



THE CARDINAL

Wisdom begins with respect for the Lord.



Six Tips for a Great School Year

1. Learn to Use JupiterGrades

JupiterGrades is parents' and students' "lifeline" to the school. You can view teachers' grade books in real time and check all of your upcoming assignments in the HW Planner. JupiterGrades has the school activities calendar including sports and lunch. It has a "downloads" area with the Student Handbook, permission slips and information on other school activities. The site lets you send and receive messages from teachers and administrators. It also links to Juno, our online homework and testing app, which Middle and High School teachers use for assignments, homework and tests.

Parents and students are given passwords to log into JupiterGrades. If you have not been able to log in or have other technical problems, please contact the school office.

2. Get Connected

The main lines of communication between the school and families are JupiterGrades, the Student Handbook, our newsletter *The Cardinal* and the weekly email *FCS Reminders*. Occasionally emails will be sent for special events. Emails are also sent out

when school is canceled due to inclement weather. You may also find interesting items on our school blog, Facebook page, LinkedIn page and Twitter.

The Student Handbook lays out all of the school policies for parents and students. Parents and students are required to read the handbook and sign the acknowledgment form every September.

The Cardinal is our monthly newsletter, featuring articles of interest, student activities and staff biographies. It is available in both print and electronic formats.

The *FCS Reminders* contains information on upcoming events, field trips, sports practices and extracurricular activities. This email is sent every Friday when school is in session.

The school blog, our Facebook page, LinkedIn and Twitter also contain interesting information on what is happening at the Fairfax Christian School. Parents and students are encouraged to subscribe, "link" and "like" the school through social media.

It is important that all parents and students give the school office their

current email address to stay connected.

3. Get a Great Night's Sleep

The best way to ensure a great school day is to start with a good night's sleep. Studies have shown that school-age children should have between eight and fourteen hours of sleep a night. School begins at 8am and many students are awake by 6am.

It's considered poor etiquette to call someone's house after 9pm. This rule also applies to texting, email and other communications. Good parents should enforce this rule, not only for their students' sake, but for other students' and families' sakes.

Many of our students have parents, other family members and friends in other time zones. It's tempting to Skype, text and email at 3am. However, doing this can lead to sleepy students and disastrous results during the school day. Plan to talk with overseas family and friends during your waking hours, not theirs.

For a few dollars, parents can put a simple household timer on their wifi router which will automatically shut off at a set time in the evening and turn on again in the morning.

Some experts recommend this to cut exposure to wifi radiation while sleeping and to give the router a reset every morning which, for some, will give them faster service during the day.

4. Block Time for Homework

The Fairfax Christian School does not give homework on the weekends or have assignments due on Monday, except for Bible classes. Therefore, the amount of homework on Monday through Thursday can be rigorous. Plan your weekends for rest, rejuvenation and family time.

New students are sometimes overwhelmed with the amount of homework assigned. Other students and parents think we do not assign enough work. Our policy is to assign enough work to assure that students master their subjects without creating busy work. If a student is struggling with a concept, teachers may assign extra homework for reinforcement.

The amount of homework time needed varies depending on the student's classes. However, every

student should have a substantial block of time set aside Monday through Thursday for their studies. Occasionally, students may need to use the weekends to catch up or work ahead to stay on schedule.

5. Organize Space for Homework

It is important to have a quiet, clean, well-lighted space at home for studying. This can be a desk in a student's bedroom or the kitchen table. Getting in the habit of working in the same study space will bring consistency to homework time and help students focus. Students should not be doing their homework in front of the television or while listening to loud music. These distractions will undermine the quality of the student's work and extend the amount of time it takes to get the work done.

The Fairfax Christian School provides all the school supplies students need to do their school work. Students are given pens, pencils and paper to do their homework. It is the student's responsibility to bring these items home. Written homework may only be done in blue ink or pencil.

Keeping a neat, organized backpack will also help students be organized

for homework time. Students should check to make sure they have all the books and supplies needed to do their homework.

Parents of younger students should check their child's backpack daily. Lower school teachers will send home homework packets, field trip permission slips, communications from the administration, invitations and notes in the student's backpack.

6. Don't Overcommit

The Fairfax Christian School is academically rigorous and there are many school-based extracurricular activities. Students should choose the activities they are willing to commit to for the school year, but not so many that they interfere with their studies. Plan study time first before committing to extra activities.

Choose your activities wisely. Universities want to see that a student has participated in extracurricular activities. However, focusing on a few and with long-term commitment is better than shallow participation in many activities.



Back to School Picnic
Students, parents, faculty and staff came together to celebrate a new school year at our Back to School Picnic. New and returning students enjoyed a catered dinner from Red Hot & Blue with dessert by Scoops Ice Cream.





Your Academic Administrators

The Fairfax Christian School has restructured and expanded our Academic Administrators team to better serve the needs of our students and parents.



Rosemary Thoburn is our new Dean of Academics. Rosemary, a graduate of the Fairfax Christian School, has been on staff since 2004. She recently received a Master's degree at George Mason University.



This year we welcome back Lorene Ward, who will now serve as our Academic Director concentrating on international and high school students. Miss Ward will also be overseeing and coordinating our ESL program.



James Lee has been moved from the Admissions Office to Director for International Students. He will help students adjust to their new school, plan school events, monitor students' grades and assist parents and guardians.