

Freeman Academy STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Vision Statement

Faith-inspired learning for life

Mission Statement

Freeman Academy infuses Christ's call into all learning through Anabaptist principles. We seek to stimulate students to think critically and integrate knowledge with faith, service, artistic expression, and practical experience. Freeman Academy cultivates the unique God-given gifts of all students in a safe, caring, and creative community.

Freeman Academy, founded by Freeman area Mennonites in 1900, is a Christian school, grades K-12, which integrates the Christian faith into all aspects of the school experience. Students are encouraged to develop their potential, academically, socially, physically and spiritually. The faculty and staff of Freeman Academy have the mission to:

Challenge youth to **Educational Excellence**
Nurture a **Christ-Centered** vision within them
Build a **Community** of caring and support
Promote **Opportunities** for leadership
Call them to a life of **Peace and Service**

WELCOME

The experiences students encounter during their school years influence them for the remainder of their lives. The faculty and staff of Freeman Academy are dedicated to provide Christ-Centered educational opportunities that will enable you to grow spiritually, academically and socially.

You should enter the doors of Freeman Academy eager to learn, expecting to be accepted fully and treated fairly in an environment that is safe and filled with Christ's love. Parents should expect the school to challenge you to grow to your fullest capabilities by challenging you intellectually, spiritually and physically. For this to happen, you and your parents and the teachers will work in partnership to plan and evaluate your learning and progress throughout the time you attend Freeman Academy.

This handbook provides information and instructions to help you experience Freeman Academy to its fullest. Please read this manual carefully and let the administration know if you have any questions.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT

Freeman Academy provides equal opportunity for all qualified persons in its educational programs and activities. It also seeks to be a community in which freedom of expression and vigorous debate are valued and provided to all its members free of all forms of discrimination or harassment, including but not limited to exploitation, coercion, and intimidation. To achieve these goals, Freeman Academy has adopted a policy prohibiting discrimination and discriminatory harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and any other basis under federal or local laws. The policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity applies to every aspect of the operations and activities of the school, including admissions and employment.

Anabaptist-Mennonite Faith in Practice in Our School



1. In this school students know they are loved and valued by God which enables them to value and love each other.
2. Peace-building, including the use of restorative discipline, is regularly modeled and practiced as a lifestyle of nonviolence, seeking justice and being part of a reconciling faith community.
3. Our school values and is responsive to cultural, racial and socio-economic diversity.
4. Our school provides a welcoming community where it is emotionally safe to raise questions, to value and learn from differences, and to care for each other.
5. The school enables students to practice global awareness, cultural sensitivity, anti-racism, and compassionate living.
6. Students grow in their understanding of stewardship of all God has entrusted to them, including the natural environment.
7. Staff members in our school are committed to modeling the life of Jesus Christ.
8. Students grow in understanding the process of biblical discernment by asking questions, practicing spiritual disciplines, and engaging with other Christians.
9. Students are encouraged to grow in relationship with Jesus and to follow Jesus daily in life through attitudes and practice.
10. Our school does everything it can to eliminate the obstacles that exclude or hinder the ability of students to receive a faith-infused, education of excellence.
11. Stories and symbols of faith and reconciliation are regularly shared in our school community.
12. Our school invites parents to become partners in the faith formation of their child.
13. Our school is a community that lives the gospel message through praying, serving others, and enabling students to grow in understanding that they can make a positive difference in the world globally and locally.
14. Our school builds a strong faith and learning community in which students and staff support each other.
15. Our school enables students to live a life of curiosity, wonder and mystery as they join with God to bring the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven.

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THE SCHOOL DAY

BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

- Students are asked to arrive at school in time to find their seats comfortably prior to the opening bell but not so early that they need to hang around and wait for a long time. At the end of the school day, students not in extracurricular activities are expected to leave promptly at the end of classes – 3:00 p.m. for students in grades K-6 and 3:40 p.m. for students in 7-12th grades.
- Parents are expected to pick up their students promptly. Students participating in extracurricular programs will be dismissed as necessary, as indicated by the coach/supervisor. Parents should communicate with the office if their students will be utilizing the After School Room.
- Students in grades K-6 who are not picked up within 10 minutes of the dismissal of school will be expected to stay in the After School Room from 3:00 p.m. until the supervising faculty member dismisses them at 3:40 p.m. or until picked up by parents.

ATTENDANCE

It is the combined responsibility of school personnel and parents to see that absences are kept to a minimum. Absences tend to disrupt the learning process. Time lost from class is impossible to duplicate in the nature of exchange between students and teachers.

Absences will be classified as excused, unexcused or school related. School related absences, such as field trips and other excused absences, will not count against a student with regard to grades or be included on the student's permanent record. Work missed due to school related and excused absences can be made up for full credit.

To help assure student success, the following absence policy will apply on a trimester basis in regard to excused and unexcused absences.

PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUESTED TO CALL

- A parent or guardian is required to call the school (925-4237) before 8:00 a.m. and leave a message on the receptionist phone or via email (to the receptionist/administrative assistant) to report student absence or tardiness.
- If parent contact is not made within 24 hours, the absence will be considered unexcused. Failure of the parent(s) or guardian(s) to call/email will result in an unexcused absence.
- Parent(s) or guardian(s) may request make-up work by emailing each teacher directly.
- Students will have twice the number of days absent to make up the work missed during excused absences.

ABSENCES

Freeman Academy's school attendance policy leaves little option to excuse students from school, except for:

- Personal illness/injury
- Death in the family, funerals
- Emergencies deemed to have good and sufficient cause for absence
- Doctor or dentist appointment – these appointments will be excused if parents notify the office, preferably in advance
- Other absences subject to administrative approval and parental or guardian contact

****NOTE: Parents must give notice to the school for any of the above to be classified as excused.***

Parents are strongly discouraged from scheduling extended vacation while school is in session. Such absences may or may not be excused; that decision will depend upon the student's academic and disciplinary standing.

1. **Excused Absences:** All class assignments must be made up to receive credit. Length of make-up time is twice the number of days missed. If a student has an excused absence on a previously announced test date or the due date of a report/paper, the student will be expected to take the test and/or hand in the report/paper on the next day of attendance following the absence.
 - a. Absences for school sanctioned extra-curricular activities will not receive extra make-up time. Work should be completed on schedule.
2. **Unexcused Absences** will result in loss of credit for daily work and quizzes. Credit earned for major tests, projects or papers missed due to unexcused absences will be determined at the discretion of the teachers.
 - a. NOTE: The school does not necessarily accept absences sanctioned by the home; therefore, all foreseeable absences should be discussed before missing school.
 - b. Skipping school will result in a one-hour detention for each hour missed. The time will be made up before school, after school, or possibly on a Saturday in-school suspension. Repeated skipping can result in suspension from school. Parents or guardians will be notified when students receive a detention.
3. **Loss of Credit:** A student is required to attend at least 90 percent of the classes (Ex: 54 days out of a 60-day trimester), or to have no more than six unexcused absences in any class during a trimester, in order to receive full credit for the class. Parents or guardians will be notified of any loss of credit. A student who has lost credit in any class may:
 - a. stay in the class if his or her conduct remains acceptable to the instructor;
 - b. be assigned to another location for supervision for that class period;
 - c. be suspended for the remainder of the trimester.
 - d. **Exceptions:** The Head of School may grant exceptions depending on the reason for missed classes.

TARDIES

It is important that classes are free from interruption and that students be available for organized class activities as soon as the bell rings.

- Teachers will record all tardies in their classes.
- Students who are tardy must check in at the office before being allowed into class.
- Students who are legitimately late to a class because the previous teacher did not release them in time must have a pass from that teacher excusing that tardy.
- The accumulation of three (3) tardies within a Trimester will result in a 30-minute detention. Every consecutive tardy after three (3) tardies will result in a 30-minute detention. After the 4th detention (equivalent to 7 tardies or 2 hours of detention served), students will serve a two-hour detention for every subsequent tardy. This will reset at the end of each Trimester. Students will be required to pay a supervisory fee of \$30.
- Detention will be scheduled for the student as determined by the office and administration. Cell phones and other electronic devices will not be allowed during detention. Failure to show up for a detention will result in additional consequences. – see below
- **Excessive Tardiness:** The student is referred to the Head of School for corrective action. Continued tardiness will result in further disciplinary action, at the Head of School's discretion.

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

- Parental/guardian approval is necessary prior to a student leaving the school premises.
- Students in grades 7-12 should "sign out" at the office and inform office staff of departure. Students in grades K-6 may be "signed out" in their homerooms by a parent/guardian.
- School sanctioned "during-class" activity; teachers will alert the office staff when they will be off campus and when they will return.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

- If returning during the school day, students shall "sign in" at the office, inform staff of return, and receive a pass from office staff back to class.

- **NOTE: Leaving school to participate in school-sponsored activities is not included in this section.**

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Should weather conditions make it necessary to cancel school, the following radio and television stations will broadcast the announcement. Tune into one of these stations: KELO TV and Dakota News Now. Also, Dakota News Now and KELO's websites publish the close-line. The decision to postpone or cancel school is made by the Chair of the Board of Directors and the Head of School. Late starts allow students and staff more time for safe travel. Parents, create an emergency plan with your children in the event of an early dismissal.

If school is canceled/dismissed early because of the weather, after school and evening activities will be canceled as well.

MESSAGE BOARD

It is the responsibility of each student to check the message boards and the bulletin boards. Important messages and information will be posted throughout the day. If 7-12th grade students need to make phone calls during the school day they need permission from their classroom teacher or they may do so during the lunch period.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Each student in our campus community must accept responsibility for his/her behavior, attitude and overall conduct. As a Christian school, we expect our faculty, staff and students to live their lives in a manner that is pleasing to God. If it is apparent that a student is involved in activities that are contrary to Christian standards, thoughtful and loving action will be taken to teach and correct the student. For major or continuous problems, the student may be subject to disciplinary action.

DRESS STANDARDS

If FA Staff feel that clothing is unacceptable, students will be asked to change their clothing. If the student does not have appropriate clothing to change into, they will be given clothing from the office (which will need to be washed and returned).

Acceptable clothing:

- Clothing should cover body parts in a modest and respectful manner.
- Pants/jeans, dresses, skirts, shirts in clean, mended condition
- Shorts (including athletic shorts) and skirts must be mid-thigh in length when standing.
- Leggings/yoga pants must have a top that fulfills the same length required as a skirt/shorts.

Unacceptable clothing:

- Clothing which is offensive, immodest or distracting to others
- Excessively torn clothing
- Clothing with offensive or inappropriate images or messages
- Clothing items promoting the use of tobacco, vaping, alcohol or illegal substances

Accessories:

- Hats, caps, hoods and other head coverings are not to be worn in classrooms/chapels/assemblies, unless for religious reasons or other exceptions determined per teacher in their respective classrooms.

OUTDOOR RECESS POLICY

If there is a 0 degree wind chill, wind advisory, or rainy weather, elementary students will use Sterling Hall for recess (with appropriate shoes/socks). If there is snow on the ground, students are required to wear boots in order to be on the snow. If they do not have boots on, they will need to stay on the sidewalk or shoveled areas of the playground. If a student desires to play in the snow, they must have snow pants and boots on. If the temperature is below 60 degrees, all students are required to wear a second long-sleeve layer.

ASSEMBLIES

Special programs by students, outside speakers, musicians, college groups, and others during the school year present a variety of entertaining and educational experiences. Visitors judge us by our assembly conduct.

- Be courteous and attentive.
- Applaud in an appropriate manner.
- Remain seated during the performance unless directed otherwise.
- Exhibit appropriate audience participation for different types of programs.

ATHLETIC RELEASE FORMS

To provide important information to parents or guardians and provide for the welfare of student participants, all students wishing to participate in athletics will need to complete a South Dakota High School Activities Association (SDHSAA) Annual Parent & Student Consent Form, Concussion Form, Consent for Release of Medical Information Form (HIPAA), and have an annual SDHSAA Physical Examination Form completed by a licensed medical examiner. These documents need to be signed by a parent or guardian as well as the student prior to the first athletic practice in which the student participates for the year.

DETENTION

Teachers may assign detention for minor discipline problems. The time these detentions will be served is at the teachers' discretion. Office-assigned detentions will be assigned for excessive tardies or for students referred to the Head of School for disciplinary reasons.

- Office-assigned detentions will be served at a day/time assigned by the office.
- **Very few excuses** will be accepted for dismissal from detention. Unacceptable excuses include athletic practices and games, a job, parental request, etc.
- **Failure to attend detentions will result in further disciplinary action.**

SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL

The Head of School is authorized to suspend students. Suspensions may be in-school or out-of-school.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION—(I.S.S)

- Students assigned I.S.S. must comply with regular attendance and school policies.
- Students are expected to work on schoolwork throughout the entire time assigned. Credit will be given to work completed while in I.S.S.
- Lunch and restroom breaks will be provided.
- Electronics, refreshments or other objects of entertainment are not allowed in I.S.S.
- Sleeping is not allowed in I.S.S.

Non-compliance with I.S.S. procedures will result in out-of-school suspension.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Suspensions will be from one to five days in duration. Parents will be informed before a suspension takes effect. Parents or guardians and the student must meet with the Head of School before the student will be reinstated. Students on suspension are not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities and they are not to be on school property during the instructional day or evening activities.

Acts of unacceptable behavior that may result in suspension or dismissal from school, depending upon the severity of the infraction include, but are not limited to:

- Possession, consumption or sale of alcoholic beverages, narcotics, marijuana, tobacco, vaping and other addictive drugs and deleterious substances
- Threat, possession or use of any object as a weapon on school property or at school activities, functions or events
- Physical or verbal assault of students or school employees or visitors to campus
- Theft
- Vandalism

- Intimidation or extortion, of any type
- Inappropriate use of technology

Dismissal from school is a disciplinary action, which may last from 10 to 177 school days. Dismissing a student requires Board of Directors' action. The Board of Directors of Freeman Academy authorizes the Head of School to discipline, suspend or recommend dismissal of a student for the following reasons:

- Willful violation of any published regulation for student conduct adopted or approved by the Board of Directors.
- Conduct that disrupts, impedes or interferes with the educational mission of the school.
- Conduct that impinges on or invades the rights of others.
- Conduct that has resulted in conviction of the student of any offense.
- Excessive absences or lack of attendance.

WEAPONS AT SCHOOL

A student shall not knowingly possess, on grounds or off school grounds when at a school activity, function or event, any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon. All staff persons are REQUIRED to report any evidence of possessions of weapons by students to administration. Students are encouraged to report any evidence of a weapon at school to a staff member.

Possession of a firearm or ammunition on school grounds shall result in dismissal from school, unless the Head of School and/or the Board of Directors decide that an exception is warranted.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

According to a SD law, the communication of a terrorist threat or hoax is a criminal offense and can carry felony penalties. Actions once considered pranks and/or vandalism may now be considered criminal activity.

In the case of suspicious activity, Freeman Academy reserves the right to search any locker on campus. In cases of suspected criminal activity, Freeman Academy also reserves the right to search cars parked at school facilities.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, VAPING AND ILLEGAL DRUG USE

Freeman Academy strictly prohibits the use of any form of tobacco, vaping, alcohol, and illegal or illicit drugs. If a student chooses to use any of these substances, the student may be suspended from school activities, suspended from school or dismissed from school pending an investigation by the Head of School.

As members of the SDHSAA, FA abides and is bound by our agreement to follow all rules put in place. Should a student be found to use a controlled substance, FA is required to report this usage to the SDHSAA and follow their guidelines.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the right of all students, faculty, and staff to enjoy an environment free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Freeman Academy expects everyone in our school community to foster positive attitudes and behaviors toward members of each gender. Sexual Harassment includes conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following categories: quid pro quo, hostile environment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

FA's TIX policy applies to the behavior of all students, faculty and staff while in the "school environment". The "school environment" includes actions occurring on all property owned by Freeman Academy and actions occurring during activities specifically controlled and directed by the school whether on Freeman Academy property or not.

All persons who become aware of or are a victim of sexual harassment are strongly encouraged to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, the Head of School, and/or parents. All staff members of FA are considered mandatory reporters. Acts of retaliation due to the reporting of sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Both the complainant and the respondent will be offered supportive measures upon the receipt of a complaint. The safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance, those who feel threatened in any way will be offered support.

Once a formal complaint has been received the formal process will proceed, including an investigation, possible hearing, and a determination regarding responsibility. If desired, the complaint may be processed using an informal resolution process. If dissatisfied with the determination, either the complainant or the respondent can request an appeal. The case then goes to the FA Board of Directors for review and determination. This determination is final.

The full Title IX Policy can be found on the FA website at <https://freemanacademy.org/parent-resources/>.

STUDENT BULLYING

Freeman Academy is committed to maintaining a constructive, safe school climate that is conducive to student learning and fostering an environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a student's ability to learn and may have lasting negative effects on a student's life. The bullying of students by students, staff or third parties is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated.

Bullying occurs when a person or group is intimidated, frightened, excluded or hurt by a pattern of behaviors directed at them by others. Bullying consists of repeated physical, verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic, or any other conduct directed toward a student that is so pervasive, severe, and objectively offensive that it has the purpose or effect of:

1. Creating or resulting in an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic environment;
- Or
2. Substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance, which deprives the student access to educational opportunities.

The following actions in an ongoing form may be forms of bullying:

1. Physical aggression-including hitting, punching, kicking.
2. Teasing or verbal abuse-including put-downs, insults, name calling or racial/sexual remarks.
3. Intentional exclusion from activities or friendship groups.
4. The setting up of humiliating experiences.
5. Damaging a person's property/possessions or taking them without permission.
6. Threatening gestures, actions or words.
7. Written/verbal/ electronic messages that contain threats, put-downs, gossip or slandering.
8. This policy includes cyber bullying and any bullying through electronic means.

This policy is in effect while students are on school property, while they are in school-owned or school-operated vehicles, while they are attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities, and while they are away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of Freeman Academy.

This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit civil exchange of opinions or debate protected under the state or federal constitutions where the opinion expressed does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the educational process or intrude upon the rights of others.

Procedure:

1. All parties —victim, bully and sufficient bystanders – will be spoken to in order to establish the facts of the situation and to hold them accountable for their actions/inaction. Generally, all parties will be asked to give a verified account of what has happened with a view to understanding the whole picture.

2. All incidents are to be documented and written reports will be kept on the behavior.
3. All staff will be informed about and have access to the information recorded on all incidents so that they may be aware of any issues between students.
4. Acknowledgment of the allegation of bullying and assessment of student safety must take place within one school day of the report.
5. Investigations into bullying allegations must be undertaken in a timely manner and should be carried out in such a way as to minimize the risk of escalation.
6. Parent(s) of victim and bully will be informed throughout the process and may be invited to be present in discussions. In some cases this may apply to parents of bystanders also.
7. All incidents of bullying will be followed up in writing to parents/caregivers of at least the victim/s and bully.
8. Bullying incidents will be followed up and students monitored to ensure the incident is resolved satisfactorily. The school will take serious disciplinary action in cases of retaliation.
9. Discipline will follow procedures in the Student Handbook found under the Student Conduct section.

RESPONSIBILITIES of STUDENTS

1. Students should ask the offending student to stop.
2. Students being bullied should report it to staff, parents or another adult.
3. Students who are aware of bullying should report it to the teacher.
4. Students should take appropriate steps to discourage or prevent bullying.
5. Students should be willing to resolve bullying situations, employing forgiveness and some changes in behavior.

RESPONSIBILITIES of PARENTS

1. Parents are encouraged to take what their children say seriously and to report bullying concerns to the teacher first.
2. Parents need to accept that the whole story may be quite complex and trust the school to resolve bullying matters.
3. Parents not satisfied with the action may refer to administrators if the need arises.

ACADEMICS

CLASS TIME SCHEDULE for 7-12th Grades

Time	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri
8:00-9:00					
9:05-9:55			Chapel		
10:00-11:00					
11:05-12:05					
12:05-12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:50-1:40					
1:45-2:35	Spiritual Life Groups, Advising and Independent studies				Spiritual Life Groups, Advising and Independent studies
2:40-3:40					

1st through 6th grades will start at 8:00 AM and dismiss at 3:00 PM.

7th through 12th grades will start at 8:00 AM and dismiss at 3:40 PM.

GRADING CRITERIA

Grading criteria and grading scales are established by the staff based on the following:

- Classroom attendance
- Arrival in class on time with all books and necessary materials
- Classroom participation
- Completion of class and homework assignments
- Mastery of the course materials
- Test scores
- Completion and timely submission of make-up work
- When rounding grades, FA will follow traditional rounding practices.

Assignments are due on the last day of each trimester. **Except in the event of an emergency, no incomplete grade will be given at the end of a course.**

Grading Scale:

A+	98.5-100
A	92.5-98.49
A-	89.5-92.49
B+	86.5-89.49
B	82.5-86.49
B-	79.5-82.49

C+	76.5-79.49
C	72.5-76.49
C-	69.5-72.49
D+	66.5-69.49
D	62.5-66.49
D-	59.5-62.49
F	00.0-59.49

FA GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN 2025-2026

- 4.0 credits Language Arts/English
- 3.5 credits Social Studies
- 3.0 credits Lab Sciences
- 4.0 credits Mathematics
- 4.0 credits Bible
- 1.0 credit Computer Science
- 3.0 credits Fine Arts
- 2.0 credits World Language
- 0.5 credits Personal Finance
- 0.5 credits PE
- 0.5 credits Health
- 2.0 credits Electives

28 CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION

Students not completing academic requirements for graduation may not be permitted to participate in commencement exercises until they have become eligible for graduation.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Freeman Academy encourages honesty in all aspects of a student’s life. Whether a student is talking with a friend or teacher, writing a paper or presenting a speech, the student is ultimately responsible for the validity of his or her words. Academic honesty is an essential element in developing self-respect, a sense of

achievement, and positive relationships with others in our school community. It is also an important qualification for success in higher education and the world of work.

Academic dishonesty is using someone else's work, concepts, designs, data, ideas, research, or documentation without giving proper credit to the source. In addition to plagiarism, it includes lying, cheating, and using unauthorized materials in preparation for or during a test/quiz or exam. Practical examples of academic dishonesty include deliberately copying another student's homework or test answers, copying print or audio/video materials without giving credit to the source, cheating on a test, and including in a bibliography items the student has not read.

Freeman Academy recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) tools—such as ChatGPT and similar technologies—are becoming more prevalent in academic and professional environments. These tools may be used for educational purposes only with the knowledge and permission of the teacher. The extent of use is left to the discretion of the teacher. If AI tools are used, proper citation is expected. Using AI to complete assignments in its entirety, generate answers, or assist with work without teacher approval will be considered a violation of the Academic Honesty policy and subject to its consequences. Misuse of AI tools will be treated similarly to plagiarism or unauthorized assistance. Students are expected to submit work that reflects their own unique understanding, analysis, effort, and integrity.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense. Consequences depend on the nature of the violation and whether it is a first-time occurrence or has happened before. Consequences range from the requirement to redo work on the understanding of a significant grade reduction, to a grade of "F" for the assignment or project, to a loss of credit for the course or even suspension from school.

Students are responsible to complete their own work, to acknowledge the contributions of collaborators or sources, and to refuse to participate in another student's dishonesty. Parents can help by having reasonable expectations of their children, encouraging them to academic honesty and, of course, not completing their work for them. Teachers are responsible to establish clear guidelines for and expectations about independent work, student collaboration, paraphrasing the words of others, and properly citing sources. The administration supports expectations of academic honesty and follows up with students, teachers, and parents as needed.

SCHOLASTIC HONORS

The honor roll will be printed in the *Freeman Courier*.

- Gold Honor Roll = 3.6-4.0 GPA
- Maroon Honor Roll = 3.20-3.59 GPA
- **In addition to the honor roll, graduating seniors who have successfully completed the Regents Scholar Curriculum will be recognized during the graduation ceremony.**
- Any student with an 'incomplete' at the end of a trimester is not included on the honor roll.
- Any student with an 'incomplete' in a class when the honor roll is calculated will not be included in the published list. Once the incomplete has been corrected, the student may still receive an honor roll certificate if they meet the requirements.

COLLEGE VISITATION

High school students in good standing may be excused from classes by the administration to make college/technical school visits. **Parents must inform the office before the scheduled visit and students should obtain homework from each classroom teacher prior to the visit.** Parents and students are urged to consider such visitations during non-instructional time if possible. The administration may limit the number, frequency and length of visits. Students who return from a college visit on the day of an athletic or fine arts event may participate.

TRANSCRIPTS

Each graduating senior may request one free final transcript mailed to the college of their choice by notifying the business office. Additional transcripts are available at a cost of \$10.00 per transcript mailed, faxed or e-mailed.

- Trimester grades, final grades and transcripts will be withheld on balances due beyond 60 days.
- Diplomas and transcripts for eighth graders and seniors will be withheld until accounts are paid in full.

PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT CONFERENCES

Regular communication between parents, teachers and students is essential for optimum learning. Two days are set aside during the first and second trimesters for parents, teachers and students to meet to discuss achievement and set learning goals. Additional conferences can be held any time a need arises.

ELIGIBILITY

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege granted to Freeman Academy students in good standing. Freeman Academy is a member of the South Dakota High School Activities Association. To be eligible for extra-curricular activities, students must fulfill all the eligibility rules of the SDHSAA. In addition, Freeman Academy requires meeting the following requirements:

1. Any "F" grade will result in a student being ineligible for extra-curricular activities until the grade is raised to passing on a subsequent weekly eligibility report.
2. A student with an incomplete will be ineligible until the incomplete is replaced by a passing grade on a subsequent weekly eligibility report.
3. A student with two "D" grades will be ineligible until at least one "D" has been raised to at least "C" level on a subsequent weekly eligibility report.

Teachers will submit eligibility lists weekly during the school year. Grades will be computed on a cumulative basis and reflect current trimester grades.

1. The first three (3) weeks of each trimester will be set aside to establish a student's GPA. At the beginning of the 4th week, a student's GPA will begin affecting eligibility.
2. The Eligibility List will be turned in each Thursday by 4:00. The week of ineligibility will be the following Monday through Sunday.
3. Work missed due to an excused absence will not count against eligibility until the number of days plus one, as specified in the handbook for makeup, has been reached.
4. The intent of the Eligibility List is not to punish students but to encourage them to improve academically.
5. With a view to helping students remain eligible, students with two or more C- grades may be assigned to work with a resource teacher until at least one C- has been raised to a C or higher.

**This eligibility policy will affect all extra-curricular contests. Class-related activities such as concerts, church performances and art shows are not affected by this policy.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

When it is necessary for a student to withdraw from school, the student's parents or guardians should inform the office. All fees must be paid, all school owned books returned and all work completed before the withdrawal will be considered complete. **The student's transcripts and records will not be sent to another school until withdrawal is complete.**

MUSIC DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

All FA students are invited to participate in the various musical ensembles/band/choirs at Freeman Academy. During the course of the school year other opportunities come up for our students to audition.

In the event that there is an open audition (no limit of entries is put on our school) all FA students involved in the Fine Arts, and are part of the respective program, are welcome to audition. When there is need for Freeman Academy to hold auditions due to a limited number of students or groups, full time students are welcome to audition. Such events include: All-State Chorus, Chamber Choir, 5-8th grade vocal elementary contest.

All participating students must fall under the FA Academic Eligibility guidelines to participate in contests and festivals.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In order to mitigate the various negative effects of cell phone usage by students throughout the school day, Freeman Academy has moved to enact the following cell phone policy, beginning with the 2025-26 academic year:

- Cell phones are not permitted during the school day for Grades 1-6 students. Classroom teachers will keep them in a secure location. Cell phones must be turned off during the school day.
- Cell phones are not permitted during the school day for Grades 7-12 students. The following procedure will be used:
 - Grades 7-12 students will be required to bring cell phones to school and store them in the Phone Cabinet on the first floor of the Admin Building. Phones will be kept in faraday pouches to reduce or eliminate signal to other Bluetooth devices (e.g., smartwatches). As usual, only phones that have been registered with IT will be allowed on campus.
 - The front door supervisor for the week will ensure phones are kept in proper place. The storage area will have phone spots marked for each student in order to easily identify phones that have not been turned in.
 - Phones will remain in the cabinet during the entire day, to be released to students at the 3:40 bell.
 - Students who need to leave early for authorized reasons will be able to retrieve their phones on their way out, with the help of office staff.
 - Tardy students must turn phones in at the office when they report in.
 - If international student families need daytime conversations, in order to account for time zone differences, arrangements can be made between families and the office for calls during the lunch period, following the meal. Calls can be made using Zoom, with a laptop and space provided by the school. Calls should be scheduled with the office in advance.
 - Earbuds will also be prohibited. Students will be required to bring *wired-only* headphones for listening to music on their laptops, as permitted by teachers.
 - Smartwatches must be registered with IT, as with all other personal devices. Bluetooth-only watches will be allowed, but no smartwatch with an independent signal will be permitted.

NOTE: FA faculty and staff will still be permitted to use cell phones and related devices, following the guidelines established in the Faculty/Staff Handbook.

An **Acceptable Use of Technology Policy** must be signed by parents and students and all personal devices must be registered with the school.

INTERNET/COMPUTER USE

The computers and the Internet are to be used for educational purposes only. An **Acceptable Use of Technology Consent Form** must be signed to use computers. Any action by a student that is determined by their classroom teacher or a system administrator to constitute an inappropriate use of the Internet may result in the student's loss of computer privileges.

TEXTBOOK USE AND CARE

Students are responsible for proper use and care of borrowed course materials, including textbooks. Students whose textbooks or other borrowed materials are damaged while in their possession will be responsible for paying for repair or replacement of those textbooks or materials.

FACILITIES

BUILDING ACCESS & KEY CARDS

Students are issued a keycard at the beginning of the year for a reimbursable fee of \$5.00 (charged to the student's account). If they do not return their card at the end of the school year, the \$5.00 will not be reimbursed. If they lose their card during the school year, they will be issued a new card and charged \$10 for each replacement card issued.

- Grades K-4: Cards will be kept by staff for use in the lunch line.
- Grades 5-6: Cards will be kept in the classroom.
- Grades 7-12: Cards will be kept by students. They will be expected to carry them throughout the day to access the Ad Building and Music Hall.
- Students will use their keycard to track their school lunch purchases.
- If the student does not have their keycard for 2 consecutive days at lunch, the student will automatically be issued a new key card for a \$10 fee (either paid by student or assessed to their account.) Should the student return their old card to the office their account will be credited for \$5 (no cash will be returned to the student).
- Keycards will only work during school hours. At no time will students be allowed in school facilities without prior school approval.

LOCKERS

Lockers are furnished for students to keep books, apparel and personal belongings in a convenient place.

- Keep locker doors shut when not in use. Students may provide their own locks for lockers.
- **No items should be attached to the outside/inside of the locker or on the wall by the locker other than Bearcat Booster Club posters.**
- Items are expected to be in lockers, not on the floor. Items found on the floor will be brought to the Lost & Found by staff members.
- Lockers are the property of the school and are subject to search.
- The school is not responsible for missing items.

FOOD AND DRINK IN SCHOOL

Students are expected to limit food consumption to the dorm and dining hall. Students may carry water in a water bottle and/or coffee/tea in a container with a tight-fitting lid.

Please note the following two exceptions:

- Since students may get hungry during the long morning, they may pack a granola bar or other snack that is not messy and eat it at the discretion of the classroom teacher.
- NO drinks or food are allowed during Chapel except water.
- In the event of a class party under a teacher's direct supervision in a classroom, such as a birthday party, food and drink are permitted on the understanding that the room is left clean.

LOST AND FOUND

Any items left in the hallways, the Link, or the gymnasiums, will be brought to the office. Items will be set out for students to claim. Unclaimed items will be taken to the Et Cetera Shoppe in Freeman.

LIBRARY

Library hours will be posted and may be adjusted as the schedule is changed. An atmosphere that is conducive to reading and study is essential at all times.

The rules for the Library are as follows:

- No food or drink other than water bottles
- Speak quietly
- One person per chair
- No seniority privileges
- Librarian's choice of music only
- No computer games
- Books and magazines may be checked out for two weeks. The newest magazines may only be checked out overnight.
- There is a 10¢ fine per day for overdue books and a \$15 book replacement fee for a lost book.

STUDENT PARKING

Automobiles are to be parked in the Pioneer Hall parking lot upon arrival at school and are not to be entered or moved until the end of the school day. **Students are not allowed to go to the parking lot during school hours unless permission is granted from the Office or lunch supervisor.** Students will be required to register any vehicle they will drive to school, make/model & license plate number, with the Office.

FRONTIER HALL DORMITORY STUDENT USE

Frontier Hall is the dorm facility for those students who do not commute to school. The Dorm Supervisor is in charge of the dorm facility before and after school, so please respect their authority. Guests are asked to keep the facility clean and to respect the people who live there. All visitors must be out of the dorm by 10:00 p.m. on school nights. When visiting the student's living quarters, please knock before entering their room. No members of the opposite sex are allowed in the student's bedroom at any time. Please be mindful that the dorm supervisor and dorm students live here and treat it as you would your own home.

FACILITY RENTALS

Freeman Academy students, under the responsibility of their parents/guardians, may rent the school's facilities for 50% discount on pricing pending approval of a signed facility rental contract by the Administration Office and the parent/guardian. Students and their families must follow all contract stipulations. The 50% discount does not apply to any extra applicable cleaning fees.

FINANCIAL

TUITION PAYMENT POLICY

Preamble: Freeman Academy supporters donate time and money each year to support the operating expenses of the school. Tuition income makes up only a part of the overall budget of the school. The efforts of volunteers in helping to maintain the school and their work in fundraisers such as Schmeckfest, as well as other gift income, results in lower tuition fees for students. The Board of Directors believes every family should honor this generosity by making scheduled and timely payments on tuition and other billed charges during the school year. The following policy exists to help make this possible for every family.

Policy: Parents/guardians are required to sign an agreement to pay the charges related to sending their child to Freeman Academy before the student can be enrolled. This agreement includes a listing of tuition charges, standard fees, meal costs and deductions or credits applicable to their billing statement. The agreement offers several payment options and provisions for handling late payments or non-payment of accounts.

Procedures:

- The Board of Directors establishes annual tuition rates and fee structures.
- The Business Office prepares "Tuition and Fee Statements" based on the rates set by the Board of Directors.
- Tuition and Fee statements are emailed to families in July. Families are encouraged to make an appointment with the Business Office to set up a payment plan. All families are required to sign and return the fee statement prior to the start of school. NOTE: Failure to return a signed fee statement

does not mean families are not obligated to pay tuition; if the child is attending school at FA, the family is assumed to be in agreement with the fee statement.

- Financial aid is available and must be applied for annually.

Payment Options:

- Full payment of tuition and fees due at a pre-determined date. Other monthly charges due when billed.
- ACH payment set up in the Business Office on a monthly schedule.
- Other payment schedules/options may be considered when meeting with the Operations Director and/or Administration.

Late payment and /or non-payment of tuition and other billed charges:

- Trimester grades, final grades, and transcripts will be withheld on past due balances of 60 days and longer.
- Accounts not paid in full at the end of the school year (May) will be ineligible to receive financial aid the following year.
- Non-payment on accounts or lack of significant effort (to be defined by administration and Board of Directors) to settle accounts will result in denying re-enrollment the following school year.
- If a family decides to withdraw a student, they will be subject to paying tuition and fees for the entire trimester of withdrawal. Financial aid and tuition assistance will be prorated in the same manner as tuition and fees. Failure to make timely payment will result in holding of student records.
- All delinquent accounts at the end of the current school year may be subject to collections for payment.

Method by which past due accounts can remain in "Good Standing":

Consideration of unusual financial circumstances combined with genuine effort to pay down accounts can delay or avoid some of the penalties as outlined above. For any past due account to remain in "good standing", a signed agreement must be arranged with the school officials that spells out how the account will be paid and by what date.

Parents/guardians may appeal actions taken against them before a panel composed of the Administrator, chairperson of the Finance Committee and chairperson of the Board of Directors. The decision of this panel will be binding on all parties.

VARIABLE TUITION

Freeman Academy is committed to making quality Christian education affordable for families, regardless of their financial situation. We realize tuition is not one-size-fits-all. Variable Tuition customizes the tuition amount to each family's unique situation: finances, number of children, single parent, and so on. In the spring, interested families can set up an online account with the TADS assessment service. TADS is a confidential service for independent schools across the U.S. that develops a financial plan for each family and sends a recommendation for an appropriate tuition level. Families must complete a TADS application each year to qualify for Variable Tuition. There is a yearly per family charge for this service.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Lunch is held in the Dining Hall, which is located in the basement of Pioneer Hall.

- Grades K-12 = Cost per meal is determined by Administration annually. This information will be included on the fee statement sent from the business office.
- When in the lunch line, ALL students must swipe their key cards at the Point of Sale.
- Parents/family members are welcome to eat with their children. Please call the office or dining hall by 9:00 a.m. to be included in the lunch count and allow the Dining Hall to prepare accordingly.

Freeman Academy Meal Charge Policy

- I. Federal Requirement
 - a. The policy is in place to address the need for school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to institute and clearly communicate a meal charge policy, which would include, if applicable, the availability of alternate meals. Because all students in

participating schools may receive reimbursable school meals, all SFAs must have a policy in place for children who are participating at the reduced price or paid rate, but either do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. Such a policy ensures that school food service professionals, school administrators, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations in these situations.

- b. You can find more information about this US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requirement at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/unpaid-meal-charges>.

II. PURPOSE OF POLICY:

- a. The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures at Freeman Academy. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department. The goals of this standard of practice are:
 - i. To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts
 - ii. To support positive situations with Freeman Academy staff, business policies, and students and parents/guardians to the maximum extent possible
 - iii. To establish policies that are age appropriate
 - iv. To encourage parents/guardians to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student
 - v. To establish a consistent policy regarding charges and collection of charges

III. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

- a. The food service department and Business Manager are responsible for: maintaining charge records and notifying the student's parent/guardian.
- b. The Parent/Guardian: Immediate payment

IV. ADMINISTRATION:

- a. Families are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meal benefit. Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive a written notification to encourage them to apply for free or reduced price meal benefits.
- b. Families are notified that meals will be billed monthly. Written notification of this billing program occurs at the beginning of each school year, is given to each new transfer student, and is posted on the Freeman Academy website.
- c. Families will be notified of the school Meal Charge Policy in writing before the school year begins and with each new transfer student.
- d. Meals will be counted starting on the first day of the month and continuing until the last day of the month. At this time the meals will be invoiced for each student and a statement emailed to each family stating that payments need to be made **within two weeks**.
 - i. If payment has not been received within the 2 weeks a statement will be mailed to the family with a note that unpaid charges need to be paid.
 - ii. Calls on delinquent accounts will be made on an as-needed basis to try to collect payment.
 - iii. If a child has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. SFAs may not use the child's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.
 - iv. All delinquent accounts at the end of May of the current school year may be subject to collections for payment.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Freeman Academy has an **Emergency Action Plan** in place. The procedures found in this plan cover the following emergencies:

- Medical
- Fire
- Extended power loss
- Chemical spill
- Lock down
- Bomb threat
- Active shooter

- Severe weather/natural disaster

The plan of action found in the EAP supersedes all other policy. Parents and students are allowed to review the EAP at the school office upon request.

TORNADO DRILLS

Severe weather warning or sighted tornados will be indicated by the intercom and bell system. FA participates in periodic tornado drills within the school year.

FIRE DRILLS

In order to meet state requirements, we hold periodic fire drills. For proper emergency exit routes, see the posted exit plans in each room.

Students are forbidden to set off fire alarms except in the case of a fire. Any student who does so is guilty of a serious offense and will be disciplined appropriately. A student may be referred to the Sheriff's Office and State Fire Marshall for discipline.

LOCK-DOWN AND EVACUATION DRILLS

There may be situations that would require Freeman Academy to go into a lock-down or evacuation situation. FA participates in lock-down and evacuation drills periodically.

During an actual event, Students will not be allowed to be released to parents or to leave on their own until given permission from Law Enforcement, Head of School or Administration.

Freeman Academy | 2025-2026 CALENDAR

Tri 1 – 58 days / Tri 2 – 57 days / Tri 3 – 58 days

<p>4 Independence Day</p>	<p>JULY 2025</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S				1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			<p>JANUARY 2026</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>Th</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	<p>1-2 Christmas Break 13 Tri 2 Midterm 22 4:30-7:30PM PT Conf 23 7:30-10:30AM PT Conf NO SCHOOL</p>														
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