

RIO Christian Academy

Student Handbook



RIO Christian Academy
370 S Long Hollow Rd
Maryville, TN 37801
Office Phone - 865-210-8022
Info@riochristianacademy.org

About Us

RIO Christian Academy (“RCA” or the “school”) was founded in 2022 as a Christian School. It operates as a private, non-profit, non-denominational Christian School. RIO Christian Academy operates solely on the authority of the Board of Directors that governs the policies and procedures of the school.

The mission of RIO Christian Academy is to provide a rich academic culture where students are encouraged to perform at their personal best academic level each day, while participating in a culture that is rich in Christian Principles in all aspects of the operation of the school.

RIO Christian Academy has a strong worldview on the importance of a personal relationship with God. This personal relationship causes the employees, parents, and most importantly the students to be able to openly discuss God in all areas. In addition to the openness about the Lord and His ability to help us in all things, academics will be rigorous to the extent that each student will be able to grow and learn at a pace that it is challenging and sustainable.

RCA will also individualize learning on a daily basis. This will make learning personal and intentional for each child. Students will be met where they are in the educational process and steps will be put in place to help them grow from one year to the next. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to be an active part in the learning process and to do whatever they can within their reach to help their child get the most out of each academic school year.

Mission Statement

To provide a concise academic path where all students can excel, both academically and spiritually.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

James 3:17

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Student Value System

E - Excelling in all areas of life

A - Academic excellence in every situation

G - Godliness in all decision making

L - Lifestyle of integrity at all times

E - Encouraging those around you at all times

S - Systematically following the academic standards

Statement of Faith

We believe that all scripture is God breathed and is useful for daily application in our lives today. We believe that the Bible is the final authority in life.

We believe in one true God and that He exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We believe that man was created in God's image and that God distinctly created both male and female. We believe that they both have an unique and unified purpose. We also recognize that Adam's fall created a need for a Savior.

Therefore, Jesus Christ came to the earth, fully God and fully man to die for all, so we can be saved from our sin through faith, by grace as we accept the work on the cross as a personal gift of mercy on our behalf.

Admission

Pre-K and Kindergarten Enrollment Process

Families must provide proof of immunizations, or a religious exemption form signed by a pediatrician prior to enrollment. Students applying for pre-k must be 4 years old by August 15 of the current school year. Students applying for Kindergarten must be 5 years old by August 15 of the current school year.

Students can apply for pre-k and kindergarten in April for the following school year. Families will meet with school staff to complete the interview process. The interview process will include all adults with custodial rights. Noncustodial adults will not be a part of the interview process. Extended family members will be welcome at school related events throughout the year.

Families will be notified in writing of admission from the school office. Admission will be valid for one year and will be re-evaluated annually.

Sign-In and Out Procedures

Students in pre-k will need to be signed in and out each school day by a custodial parent or a designee from a custodial parent. A valid ID will be required from all designees the first time they pick a student up from pre-k.

Kindergarten and up can be dropped off at the door between 7:30 - 7:45 am each day in the car line. If you need to walk to the door with your child, please park your car and walk the child to the door. Students will be picked up in the car line each day between 2:45 - 3:00 pm. Please do not walk up to pick up your child. This will help keep everyone safe. Everyone picking up a child will be given a car tag. Please make sure that all adults that will be picking up have a car tag.

If you need to bring your child in late to school, or if you need to pick them up before 2:45 pm, please make plans to walk in the office to sign them in or out. Students should not be sent to the office alone after 7:45 am, and they will not be permitted to exit the building alone at any point during the day.

If your child is riding home with another student, both parties need to provide a note that is to be turned in at the office at the beginning of the school day.

School Day

The school day begins at 7:45 am each day and ends at 2:45 pm each day. Students will be in school for 180 days. There are 13 days that are built into the schedule to offset any school closures due to weather or sickness.

Attendance Policy

Daily attendance is a key factor in academic success. With that in mind, it is necessary to be at school on time each day and to stay for the day in its entirety. We are very intentional about providing an academically-rich environment from bell to bell. Please make every effort to adhere to this policy.

Parents can write a note to excuse their child from school up to 10 times in a school year. After 10 absences, students need to provide a dr note for their absences. Please schedule maintenance appointments during breaks. Attendance will be looked at from year to year in the annual review policy.

Excessive absences can possibly keep students from promoting to the next grade level if they interfere with academic growth and progress.

The state requires that students are accounted for in each school district. Students will be accounted for according to the district they are zoned for within the first 30 days of the beginning of the school year. RIO Christian Academy students that have 5 unexcused absences will be reported to the school district they are zoned for. Someone that handles truancy for the designated school district will reach out to any family that has a child with 5 unexcused absences. Students will be referred to juvenile court if unexcused absences persist. The local public school districts have a progressive truancy intervention system that will apply to students attending RIO Christian Academy. Families will be kept up to date about attendance, and notified in writing if they have 3, 4, or 5 unexcused absences on record. Any student that withdraws or is expelled will be reported to the district they are zoned for.

Grading Policy

Students will be evaluated every 4.5 weeks to determine progress. Progress reports will be shared with families every 4.5 weeks. Formal grading reports will be shared every 9 weeks.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately for the school day. Students' clothes should be modest and not represent any concept that is contrary to the school's values and beliefs. Students are encouraged to wear tennis shoes or similar, so they can participate in physical activity each school day.

Conferences

Conferences can be scheduled upon the request of the family or the teacher at any point necessary throughout the year. Conferences will not be held without prior request due to scheduling conflicts. Please do not use the drop off or pick up time as a conferencing time, as time is very limited during these allotted times.

Promotion and Student Retention Policy

Students will only be retained if parents and teachers agree that the retention will serve the student well over the course of their educational experience. There must be 2 or more data points (from math or reading screeners) to reference when making this decision. This will be done in kindergarten or first grade, if necessary. Teachers will notify families of any such concern as early in the school year as possible. Parents that wish to see their child retained in kindergarten or first grade, should raise this concern as soon as possible in the school year. These concerns or decisions should be discussed before the last grading period. Students will be promoted from one grade to the next at the end of each school year. Student promotion and retention will be noted on the permanent record card at the end of each year.

Health and Illness Policy

There are building level teachers that are trained in CPR and First Aid, who are willing to attempt to help in the case of an emergency. There is also an AED that is available in the school should the need arise.

Immunizations should be current and in compliance with state guidelines. Families should review the guidelines with their pediatrician. Religious exemptions should be handled through the pediatrician as well.

Students that have nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea should not be at school. Please do not bring your child to school if they have experienced any of these symptoms within 24 hours prior to the start of the school day.

Students suffering from any sickness should be symptom or fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Students that have lice need to be treated immediately, and they may not return to school until they are lice free.

Students with a visible skin disorder should seek medical treatment and only return to school with a doctor's note.

Medication

Medication can only be administered through the school office with the appropriate note from parents. Parents can give the school office permission to administer tylenol, tums, or ibuprofen at the parent's discretion.

Inhalers can be in the classroom so that students have quick access to them, if needed.

EpiPens can be kept in the classroom as well, if needed. However, parents must make sure that the prescription is accurate and current (not expired).

Emergency Procedures

Students will participate in three types of drills each year: fire drills, tornado drills, and intruder drills. These drills will take place so that students know what to do in case of emergency.

If there is an actual emergency, parents will be notified ASAP through the communication platform.

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the premises, the students will be taken by cars, vans, and/or personal vehicles to RIO Advance. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Medical Equipment

An AED is on site in a well labeled and easily accessible location. If students are in need of specific medical equipment, parents and school personnel will work together to make sure the medical equipment is in place and readily available.

Blood Borne Pathogens

Teachers will be trained to handle blood borne pathogens and to be diligent in limiting student direct contact.

Hand Washing

School personnel and students will follow hand washing procedures that are posted at all bathrooms and classrooms.

Reporting Abuse

Teachers and staff have a responsibility to report suspected abuse. The school will not contact parents before making a report to the appropriate authorities.

Cell Phones or Devices

Students are not permitted to have cell phones, home devices, or smart watches with them in the elementary school.

Communication

If students need to be contacted by their parents during the school day, this communication needs to come through the school office. If a family emergency arises during the school day, the school office should be contacted first to help with necessary arrangements. Please do not contact teachers during the day with same day communications. They may not see the messages in time, as they are with the students.

Security

RCA has surveillance cameras that assist in monitoring daily activity. Other internal safety measures are in place to keep students safe on an ongoing basis. All staff, and contracted persons with proximity to children will complete background checks.

Discipline Procedures

School staff will work hard to create an atmosphere where student expectations are clearly outlined and communicated to all students. If a student has a persistent problem with their behavior that needs to be addressed, school staff will contact the family impacted by the behavior. Hitting, kicking, biting, or any other aggressive behavior will not be tolerated. In the case of one of these events, parents will be notified. The following steps will be taken when possible:

1. Redirect - students will be redirected and asked to rethink their negative behavior.
2. Think time - students will be asked to sit in an area where they can consider their behavior and how they can improve.
3. Removal from class - in the event of extreme behavior challenges students may be removed from their peers to spend some time regrouping
 - The school reserves the right to skip any steps at RCA's discretion and in the event that it is in the best interest of all students involved.

Suspension

Suspension will only be a first resort if behavior is deemed extreme by school personnel. If suspension becomes necessary, parents will be notified as soon as possible and will need to come and sign their child out from school.

Behavior Plan

If suspension is necessary, a behavior plan will be implemented to help prevent further discipline problems.

Firearms; Zero Tolerance

If a student brings a firearm to school, the student will be expelled immediately.

Weapons

Weapons of all kinds are prohibited from school property. This includes knives of any kind.

Bullying

In a Christian School there is no place for bullying of any kind. Students will be made aware of possible consequences of bullying. The first occurrence will be documented as a warning to both parents and students. The second occurrence will result in suspension. The third occurrence will result in possible dismissal from the school.

Field Trips

Field trips will take place throughout the school year. Custodial parents or designees will be responsible for transporting their child to and from the field trip site. Field trip days will be school days, so attendance will be recorded for the day.

Fundraising

There will be 2 school fundraisers each school year that will be required for each student to participate in. Families will be given ample time to prepare for the fundraisers.

Parental Support

RCA will welcome parent support in the building and classroom on a scheduled basis. If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact the school office and/or your child's teacher to make the necessary arrangements.

School Personnel Qualifications

All school personnel will be highly trained and qualified to be a part of the school culture. All school personnel will go through the background check process annually. School supervision of all students and school personnel will be a high priority on a daily basis.

Student/Teacher Ratio and Class Size

No more than 20 students will be in each classroom. There will be at least 1 teacher for every 20 students. Teaching assistants will be present most of the day to assist with small groups and lower ratios.

Non Discrimination Policy

RIO Christian Academy does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, or national and ethnic origin

Record Keeping

Teachers will be responsible for updating permanent record cards each school year. Student files will be kept in the school office and will be reviewed at the beginning and ending of each school year by the school administrator/designee. The student file shall include: permanent record cards, immunization records, work samples as applicable, custodial information, and emergency contact information.

