



SOUTH DADE ACADEMY

**Student/Parent Handbook
2026-2027**

Contents

Introduction	3
Non-Discrimination Policy South Preparatory Academy	3
Admission Information	3
Enrollment	3
Fees	3
Student Immunizations	3
Re-Enrollment	3
Annually Required Documents	3
Attendance	5
Student Responsibilities	4
Code of Conduct	4
Dress Code& General Guidelines	6
Behaviors and Range of Corrective Strategies	6
Level 1 Behaviors	5
Level 2 Behaviors	7
Level 3 Behaviors	7
Academics	9
Curriculum	10
Grading	10
Grade Levels	10
Transferring Credits	10
Student Records Policy	10
Medication Administration	11
Drug-Free School	12
Weapon-Free School	12
Bullying, Harassment and Hazing Policy	12
Internet Safety Policy	13
Standards of Ethical Conduct	13

Introduction

Welcome to South Dade Academy

Welcome to South Dade Academy! We empower students to earn their high school diploma while developing the academic knowledge, career readiness, personal responsibility, and life skills needed for success after graduation. Through individualized instruction, dedicated staff, and a culture of respect and accountability, we prepare students for postsecondary education, the workforce, and lifelong learning.

This Student and Parent Handbook is designed to provide important information about our school's policies, procedures, expectations, and available resources. We encourage all students and parents/guardians to read this handbook carefully and refer to it throughout the school year. By working together, we can create a safe, respectful, and successful educational experience for every student.

We are excited to partner with you and look forward to celebrating your achievements throughout your educational journey at South Dade Academy.

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 **\$15,000** per year.

Option payments

1. Self-pay
2. Apply for the Step Up for Students scholarship.
 - a. Stepupforstudents.org

Student Immunizations

Immunization Requirements (Grades 6–8)

All newly enrolled students in grades 6–8 must submit a copy of their current Florida Certificate of Immunization (or other approved immunization documentation) within **14 calendar days** of enrollment.

In accordance with Florida law, a student may not continue attending school if:

- A valid immunization record is not on file.
- The student has not received the required initial doses of the **Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)** vaccine.
- The student has not received the required initial dose of the **DTaP/DPT/DT** vaccine.
- The student has not received the required initial dose of the **Polio** vaccine.

If the school has not received the required immunization documentation by the **15th day** following enrollment, the student will be excluded from attending school until one of the following is provided:

- Official immunization records from the student's previous school or healthcare provider; or
- Documentation showing the student has begun the required immunization series and has received at least one dose of the required vaccines, including **DTaP/DPT/DT, MMR, Polio, and Hepatitis B**, when applicable.

Any days the student is absent due to failure to provide the required immunization documentation will be recorded as **unexcused absences** until the student is eligible to return to 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 admission office.

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.

Tuition and Scholarship

Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining their student's scholarship eligibility and completing all required scholarship actions, including responding to scholarship requests, submitting required documentation, and approving scholarship payments when applicable.

If a parent/guardian fails to complete the required scholarship actions after multiple attempts by the school to obtain compliance, the student's scholarship application may be placed in a **declined** or **withdrawn** status for the applicable school year in accordance with scholarship program requirements

Parents and guardians must approve private school tuition and fee invoices within thirty (30) calendar days of the school submitting them.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is essential to student success and academic progress. All students are expected to attend school consistently and comply with South Dade Academy's attendance policies and procedures.

In addition to the school's attendance requirements, students receiving a scholarship must also meet all attendance requirements established by the scholarship program and applicable state regulations.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their student attends school regularly and for reporting absences in accordance with school procedures. Excessive absences, tardiness, or failure to comply with the school's attendance policy may result in academic consequences, disciplinary action, and may affect continued enrollment or scholarship eligibility, as applicable.

0-3 Absences:	Teacher-Student Conference
4-7 Absences:	Parent/Teacher Conferences-Attendance Letter Sent to Parent/Guardian
8-10 Absences:	Attendance review committee (ARC)/ Attendance supportive committee review Needs assessment-prevention plan
11-14 Absences:	Reflection of Personal values & Goals and additional attendance interventions
15+ Absences	Truancy Meeting-Administration

Testing

Students in grades 6-10 attending using FTC or FES-EO scholarship funds are required to take a standardized assessment approved by the Florida Department of Education.

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 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.

Levels of Behavior and Corrective Actions

South Dade Academy believes that discipline should be fair, progressive, and focused on maintaining a safe and productive learning environment. Depending on the severity, frequency, and circumstances of the incident, administration may use one or more of the corrective actions listed below.

Note: Parents/guardians may file a police report if they choose. The school will cooperate with law enforcement as required by law but cannot release student information unless legally authorized or requested by law enforcement.

Level I – Minor Behaviors

Level I behaviors are minor infractions that disrupt the learning environment but generally do not threaten the safety of students or staff.

Examples include:

- Classroom disruption
- Failure to follow classroom or school rules
- Cutting class or skipping assigned activities
- Dress code violations
- Inappropriate public displays of affection
- Unauthorized use of cell phones or electronic devices
- Repeated use of inappropriate or profane language not directed at another person
- Possession of items not appropriate for school
- Minor confrontation with another student
- Any other behavior determined by administration to be a minor violation of school expectations

Corrective Actions

- Verbal warning or redirection
- Student conference
- Parent/guardian notification
- Parent/student/administrator conference
- Counseling or behavioral intervention
- Restitution for damaged property, when applicable
- Temporary loss of privileges or participation in extracurricular activities
- Progressive discipline for repeated offenses

Level II – Moderate Behaviors

Level II behaviors interfere with the educational process, demonstrate repeated disregard for school rules, or negatively impact the safety and well-being of others.

Examples include:

- Academic dishonesty or cheating
- Defiance or insubordination toward school personnel
- Forgery or falsification of school documents
- False accusations
- Harassment or bullying that does not involve protected classifications
- Minor physical altercations or fighting
- Leaving campus without authorization
- Theft of property
- Vandalism
- Possession or use of tobacco, nicotine, vaping devices, or similar products
- Selling unauthorized items on campus
- Use of profanity or threatening language directed toward another individual
- Technology misuse
- Repeated Level I violations after interventions
- Any other behavior determined by administration to be a moderate violation

Corrective Actions

- Any Level I corrective action
- Mandatory parent conference
- Behavioral contract
- Counseling or referral to outside services
- In-school intervention
- Restitution for damaged or stolen property
- Suspension (in-school or out-of-school)
- Removal from extracurricular activities
- Probationary status

Level III– Severe Behaviors

Level III behaviors seriously endanger the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff, significantly disrupt the educational environment, or involve criminal conduct.

Examples include:

- Assault, battery, or serious physical fighting
- Threats or intimidation toward students or staff
- Bullying involving repeated harassment or protected classifications
- Sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexting, or sexual assault
- Possession, use, sale, or distribution of alcohol, controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, mood-altering substances, or unauthorized medications
- Possession, use, sale, or distribution of firearms, knives, explosives, destructive devices, or other weapons
- Possession of simulated weapons used to threaten or intimidate
- Arson
- Burglary, robbery, grand theft, or motor vehicle theft
- Hate crimes
- Hazing
- False fire alarms or bomb threats
- Making false threats against the school
- Major vandalism or destruction of property
- Technology offenses involving criminal activity or significant harm
- Any felony or criminal offense occurring on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or affecting the school community
- Any other conduct determined by administration to pose a significant threat to the safety or operation of the school

Corrective Actions

- Immediate parent/guardian notification
- Immediate removal from class or campus
- Suspension pending investigation
- Referral to law enforcement or appropriate governmental agencies, when applicable
- Restitution for damaged property
- Expulsion
- Permanent loss of extracurricular privileges
- Any additional disciplinary action deemed appropriate by school administration

Administrative Authority

The examples listed above are not intended to be all-inclusive. South Dade Academy reserves the right to determine the severity of any misconduct and assign the appropriate disciplinary level based on the nature of the incident, the student's disciplinary history, the student's age, intent, and any aggravating or mitigating circumstances.

Administration also reserves the right to bypass progressive discipline when student safety or the seriousness of the offense warrants immediate suspension, expulsion, or referral to law enforcement.

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 in which they complete independent work and life skills lessons, 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

Students are expected to actively participate in their coursework and complete all assigned academic activities each week through the school's learning platform.

Students are expected to complete **a minimum of one (1) course per month** to remain on track for academic success and graduation requirements.

To successfully complete a course, students must earn the following minimum passing grades:

- **Standard Courses:** 60% or higher

In addition, participation in all required academic support activities is **mandatory**. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Career Week activities
- Workshops
- Third-party agency programs, when assigned
- Required workbooks, projects, and supplemental instructional materials

Failure to complete required coursework or mandatory academic activities may result in delayed course completion, loss of academic credit, or other academic interventions as determined by the school.

Grade Level Classification

South Dade Academy operates on a **credit-based** educational model rather than traditional grade levels. Students progress toward graduation by earning the required academic credits, regardless of age or previous grade placement.

For administrative, reporting, testing, scholarship, or other official purposes, the school may assign a grade-level equivalent. Grade-level classifications are determined by the Registrar based on the student's academic records, earned credits, and graduation requirements.

Credits earned at previously accredited high schools may be accepted and applied toward graduation requirements, subject to an official transcript evaluation by 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.

Request to Amend Student Records

Parents/guardians have the right to request that South Dade Academy amend information contained in their student's educational records if they believe the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise violates the student's privacy or other legal rights.

For students who have reached eighteen (18) years of age, the school will follow all applicable federal and state laws regarding educational records. However, for students enrolled under a scholarship program that requires a parent/guardian to serve as the primary educational decision-maker, only the parent/guardian may request changes or amendments to the student's educational records, unless otherwise required by law or authorized by the scholarship program.

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.
2. . 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 the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents, and the community.
3. 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 profession.
4. Shall not interfere with a colleague's political or civil rights exercise.
5. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's professional performance or work responsibilities.
6. 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.
7. 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.

Reporting Employee Misconduct

Reports of alleged employee misconduct may be made to the **Office Manager** by contacting the **Front Desk** at the school's main telephone number (786)826-9092 or by emailing **HR@southdadeacademy.com**.

All reports will be reviewed promptly and handled in accordance with applicable school policies and procedures.

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/Communityfeedback.

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

(786)826-9092

420 NW 5th Ave.
Florida City, FL 33034