtained during their professional service confidential unless disclosure is necessary for professional purposes or required by law.
9. Our school employees must display the highest ethical conduct, and this commitment requires honesty in all professional relationships. We are aware of the importance of maintaining respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents, and the community.
10. Shall not, based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, if otherwise qualified, or social and family background, deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional.
11. Shall not interfere with a colleague's political or civil rights exercise.
12. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's professional performance or work responsibilities.
13. The orderly processes of education that create a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and, further, shall make a reasonable effort to assure that everyone is protected from such harassment.
14. It would help if you did not make malicious or intentionally false statements about anyone.

## **Training Requirement**

All instructional staff, educational support employees, and administrators must complete training on these standards of ethical conduct as a condition of employment.

**Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators:** All employees, educational support employees, and administrators must report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging

comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors.

## **Reports of employee misconduct**

Principal Lisandra Prieto-Gonzalez, at the school's telephone number.

## **Reports of misconduct**

Administrators commit it should be made to Lisandra Prieto-Gonzalez, Principal, at the school's phone number.

Legally sufficient misconduct allegations by Florida-certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services. Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted on SDA Classroom and Hallways bulletin boards, in the front office, and on our website at [www.southdadeacademy.com/Community feedback](http://www.southdadeacademy.com/Community%20feedback).

## **Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment, or Neglect**

All employees and agents have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Call **1-800-96-ABUSE** or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

**Signs of Physical Abuse:** The child may have unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, other injuries, broken bones, or burns. A child experiencing physical abuse may seem withdrawn or depressed, seem afraid to go home or run away, shy away from physical contact, be aggressive, or wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries.

**Signs of Sexual Abuse:** The child may have torn, stained, or bloody underwear, trouble walking or sitting, pain or itching in the genital area, or a sexually transmitted disease. A child experiencing sexual abuse may have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively, fear a particular person, seem withdrawn or depressed, gain or lose weight suddenly, shy away from physical contact, or run away from home.

**Signs of Neglect:** The child may have unattended medical needs, little or no supervision at home, poor hygiene, or appear underweight. A child experiencing neglect may be frequently tired or hungry, steal food, or appear overly needy for adult attention.

**Patterns of Abuse:** Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

## **Liability Protections**

Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by law or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department or any law enforcement agency shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result because of such action. (F.S. 39.203).

An employer who discloses information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer of the former or current employee upon request of the prospective employer or of the former or current employee is immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the information disclosed by the former or current employer was knowingly false or violated any civil right of the former or current employee protected under F.S. Chapter 760. (F.S. 768.095).

**Questions or concerns**

[www.southdadeacademy.com](http://www.southdadeacademy.com)

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