

*River City
Christian Academy*



Ann Allen, Administrator

Kathy Anderson, Co-Administrator/Secondary

Andi Pitman, Co-Administrator/Elementary

Paul Radosevich, Minister of Education

June Arnold, Ministry Assistant

River City Christian Academy

Introduction

First Baptist Church of Decatur (FBC) exists to reach, teach, and change lives through God's power and presence. Home schooling does provide greater opportunity in fulfilling this mission as parents carry out God's direction in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 ("These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.") Also Paul's encouragement in Philippians 4:8 ("Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things") can be enhanced through the option of home schooling. In view of the FBC mission statement RCCA will provide a Christian atmosphere for the home school families to help achieve personal development and academic excellence.

Philosophy

The philosophy of RCCA is that parents begin training their children at birth. This instruction is rich and varied, and may or may not involve formal instruction. However, RCCA recognizes that all children do not fit into the same mold; thus, home schooling provides an alternative, enabling parents to customize each child's formal education based on the child's abilities and interests. The branches of study are limited only by the imagination. RCCA desires to help parents succeed in raising godly men and women to the best of their God given abilities.

We understand that as parents we are responsible for the educational training of our children and will hold no one else responsible for their training.

The position of First Baptist Church and River City Christian Academy is clear. We understand that both of these abide by the Bible and the doctrines defined by the Baptist Faith and Message. I recognize that the River City Christian Academy and the teachers that lead will abide by the same.

Father's Signature

Mother's Signature

Date

You do not need to sign inside the handbook. A single sheet copy will be available for your signature.

Curriculum

One of the greatest legacies you can bestow upon your children is a desire to learn. To engage them in learning, you must choose a curriculum that reflects your desired goals for them academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally. Curriculum may change and grow as your child's specific talents and gifts develop and mature. There are countless curricula available to your family. Carefully research which curriculum best suits your children. We are available to offer suggestions to help you select the right one.

Once you have chosen your curriculum, make sure you complete the *Curriculum Selection Form* to be included in your file. This (and all forms) should be returned to Debbie Barton in the First Baptist Church main office.

Information

Registration and Enrollment - Registration forms and a non-refundable \$110 per family/per school year is required by August 31 each school year. There are no other required monthly fees. These fees will cover the basic overhead and office expenses associated with RCCA. Additional fees may be required as needed for optional field trips, classes, speaker or other special events.

Home School Legal Defense - An HSLDA membership is required. A copy of your membership card must be submitted by October 1, each year.

The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) provides legal services for home schooling families from all over the nation. With your paid membership, HSLDA will provide legal counsel and pay all of your legal fees if you are taken to court for an education-related issue. Your family is terminated from the HSLDA when you leave any school covering.

Your Personal Home School Statement – For new applicants and returning members not enrolled the previous school year, write your family reasons and philosophy for home schooling on the *“Why Our Family Home Schools”* form provided.

Progress Reports (Grades) – One progress report per child/per semester (2 per child/per school year) is to be submitted. **Progress report forms are provided and should be completed and returned by January 14, 2011 (1st semester) and June 10, 2011 (2nd semester).** You are required to conduct this review and submit the grades and your comments on the forms provided.

Think of the progress review as a time to objectively evaluate your child's educational progress. The review becomes a record of your child's educational progress and is placed in his/her file. The progress report will be kept in your child's personal file and you are required to keep a copy as well.

Attendance Records – One attendance report per child/per school semester (2 per child/per school year) is to be submitted. Your child's attendance should be posted on the *Attendance/Progress Report* form which should be returned by January 15, 2010 (1st semester) and June 11, 2010 (2nd semester).

Alabama Law requires that an attendance record be maintained for each child enrolled in RCCA. To accommodate this law, we require you to keep an attendance record for your children. Public and private schools require 180 days of attendance each year and 140 are required for a private tutor.

For home schoolers, attendance is determined by "school days". A School Day is any day you designate as a day in which you are actively pursuing your educational objectives. These days may include field trips and other educationally related activities. We recommend a *minimum* of 160 days attendance per year. The attendance record will be kept in your child's personal file and you are required to keep a copy as well.

Supervision – Parents or legal guardians are required to attend all activities with their children unless they have made prior arrangements with another adult to be directly responsible for their care.

Behavior Code – All people and property must be treated respectfully. Damages will be the responsibility of the child's parents. Inappropriate behavior/language will not be tolerated. While in the Recreation Outreach Center (ROC), the guidelines set within the ROC Handbook will be strictly adhered to. Copies are available in the ROC upon request.

Dress Code – The scripture clearly teaches that as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to present a Christian lifestyle before the world. This lifestyle also includes the area of dress. Therefore, we request that you observe the following guidelines for class sessions and field trips.

- Minimum inseam of 4 inches on all shorts
- All appropriate undergarments will be worn and completely covered
- No exposed midriffs
- One piece swim suits for girls and no Speedos for boys at water events
- No inappropriate logos, printing, or writing on any garments

The dress code will apply to all on-campus and off-campus events when attending an event as a RCCA student. While in the Recreation Outreach Center (ROC), the guidelines set within the ROC Handbook will be strictly adhered to. Please read this as part of the RCCA handbook. A student may be removed from a class should the teacher and administrator decide the clothing is inappropriate.

Standardized Testing – Standardized testing will be available in the late spring for 3rd through 8th grades. It will be supervised by certified testers. Any fees for this testing will be the responsibility of the parent. Test fee is approximately \$45.. This testing is not a requirement for participation in RCCA. Only students enrolled in RCCA are eligible for testing.

Disciplinary Actions - Students or parents who choose not to follow the established guidelines can be removed from the River City Christian Academy. This decision will be made by the RCCA Administrator and Church Ministerial Staff. If a student is removed from RCCA, the child's school district and the HSLDA will be made aware of the termination in writing. Neither the registration fee nor the HSLDA fee will be refunded should a family be removed from RCCA.

Drop Out/Reenlistment Requirements – Students, who have dropped out of school, whether by completing withdrawal forms with their local school or simply ceased attendance from any previous school, must complete the following requirements in addition to the above mentioned steps:

1. Additional registration fee of \$50.00 for each child in each family who has previously dropped out of school.
2. Child must attend an interview with the Administrative Committee.
3. Parents must attend an interview with the Administrative Committee.
4. Progress Reports, Attendance Records, and samples of student work must be turned in at the end of each nine weeks. These weeks are based on the enrollment date of the family and will be set by the RCCA administrators.

Any student, who has at anytime dropped out of a public school prior to enrolling in River City Christian Academy, who the Administrative Committee determines to not be completing any of the above requirements, or is found to be enrolled in RCCA for reasons other than educational reasons, will be terminated.

Withdrawing – If you should need to withdraw from the RCCA, attendance records and progress reports should be turned in and made current up to the date of withdrawal. A notification will be sent immediately to the student's appropriate school district/superintendent and the HSLDA. Parents will be given their child's personal records after a signed receipt of records is completed. Effective at the date of withdrawal, River City Christian Academy is no longer considered the Cover School or Church School responsible for the withdrawn student.

Grading Scale – The grading scale used will be assumed to be as follows:

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59 and below

If you choose to use a different scale, please include that with your grades so transcripts will be accurate with your grading.

Alabama State Law

The state of Alabama does not presently have a statute specifically recognizing home schooling and does not allow students to benefit from the significant advantages of home schooling without using a church school. There may be some room for misinterpretation of the present school attendance statute.

The state of Alabama (section 16-28-3) states that, "Every child between the ages of seven and sixteen years shall be required to attend a public school, private school, church school, or be instructed by a competent private tutor for the entire length of the school term in every scholastic year except that every child attending a church school as defined in section (16-28-1) is exempt from the requirements of this section, provided such child complies with enrollment and reporting procedures specified in section 16-28-7."

Section 16-28-5 states that "Instruction by a private tutor means and includes only instruction by a person who holds a certificate issued by the state superintendent of education and who offers instruction in the several branches of study required to be taught in the public schools of this state, for at least three hours a day for 140 days each calendar year, between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, and who uses the English language in giving instruction."

Section 16-28-17 provides the power to a truant officer to take into custody any school age child who is unattended by a parent or guardian and who is not at home or at school during public school hours. It is therefore recommended that you do your basic instruction during the morning hours and your activities in the afternoon.



Compulsory Attendance Age Increased

On May 18, 2009, Governor Bob Riley signed into law Senate Bill 334, raising the compulsory school attendance age for all students in Alabama from 16 to 17 years old. Students of any age who have completed high school graduation requirements for public schools are eligible for an exemption from further attendance. Presumably, this exemption would include not only public school students but also students in other educational settings if they were taught the public school curriculum. Alabama recognizes four means of meeting the compulsory attendance requirements: public school, private school, church school, and private tutor. The statutory law of Alabama contains no express provision for homeschooling.

Sponsored by Senator Arthur Orr (3rd District), the new law affects all students receiving home instruction through enrollment in a church school. These students must continue attending school until age 17, even after completing their school's graduation requirements, unless the school adheres to the public school curriculum for completing high school. Home School Legal Defense Association is not aware of any church school whose course of study for completing high school is the same as that of the public schools.

Prior law provided that a child attending a church school was exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements, so long as he was enrolled in a church school and his parent or guardian filed a church school enrollment form with the local public school superintendent. This was really no exemption from school attendance because the child had to attend a church school in order to get the so-called exemption. He was not free to withdraw from school and pursue other interests. Senator Orr's bill muddies the water even more by inserting language that limits the so-called exemption to a child "prior to attaining his or her 16th birthday." The result is that every child 16 and over is no longer entitled to the exemption from compulsory attendance by attending a church school. But since it never was really an exemption in the first place, the new language appears to have no practical consequence.

The new law will go into effect beginning with the upcoming 2009–10 school year.

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Appendix

The pages that follow are for your reference.

You will be provided single sheet copies for your use.