

SANTA FE COLLEGE
ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Student and Family Handbook
2024-2025



The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are the results of a concerted effort on the part of the faculty and the administration. This information has been carefully prepared and presented so that it will be of value in helping students to become an integral part of Santa Fe College Academy of Science and Technology.

Dear Parents, Students and Community Members:

I am thrilled to extend a warm welcome to the Santa Fe College Academy of Science and Technology. We feel privileged to partner with Santa Fe College to offer a STEM-focused High School in our community.

I am William (Bill) McElroy, your proud Principal. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology and Cell Science, a Master's degree in Secondary Science Education, a Specialist Degree in Instruction and Curriculum and have certification in Educational Leadership and School Principal. I have served as a secondary school administrator for the past 22 years. Previously, I dedicated nine years as a science teacher and department chair at GHS, and at Santa Fe College as an adjunct science instructor. As the Principal of Santa Fe College Academy of Science and Technology, I believe that all students should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Our caring faculty and staff share my belief and enthusiasm and are eager to help our students make their dreams a reality. With a meaningful and engaging curriculum focused on STEM, and a four-year pathway to earn a high school diploma and an A.S. degree simultaneously, our students will gain the knowledge, credentials and experiences needed to confidently step into the world Future Ready! If I can answer any questions or be of service to you, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

In partnership, William McElroy, Principal

SANTA FE COLLEGE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MISSION STATEMENT: Our mission is to provide a quality education that will enable every student to achieve their highest potential as an individual, be ready for college and career, serve effectively as a citizen of a free society, and find a fulfilling role in a changing global marketplace.

ACADEMY STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Students are held to a high standard at Santa Fe College Academy of Science and Technology. At the Academy, we have the following CAST EXPECTATIONS:

- **C**ome to school prepared and ready to learn
- **A**rrive on time
- **S**how respect
- **T**reat all others as you wish to be treated

We expect all students to follow these expectations which will help them be successful at the Academy. The school day is defined as any day, including a partial day that students are in attendance and the moment a student steps foot on campus until the end of the day bell. School hours are 8:08 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, and TARDY PROCEDURES

The warning bell rings at 8:03 and classes begin at 8:08. Parents may drop off students no earlier than 7:30. Parents should enter the drop off/pick up area adjacent to the SF Police Station in the morning and afternoon. It is important that students arrive at school on time. Students who are late to school disrupt the school program. Repeated tardiness to school /class may result in disciplinary measures.

The school will not accept the following reasons for being tardy:

- Heavy traffic
- Oversleeping
- Returning home for forgotten items
- Non-educational appointments other than medical

Students are expected to be in class before the tardy bell sounds. The 8:08 bell is a signal for the class to begin. When a student is late to class because of being detained by another teacher, the detaining teacher will issue a pass to class. Ideally, the retaining teacher must have received prior consent to detain that student from the receiving teacher. If a student is unable to present an admit slip for being tardy to class, the teacher is to admit him/her as an “unexcused tardy” and implement appropriate progressive discipline. If a student is out of class five (5) minutes after the tardy bell without a hall pass, the student is considered skipping. Teachers will refer students to the principal’s office on the 3rd tardy. The consequences are based on accumulated tardies in nine (9) week period.

DIGNITY AND REPECT AT ALL TIMES

That all students treat all others (students and adults) with dignity and respect is a foundational principle at Santa Fe Academy of Science and Technology. Bullying, harassment, fighting, hate speech or any other form of mistreatment will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in these or other disruptive behaviors will meet directly with the Principal.

HALL PASSES and HALL BEHAVIOR

No student may leave a class without a hall pass. The student must obtain a hall pass from the teacher. The pass must be clearly marked with the time, date, student's name, destination, purpose, and teacher's signature. Teachers are to permit students to leave the classroom during class time for emergency reasons only - unless the main office or administration request the student. Passes should not be issued for the first or last 5 minutes of a class period. During classroom exchange, students will always keep hands and feet to themselves. Students are also expected to be quiet when they are in the hallways with a pass and close to other classrooms.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The faculty believe that good school attendance is essential to successful school progress. Regular and punctual attendance is necessary for the student to take full

advantage of available educational opportunities. The Academy has established the following attendance procedures.

- Students should bring written documentation for all absences and submit to the front office. Written documentation should be submitted to the school within two days of the student's return.
- The Academy's Attendance Policy states that excused absences will include the following: Sickness, injury, death in the family, or some other insurmountable condition. Up to six (6) absences for illness per semester with a parental note are allowed.
- Documented appointments with health care professionals are excused.
- Documented absence for religious instruction or for religious holidays is excused.
- Participation in an academic class or a school-sponsored activity approved by the principal are excused.
- Court appearances are excused (court documentation is required).

Upon a student's return to school from an excused absence, an appropriate amount of time will be given to the student to make up the work, including semester exams. The student is responsible for pursuing this option with the teacher. No student shall be allowed to make up work missed due to unexcused absences except for semester examinations. These examinations shall be made up within five (5) school days from return at a time designated by the teacher.

Upon a student's return to school from a suspension he/she will be afforded the opportunity to make up the missed work. For each day, the student is suspended, he/she will be given one day to complete the missed work. It is the responsibility of the student to request the missed work from each teacher on the first day of his/her return to school. The student may pursue this option during noninstructional time. All students shall be allowed to make up nine weeks and semester examinations. These exams shall be made up within five school days from return at a time designated by the teacher.

CHECK IN/OUT PROCEDURES

- Students late-to-school must sign in at the front office for an admission slip to enter class. The admit slip does not excuse the lateness to school unless otherwise stated by the attendance clerk.
- Because the safety of our students is a primary concern at the Academy, we encourage parents to check out their child in person. Upon arrival, parents will be required to show photo identification.
- When the parent or guardian is not physically present to sign the student out, students may check out from school only when they present a written note to the front office prior to the first period bell. This note must be signed by the parent and contain a phone number where the parent can be contacted for

verification. To ensure their safety, students will not be allowed to leave campus without this verification.

- Students who drive to school are expected to arrive at school prior to the 8:08 bell. Driving privileges may be suspended or revoked if a student is habitually late to school.
- Students who become ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the front office. The school will determine whether the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parents.
- Upon the student's return to school, a parent must send an excused note.

STUDENTS ON CAMPUS AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

As per Florida Statute, supervision is not beyond 30 minutes after school hours and any school function. Florida Statute Chapter 1003.31 (d) states, "Students subject to control of school is during a reasonable time before and after the student is on the premises for attendance at school or for authorized participation in a school-sponsored activity, and only when on the premises. The term reasonable time means 30 minutes before or after the activity is scheduled to begin or end, whichever period is longer.

Students are expected to be off campus no later than 2:45 pm. A student remaining on campus 30 minutes after school has ended must be involved in supervised activities. Otherwise, students should be picked by 2:45. Staff members are responsible for supervising students with them for 30 minutes after the activity ends or before it begins.

CLOSED CAMPUS

Students will remain on campus the full school day and will not be allowed to leave G-Building. Students may not leave campus for lunch or any other reason other than for an approved school-sponsored event. Students will not be allowed in the parking lot area adjacent to the school during the school day.

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

If a student needs medication while at school the parent/guardian must bring the medication in its original container from the pharmacy labeled with the date, student's name, name of the medication and times the medication should be given. A signed parent letter accompanying the medication should request the time the medication should be given. Students may not carry or take medications themselves at school, except by physician request such as an inhaler for asthma. A school designee will administer any medication that must be taken during the school day.

SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY

Students can request a schedule change for the following reasons:

- Have credit in the course.
- Failed a course and need to repeat it.
- Course needed for graduation or promotion.

- Failed a course under the same teacher.
- Have not passed a pre-requisite.
- No class schedule or two classes in the same period.

GRADING SCALE

A = 90 to 100

B+ = 87 to 89

B = 80 to 86

C+ = 77 to 79

C = 70 to 76

D+ = 67 to 69

D = 60 to 66

F = 0 to 59

I = 0

REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Students receive report cards every nine weeks on the date set by the Alachua County School District. The report is a non-returnable grade sheet to be taken home to parents. The final report card may be picked up from school, or students may leave a stamped, self-addressed envelope for mailing. A progress report is issued to each student for each class at the midpoint of each nine-week grading period. It should be taken home to inform parents of the student's progress. Parents will also be able to access grades and grade reports through Skyward.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Section 504: Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based on disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled student.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): MTSS is the State's process we must follow when a student is struggling academically or behaviorally when traditional responses to remedy these issues have not been successful. MTSS will begin with a formal referral to the school support team and will consist of appropriately designed and well-documented interventions, usually implemented by the classroom teacher(s). If each level of MTSS does not change procedure, an evaluation may be requested for an ESE placement.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE): Exceptional Student Education means specifically designed individualized or group instruction or special services or programs to meet the unique needs of students who have an **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** due to learning or physical disabilities. These educational services and programs are provided at no cost to the parents.

Speech and Language Therapy: Speech and Language Therapy is provided to students with a speech/language disability. Various speech and language skills are targeted to improve a student's access to the general curriculum.

Occupational Therapy: School-based occupational therapy is designed to enhance a student's ability to fully access and be successful in the learning environment. Depending on the student, it may include improving fine and gross motor skills, sensorimotor processing, coordination, adapting environments, organizing, and using materials appropriately and/or developing self-care skills appropriate the learning environment.

PEER MEDIATION

Peer Mediation is an innovative preventive approach for handling conflicts in school. Mediation redefines conflict in such a way that no one must lose. It empowers students to resolve conflicts through improved and specific communication and problem-solving skills. It reduces the number of disputes that occur, and the amount of staff time spent on discipline, resulting in a dramatic improvement in the school environment. Students may request peer mediation through the Principal or Curriculum Coordinator for the resolution of peer concerns through self-referral. Parents, teachers, or administrators may recommend peer mediation for students who may need to resolve school or personal peer concerns through specific skills of communication.

PLAGARISM POLICY

Excellent written expression of well-formulated ideas is a fundamental skill for academic and career success. Plagiarism interferes with the assessment and feedback process necessary to promote academic growth. Plagiarism defrauds the instructor with a false view of a student's strengths and weaknesses and prevents student growth. It may prevent further instruction in areas of weakness and delay the student in reaching his or her potential. Plagiarism includes:

- Taking someone else's assignment or portion of an assignment and submitting it as one's own
- Submitting material written by someone else or rephrasing the ideas of another without giving the author's name or source
- Presenting the work of tutors, parents, siblings, or friends as one's own.
- Submitting purchased papers as one's own.
- Submitting papers from the Internet written by someone else as one's own
- Supporting plagiarism by providing work to others, whether it is believed it will be copied or not.

CHEATING POLICY

Education is based on learning specific skills, forming lifelong work habits, and developing mature coping skills according to each student's unique abilities. Stress may propel students to make unethical choices. When students choose to cheat, it may be a symptom of more serious problems such as inappropriate class placement, overcommitment to extra-curricular activities, and/or academic desperation. The compromise of their values through cheating may lead to loss of self-esteem, as the students are often painfully aware of their shortcomings and fight a tiring battle to

preserve their image at the cost of their ethics. True self-esteem is based on competence. Cheating robs students of their opportunity to become competent. Assignments should be considered individually unless the instructor states otherwise. Cheating includes:

- Copying, faxing, emailing, or in any way duplicating assignments that are turned in, wholly or in part, as original work.
- Exchanging assignments with other students, either handwritten or computer generated, whether it is believed they will be copied or not.
- Taking credit for group work when the student has not contributed an equal or appropriate share toward the result.
- Accessing a test or quiz to determine the questions before its administration.
- Using a cell phone to take a picture of a test or find answers to a test.
- Using summaries/commentaries (Cliffs Notes, Spark Notes, etc.) in lieu of reading the assigned materials.

No student needs to cheat or plagiarize. The Academy provides support services for students to help them achieve success honorably. Students who advocate for themselves and seek appropriate help when they need it will not need to cheat or plagiarize.

BEHAVIORS PROMOTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Be prepared. Try to keep to a realistic schedule balancing academic obligations and one's social activities.
- Make certain that you understand your assignments and the grading assessment that will be used. If you have questions about an assignment or an assessment, talk to your instructor.
- If you study for a test with a classmate, do not sit near each other during the exam.
- Do not read or scan someone else's paper before writing your own. Some of the ideas in the other person's paper may be ideas that you would have used, but you will now need to credit the source.
- Use all avenues of support available to you. For help needed beyond the classroom, see your instructor, other instructors in the department, a peer tutor, or a parent or other adult who is well informed.
- Assignments should be considered individually unless the instructor states otherwise.
- Be organized. Having class notes in an orderly, easily accessible format will save time and anxiety.
- Keep current with assignments.
- If, for whatever reason, you choose to use another's ideas or solutions, cite that person as a source.
- Know what constitutes cheating, including all the variations of plagiarism.

A student may receive a discipline referral if the teacher suspects the student of cheating or plagiarizing student work. Discipline consequences may range from receiving a zero on the assignment to an out-of-school suspension. The student's discipline history and the Alachua County School District's Code of Student Conduct will be used to determine the specific consequence. Be aware that cheating is often a joint undertaking. Cheating is always harmful to all parties involved. It sacrifices the integrity of the person who provides the materials and robs the copier of the opportunity to learn. When cheating is not an individual activity, all parties involved are equally guilty and will receive the same consequence.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES (WCD)

Students may use wireless communication devices:

- Before the 8:03 warning bell
- During the lunch period
- After the final dismissal bell
- At school-sponsored activities
- During classroom instructional time as permitted by your teacher.

At other times during school hours, you must have WCDs powered completely off (not just placed in vibrate or silent mode) and stored out of sight. Students shall not use the telephone functionality of any WCD during the school day without teacher or administrator permission. If you violate these rules, you will be subject to disciplinary action and/or confiscation of your WCD. Also, you may lose the privilege to bring your WCDs to school for a designated length of time. Administration may search for your WCD if they suspect that you have used your WCD to violate Board policy. The principal may also refer the matter to law enforcement if the violation involves an illegal activity. Please refer to the code of student conduct for prohibited uses of technology at school. You are responsible for the care and security of your WCDs and other electronic devices. You should record your device's serial number and tracking software is recommended.

THE ACADEMY'S DRESS CODE

The way you dress can have a positive impact on you and your school. If you respect yourself and others and dress appropriately for school, you will help to make the school a safe and orderly place to learn. This general dress code applies to all students at school and to all students while attending school-sponsored activities after the regular school day.

- Clothing must be of the appropriate size for you, not oversized or undersized.
- The garment's waist shall be worn so that it is worn at the waist and not below it. You may not wear baggy/saggy pants.
- Shirts/blouses/dresses must always cover the midriff, back, and sides of the body and should be fastened with no visible cleavage or undergarments showing.

- Shorts/skirts/jumpers/skorts/dresses shall be worn no shorter than “mid-thigh.” Mid-thigh is determined by extending the arms to the sides of the body and finding the tip of the longest finger (using normal posture).
- **Exceptions:** You may wear special clothing necessary for a school-sponsored activity, as permitted by the principal.

In addition to the above basic dress code requirements, the principal may designate a more restrictive dress code requirement, if approved by the school’s School Advisory Council (SAC). If you are enrolled in a career academy, you may wear the uniform of that program. The principal may waive the school dress code policy case-by-case for reasons such as medical necessity or held religious belief. Shoes worn by students must be safe and appropriate. You should not wear bedroom slippers or shoes with wheels. **You may wear** coats, jackets, sweatshirts, sweaters, or other appropriate outer garments when necessary due to weather conditions or for other legitimate reasons. The outer garments must be of the appropriate size for you and shall not be overly baggy or violate any other provisions of the dress code.

You may not wear:

- Clothing that is not properly fastened
- Clothing, hair styles, piercings, jewelry, or accessories that are dangerous to the health and safety of yourself or others or are distracting or disruptive to the orderly learning environment
- Clothing that exposes undergarments or body parts in an indecent or vulgar manner
- Clothing that is unlined sheer or unlined lace
- Visible undergarments, sleepwear or outer garments traditionally designed as undergarments such as boxer shorts or bras
- Clothing, including outer garments or accessories (such as backpacks, jewelry, and purses) which have slogans, signs, images, or symbols that: promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gang identification, weapons, lewd sexual behavior, denigrate or promote discrimination for or against an individual or group based on age, color, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, race, religion, or gender
- Hats, bandannas, sweat bands, headgear, or other head coverings inside the school building, except when approved by the principal/designee
- Combs, curlers, or hair picks, or sunglasses inside the school building
- Students may not wear tank tops
- Pants with holes must not reveal skin above the knee
- Sunglasses, hats, or other sun-protective wear while inside a building

The principal has the authority to decide if your clothing complies with Board policy. If the principal determines that your clothing does not comply with Board policy, your

parents/guardian may be asked to bring an appropriate change of clothes to school. You may also receive a disciplinary consequence for violating the school's dress code policy. Repeated violations may result in progressively more profound consequences. You may appeal to the principal's decision through the Student Grievance Procedure in Policy 5710, Student Grievances.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

The front office staff is responsible for screening and delivering messages to students during the school day. The front staff office will need to know the nature of the emergency. Our staff is limited, and delivery of these messages is an interruption to class instruction. Priority of delivery is given to actual emergencies and messages are taken only from a parent or legal guardian. The phone in the front office area is available to students.

PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Inappropriate public displays of affection on a school campus or at a school-related activity are prohibited. Any such display is subject to disciplinary action. Such displays may include, but are not limited to kissing, fondling, 'dirty dancing,' sitting on laps, inappropriate touching, etc.

WEAPONS POLICY/ CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Weapons and the use of weapons are prohibited on school property, including buses, at school-sponsored activities, and in any vehicle brought onto school property. Possession, sale, transfer, distribution, or use of any form of alcoholic beverage, drugs with abuse potential, hallucinogens, or related items except those specifically prescribed by a licensed physician, is prohibited on school property, including buses, and at school-sponsored activities. Violations will be considered serious misconduct.

PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Students who attend the Academy may participate in sports and clubs at their zoned schools.

TEXTBOOK POLICY

Students are responsible for their textbooks. Upon receiving their books, students should examine their books and report any damage to their teacher. Students should not leave textbooks lying around or loan them to their friends. Students should print their name on the inside of the front cover of their book. When books are checked back in, students must return the actual book they checked out. All textbooks checked out at the start of the school year are due back to their classroom teacher at the end of the school year. In the event a student drops a class or leaves school during the year, textbooks should be returned immediately. We strongly suggest students cover each textbook to minimize any damage to books. TEXTBOOKS CAN COST \$40 - \$170 OR MORE FOR EACH ONE! TREAT THEM CAREFULLY!

LAPTOP POLICY

All Academy students will be issued a laptop and both student and parent must sign the Santa Fe College Laptop Loaner Check-Out Form.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROCEDURE

Breakfast and lunch will be provided by The Academy. Students may also bring their own food. Deliveries from outside agencies such as Door Dash are prohibited.

BELL SCHEDULE

8:03	Warning Bell
8:08 – 9:05	1st period, Announcements
9:10 – 10:00	2nd period
10:05 – 10:55	3rd period
11:00 – 11:30	A LUNCH
11:35 – 12:25	4th period – A Class
OR	
11:00 – 11:50	4th period – B Class
11:55 – 12:25	B Lunch
12:30 – 1:20	5th period
1:25 – 2:15	6th period and Announcements