



# Abiding Word Lutheran School

Dear Parents:

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you and your children to Abiding Word Lutheran School! We appreciate the confidence you have shown in allowing us to teach and train your children. We eagerly look forward to partnering with you in educating and guiding the next generation of young Christian leaders.

The administration, teachers, and staff of Abiding Word value excellence in education and we hold ourselves accountable for a thorough education of the whole child – mind, body, and spirit. Every aspect of our school conveys dedication to excellence: a challenging curriculum; a safe, structured, nurturing learning environment; and a desirable student-to-teacher ratio, just to name a few. We trust that this handbook will help you to better understand our program of quality Christian education at Abiding Word.

We encourage you to carefully read and discuss it with your children and welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you might have.

In Christ,

Principal Seth Herrmann

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# Abiding Word

## Lutheran School

### **An Exemplary Accredited School** **2023-2024 Handbook**

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# *Purpose and Philosophy*

## **WELCOME**

Since 1973, Abiding Word Lutheran School has been devoted to preparing young minds and hearts for the world that awaits them. Upon enrolling your child at Abiding Word Lutheran School, you indicate that you subscribe to the policies stated in this handbook. If there are any questions regarding school policy as stated herein, you are encouraged to contact the principal or Board of Christian Education.

It is our desire that this handbook sets forth school policies in a clear concise manner thus leading to a mutual understanding and cooperation between home and school as we work together as a team to provide a Christian education for your child.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Abiding Word Lutheran School exists to make disciples for the Lord's kingdom by providing Christ-centered education that challenges and prepares students for lives of Christian service.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Abiding Word is a Christian school dedicated to excellence and rooted in the timeless truths of God's Word. Our vision is to continue to provide excellence in a rigorous curriculum and Christ-centered environment. Together, the administration, faculty, and staff constantly strive to grow, cooperate, and serve to best meet the academic, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of every student.

## **CORE VALUES**

**CHRIST is the core of everything we value at Abiding Word.**

**Christ-centered:** We keep Jesus at the center of all we do.

**High Expectations:** We use our talents and abilities to give God glory in all we do.

**Relationships:** We support and invest in each other as part of God's family.

**Integrity:** We make God-pleasing choices regardless of who is looking.

**Service:** We serve each other, our students, and parents with love as Jesus served us.

**Teamwork:** We work together in all we do as a Christ-centered team.

# *Governance and Management*

## **ENROLLMENT POLICY**

Abiding Word Lutheran School was founded with the purpose of assisting parents in carrying out God's command to bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord. Abiding Word Lutheran Church therefore maintains a Lutheran elementary school for the education, instruction in the Bible, and Christian character building of God's children. Our church then, through the school, is working to reach out to each of the following:

- Families who are members of Abiding Word Lutheran Church.
- Families who are members of an area WELS/ELS congregation.
- Families of our community who seek a Christian education and are in agreement with and support the educational philosophy of Abiding Word.

## **NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

*"God our Savior...wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2,4); therefore, Abiding Word Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded or made available to students at the school. No racial distinctions or racial prejudices will be tolerated in this Christian school.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE and REQUIREMENTS**

The principal meets with the family, introduces them to the potential classroom teacher, gives a tour of the facility, and discusses possible enrollment. In our attempt to accommodate the needs of all our students, parents are encouraged to openly discuss any special needs and concerns regarding their child.

Once the family has reviewed all informational materials and is in agreement with the school guidelines as stated in the parent handbook, an application for admission should be completed and returned to the principal or school office (or online) accompanied by a copy of the applicant's birth certificate, current immunization records, previous standardized test results, and the most recent report card.

Final admission to Abiding Word Lutheran School is determined by the principal and Board of Christian Education. Parents will promptly be notified of the decision. Upon acceptance, the family signs up for a FACTS tuition management account online, and begins tuition payments.

Students who transfer from another school are enrolled on a probationary basis for one semester; at which time the parents and child will meet with the principal to review how the child is progressing. The probationary period may then be lifted if there are no serious concerns.

Parents must be willing to have the child instructed in the doctrines of the Bible as taught by Abiding Word Lutheran Church and School. Abiding Word's core purpose is to teach the whole of God's Word as commanded by Jesus (Matt 28:19); therefore, we will not shy away from letting God's Word instruct us in all teachings (such as homosexuality, same-sex marriage, evolution, pre-marital sex, drug abuse, and the like) for societal convenience. These biblical truths will be taught in age appropriate ways. Students (or families) openly opposed to these doctrinal teachings will be dismissed on religious basis.

Parents who are not members of our congregation must meet with our pastors. This purpose is for our pastors to acquaint the attendees with the teachings of Holy Scripture as taught and believed by Abiding Word Lutheran Church. Our intent is for parents to be informed of the instruction given their children in school and may better reinforce this instruction in the home.

Students are to sing in the school choir during several church services throughout the school year. If students are unable to attend, then the caregivers are asked to provide a reason for the absence in advance.

Children are expected to participate in Abiding Word's religion curriculum. This includes daily devotions and prayer, weekly chapel services, Bible History lessons, Catechism classes, and the memorization of Bible verses, hymns, and parts of the Lutheran Catechism.

Families that routinely fail to meet these requirements may jeopardize their child's acceptability for re-enrollment.

## **KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

All children having reached the age of five on or before September 1 may enroll in kindergarten. Special requests for early enrollment will be considered upon completion of a kindergarten screening test conducted by our kindergarten teacher.

## **SCHOOL TUITION**

Abiding Word is dedicated to providing cost effective Christian education in a safe, nurturing, Christ-centered environment. Tuition rates, set by the Board of Christian Education, are based on the cost of educating one child for one school year at AWLS. Abiding Word has partnered with FACTS/Nelnet Business Solutions ([www.factsmgmt.com](http://www.factsmgmt.com)) to provide safe, secure, and flexible tuition payment options that include electronic fund transfers from checking accounts and saving accounts.

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

Tuition assistance is available to all school families. FACTS/Nelnet Business Solutions ([www.factsmgmt.com](http://www.factsmgmt.com)) is utilized to determine tuition assistance in an unbiased manner. FACTS is a confidential and reliable organization that helps thousands of private schools across the United States in determining tuition assistance for families. The deadline for applying for tuition assistance is April 15. Applications are filled out and submitted online. New member students enrolling after the April 15 deadline will be granted 14 days to apply for tuition assistance. Tuition assistance will only be granted if there are still assistance funds available. Families submitting late applications will be responsible for the entire monthly tuition amount until FACTS is able to return a tuition recommendation and assistance has been confirmed.

Abiding Word also partners with ACE scholarships. ACE awards scholarships every Spring. The application process can be found on the FACTS website. If awarded this scholarship, it is renewable every year through 12th grade.

## **TUITION INCENTIVES**

Tuition paid in full before the first day of school receives a 5% discount. This only applies to families who pay the full tuition rate with no additional tuition assistance.

Any school family that makes a referral to Abiding Word Lutheran School which results in an enrollment; will be given a credit of \$700 or equal to one month's tuition for their first child. This will be credited after the referred family has been enrolled for two months. If multiple children from the same family are referred, only one incentive will be paid for that referral.

## **TUITION RULES AND FEES**

At the time of enrollment, families may elect to pay their tuition in one of three ways:

- In full before the first day of school. This option receives a 5% discount.
- In 10 equal monthly payments with the first payment due July 20, ending April 20.
- In 2 equal payments, with payments due Aug 20 and January 20.

For all payments other than the first option of payment in full, Abiding Word has partnered with FACTS/Nelnet Business Solutions ([www.factsmgt.com](http://www.factsmgt.com)) to process tuition payments through electronic funds transfer (EFT) from a checking or savings account. An annual, non-refundable FACTS enrollment fee of \$50 is charged to each family by FACTS for EFT payment options. A \$30 returned payment fee is assessed by FACTS if an EFT payment attempt fails. Returned payment fees are assessed for each payment attempt that is returned. For more detail, see Past Due Tuition (Policy FM19) below.

If a multiple child tuition discount is offered, the reduced rate applies to all younger siblings. The first month's tuition payment is non-refundable. A monthly tuition rate is defined as the annual tuition amount divided by 10. Enrolling after July 20th does not exempt the family from prior monthly payments. However, concessions may be made based on circumstance.

Invoice payments are due the first of each month and are considered late after the 8th. A \$25 late fee is assessed by Abiding Word on all invoice payments received by FACTS after the 8th.

Families wishing to use a **credit card** to pay tuition may do so. FACTS will set the account to draw from the credit card. A convenience fee of 2.75% will be added to each payment amount charged to the credit card.

Families who withdraw their student from Abiding Word are responsible for full tuition for the month in which they withdraw their child. Transcripts will be held until all payments are current. Withdrawal is final upon completion of the student withdrawal form.

## **PAST DUE TUITION**

If a family knows there will be an issue with making the next tuition payment, they are expected to contact the principal to make arrangements for an alternate payment plan. This written alternate payment plan may be agreed to by the Board of Christian Education (BOCE) School Financial Secretary or the Chairman of the BOCE. In the event the school tuition becomes past due, the following guidelines shall be followed by the BOCE.

1. After FACTS (or any other company used by AWLS to collect monthly tuition) has made its first attempt at collecting tuition unsuccessfully (20th of the month), Abiding Word expects communication from the family concerning payment, and also expects the past due tuition plus the late fee will be made available for the second attempt to collect (5th of the following month).
2. Should a second attempt to collect the tuition be unsuccessful (5th of the following month), with no alternate payment plan in place, a letter will be sent stating that the affected student(s) will be removed from enrollment as of the 15th of the current month if full payment and late fees haven't been made or an alternate payment plan has not been documented and signed. In the event of hardship, the Board of Christian Education should be contacted.
3. Should an alternate payment plan be in place and not adhered to; enrollment may be terminated.
4. A student may not re-enroll for a new school year if there is an outstanding tuition balance.
5. Tuition accounts not paid in full by the end of the year will result in the holding of report cards and transcripts.

## **RETURNED CHECKS**

Checks unpaid, for any reason, will incur a \$25.00 return check penalty. The payment for which the check was issued, including the penalty, must be paid by cashier's check or money order within seven days of notice by Abiding Word that the check was returned unpaid. Partial payments will not be accepted. In addition, no personal checks will be accepted for the next three months; payments must be made by cashier's check or money order. After three months, personal checks will again be accepted. Any subsequent returned checks will result in a status

of “no personal checks accepted” for all future payments.

If payment is not received within the seven day grace period, a certified “Letter of Demand” will be sent, allowing the account holder ten business days to respond or make restitution. This begins a formal legal collection process.

## **PAYMENT OF CASH**

Receipt of cash is discouraged in the school. Cash will not be accepted for any payment over \$10.00. When cash is accepted for any type of payment, a receipt will be issued to the person making the payment and a copy of the receipt will be retained. This policy applies to all school or parent sponsored sales and projects, and to all tuition and fees. This includes but is not limited to tuition, field trips, athletic fees, book orders, and teacher gifts. Exceptions to this policy include athletic event admissions, concession stand purchases, and Book Fair purchases.

## **PAYMENT WITH CREDIT CARD**

Payment with a credit card will be accepted for the following: admission to events, field trips, SCRIP orders, concessions, athletic fees, merchandise purchases, etc. A convenience fee will apply. Credit Cards may be used for tuition, but must be set up through FACTS. A 2.75% convenience fee will be charged for each payment charged to the credit card.

# *Curriculum and Instruction*

## **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum at Abiding Word seeks to enrich the mind and enlighten the heart through the timeless truths of God’s Word. Abiding Word’s curricular framework is balanced and comprehensive; achieving academic excellence through a comprehensive curriculum that meets or exceeds Texas State Standards. Its design promotes cognitive growth in all of its objectives, activities, strategies, and resources. The curriculum takes into account the wide range of learning styles of its students, offering flexibility to remediate the struggling student while at the same time challenging the gifted learner. The students of Abiding Word will be fully equipped with the tools needed to succeed in and out of the classroom.

Textbooks are evaluated on an ongoing basis and purchased on the basis of curriculum needs in any given subject area. Each year one or more specific areas of the curriculum are researched and evaluated by the teachers and administration. In each curriculum area we review numerous textbooks from both Christian and national publishers. This content area is upgraded with a new textbook series. Teachers are involved in writing curriculum guides and integrating the Christian faith into their lesson structure. A well-rounded program of studies includes religion, memory, mathematics, language arts, social studies, science, physical education, art, music, and computer literacy. All subjects are taught in the light of God’s Word. A more detailed view of our curriculum may be viewed online at [awlcs.org/student-life/academics/](http://awlcs.org/student-life/academics/)

## **ACCREDITATION**

Abiding Word Lutheran School is fully accredited with Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC), the National Council of Private School Accreditation (NCPA), and the WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA). Abiding Word holds an Exemplary Status with WELS School Accreditation. As an **Exemplary Accredited** school, Abiding Word adheres to high standards ensuring a high quality Christian education.



## ACADEMIC REPORTS

Abiding Word is committed to providing parents with up to date academic progress. We use an online grading system and access credentials to that system will be issued to parents at the beginning of each school year. Progress reports will be sent home every two weeks. We ask that you confirm receipt of each progress report by means of signature, text, or verbal confirmation with your child's teacher.

Report cards are issued at the end of each academic quarter. In addition to personal conversations, phone calls, and emails, parent/teacher conferences are held at the end of the first and second quarter to discuss student progress. Additional conferences may be scheduled if deemed necessary by the teacher, or upon request of the caregivers.

## GRADE ADVANCEMENT

Grade advancement will be determined on academic achievement and student readiness for the next grade level. Parents, teachers, and principal are to work together closely in determining if retention or promotion is in the best interest of the child.

## GRADING SCALE

Abiding Word uses the following grading scale:

100-99%	A+	
98-95%	A	
94-93%	A-	
92-91%	B+	
90-87%	B	
86-85%	B-	
84-82%	C+	
81-78%	C	E - Exceptional Work
77-76%	C-	S - Satisfactory Work
75-74%	D+	N - Needs Improvement
73-72%	D	U - Unsatisfactory Work
71-70%	D-	
69-0%	F	

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

As a private school, Abiding Word is exempt from the STARR tests. However, students from 5K-8th grade do test three times a year. Measured Academic Progress (MAP) testing helps teachers and parents to better understand a child's academic ability and current classroom performance, and enables them to set realistic yet high goals for growth over the course of the year. MAP tests also help the faculty of AWLS to evaluate and assess current curriculum and methods of teaching.

Abiding Word recognizes that standardized testing is not a perfect assessment tool; rather, it is simply another means of assessment and will be considered as one piece of an overall picture. A child's daily work, teacher observations, progress reports, and parental observations are all part of that picture. MAP tests seek to provide an indicator of student performance in reading, language, math, and science; as compared to other children of the same age and grade across the United States. Individual results are made available to parents and placed in each student's permanent academic file.

# *Home and School: Partners in Ministry*

## **HOME AND SCHOOL COOPERATION**

The Lord, through his Word, has bound the home and school together as one unit with one and the same purpose when He said, "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."

In order to bring about cooperation in the great and responsible task the Lord has given us, we must be sure of our aims and objectives. It is self-evident that the source of our aims, objectives, and methods of child-training is found in God's infallible Word. Therefore, the roles of teacher, caregiver, and student have been clearly outlined below.

### **As a teacher at Abiding Word Lutheran School, I agree to:**

1. Faithfully teach God's Word in truth and purity, and instruct children on how it applies to his/her life.
2. Help all students in the best way I know how and do whatever I can for them to learn, not only teaching them about God's love in Jesus, but showing it to them.
3. Constantly monitor the strengths, weaknesses, and progress of my students, both academically and behaviorally, and provide academic support on a regular basis.
4. Consistently enforce the code of conduct and school-wide procedures.
5. Communicate respectfully and regularly with my students' parents/guardians, and make myself available to students and families for any concerns they might have.
6. Form meaningful and positive relationships with my students and their families, and collaborate with my colleagues.

### **As a parent or guardian of a child at Abiding Word Lutheran School, I agree to:**

1. Be open to encouragement from Abiding Word Lutheran Church and School staff regarding the Christian education of my child, and my growth in faith and in knowledge of God's Word.
2. Help my child in the best way I know how and do whatever it takes for them to learn.
3. Ensure my child is at school, in his/her desk, and ready to learn by 8:00 a.m.
4. Support Abiding Word staff by encouraging my child to follow the code of conduct and school-wide procedures.
5. Attend parent-teacher conferences, mandatory meetings, and communicate with my child's teacher regularly regarding my child's academic and/or behavioral progress.
6. Stay actively informed about important events and updates at Abiding Word.
7. Support the school and its staff with positive words and actions.
8. Support my child in the completion of homework by providing a regular time and place at night to work.

### **As a student at Abiding Word Lutheran School, I agree to:**

1. Live by Biblical principles as a redeemed child of God, abide by Abiding Word Lutheran School's Code of Conduct, and follow school-wide procedures.
2. Learn more than is expected in the best way I know how and help my fellow students do the same.
3. Demonstrate my Christian character by being a positive influence to the students around me, taking responsibility for my failures, and humbly encouraging others in my success.
4. Complete my homework each night to the best of my ability and leave home ready to hand in homework when entering school each day.
5. Do everything I can to arrive ready for school on time, and be sitting in my seat ready to learn by 8:00 a.m.

## Parent/Staff Conflict Resolution

Christ states, "My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12) If we humble ourselves for our neighbor as Christ humbled himself for us, then we truly strive to serve them in the capacity that is best for them. If we are rooted in Christ, then we can begin to see the needs of our fellow man and how we can best help them; educationally or otherwise. Below are steps that all adults should follow in order to resolve any conflicts they may have with each other at Abiding Word.

1. Clearly identify the conflict between the two parties.
2. Determine the best form of communication.
  - a. Text Message (only if the conflict is a matter of simple miscommunication or a lack of information)
  - b. Phone Call - This should be if a longer explanation is needed. It is possible that any electronic message could be misinterpreted and increase conflict.
  - c. After School pick up – The conflict could possibly be resolved with a brief face-to-face meeting after school.
  - d. Private sit-down – This should be scheduled at a convenient time for both parties.
3. Listen to each other. Allow each other to explain frustrations or concerns.
4. Explain the problem as you see it. Help them to see where you are coming from.
5. Identify common ground. Work to see if the common ground is enough to eliminate the differences of opinion.
6. Resolve the issue.
  - a. Both parties have reached an understanding and the conflict is over.
  - b. The parties don't agree, but the issue is not worth continued conversation. Respectfully agree to disagree. Continue to support each other in the spirit of Christian love.
  - c. The parties disagree but cannot seem to resolve the issue in a sit-down meeting.
    - i. Agree to meet again at a later date if the issue is not pressing.
    - ii. Agree to get administration involved so that a neutral party can assess the situation and help resolve the matter.\*

\* At this juncture, the school board may be asked to help resolve the issue at hand

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of social media by students during school hours is strictly prohibited. Abiding Word teachers are prohibited from interacting on social media with students enrolled at Abiding Word.

Parents should closely monitor their child's social media sites. Should a student post derogatory comments about Abiding Word or its faculty, school disciplinary action may be taken. Should a student post derogatory comments about another AW student, parents will be directed to discuss the situation with their child and the victim's family.

Additionally, it is inappropriate for parents to post abusive or derogatory comments about Abiding Word Lutheran School, its teachers or staff, its program of education, or its students. These actions may result in dismissal from Abiding Word Lutheran School. It is our desire to address challenges with parents through teamwork and a spirit of cooperation.

## CELL PHONE and SMART WATCH USE

Students are allowed to bring cell phones to school. However, the following rules will be enforced.

1. Cell phones are to be powered off and turned into the classroom teacher upon entry into the classroom.

- Smart watches must be turned into the teacher as well.
2. Any communication between parents and students during the school day will be on school phones or a teacher's cell phone.\*
  3. All phones and smart watches will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.
  4. Students may only use their phones to contact parents after school and with expressed permission from their teacher.
  5. Any unauthorized or inappropriate use of cell phones on school property will result in disciplinary action. The phone will also be confiscated and returned to the parent only.

\*It is illegal in Texas to make calls with hand-held cell phones in active school zones. This includes our school parking lot during student drop off and pick up times.

## SCHOOL WIDE RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following rules and regulations have been established so that everything is done in a fitting and orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:40). Teachers may have additional classroom rules for the benefit and well being of their students.

- Carbonated and/or caffeinated drinks are not allowed during lunch or snack.
- Items such as toys, candy, and personal electronics are not allowed in the classroom.
- Cell phones and personal electronic devices must be turned in to the classroom teacher at the beginning of the day.
- Children are only allowed to use the student restrooms on the first and second floors.
- Students are only allowed in the gym with teacher or adult supervision.
- Students may keep a covered water bottle at their desk.
- Students are to walk quietly in the hallways.
- Students are excused from their classroom only with teacher permission (i.e. bathroom, school nurse, etc.).
- Students are expected to help keep our facilities in good order by putting garbage into specified containers, keeping their desk, locker, and shelf area orderly, and reporting any defacing of school property to a teacher.
- Children are allowed to leave school grounds during the day only with written or present parental permission.

## CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE

***2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness."***

In keeping with Abiding Word's mission to develop Christian character and instill self-discipline, faculty and staff members strive to clearly communicate all school rules and classroom guidelines regarding student conduct. These rules and guidelines are shared with the parents at the start of the school year. Conformity to these rules is expected at all times, whether in the classroom, on the playground, or elsewhere on the school campus. Students are expected to follow these rules out of love for God, respect for their teachers, and consideration for their fellow students.

Abiding Word's faculty and staff administer discipline in the spirit of Christian love with the proper application of Law and Gospel. Discipline comes from the word "disciple" – to teach. Discipline is our way of teaching children to make proper choices. It is viewed as loving correction rather than punishment. No form of physical, corporal, or emotionally abusive disciplinary measures are used at any time.

As any disciplinary situations arise, we will approach our concerns with prayer and Christian love, always seeking to

arrive at peaceful and proper solutions that are in the best interests of the child. Disciplinary action will take place under the following guidelines:

- Minor disciplinary matters will be handled by the classroom teacher.
- In the event of a serious infraction or persistent behavior problem, parents will be contacted and a detention will be issued.
- If the classroom teacher is unsuccessful in dealing with a serious infraction or persistent behavior problem, the issue will be handled according to the following steps:
  - The principal, teacher, and parent(s) will meet to discuss the issue. The principal will take fitting measures, including possible suspension.
  - If it becomes necessary, due to the seriousness of the problem, the student may be expelled.

**Reasons for detention may include but are not limited to:**

- Excessive tardiness
- Verbal or non-verbal defiance that seriously disrupts a safe or effective learning environment
- Physical or verbal harassment that is deemed as bullying or threatening behavior
- Repeated minor infractions accompanied by a refusal to repent
- Consistent failure to complete and hand in schoolwork or homework
- Physical fighting or play-fighting to include but is not limited to throwing objects with intent to harm, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, or spitting on

**Detention procedures:**

- Detention is held every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00 pm-4:00pm.
- Students who are issued a detention will receive a note explaining the reason for the detention, and the date the detention is to be served. This note is to be signed by the parent and returned to school the following day. Parents will also be notified via phone call.
- Parents may request a detention be served early. Any change to the scheduled detention date must be approved by the teacher.
- Detention period activities will be restricted to the completion of a detention form, homework assignments, or the reading of assigned books. Talking, eating, and sleeping are not allowed.
- Skipping detention or violating any rules may result in further and more serious consequences.

**Reasons for suspension or expulsion may include but are not limited to:**

- Consistent demonstration and/or promotion of conduct contrary to Christian living
- Excessive truancy
- A student who receives excessive detentions in a semester (more than 3) or a year (more than 6)
- Physical fighting or play-fighting to include but is not limited to throwing objects with intent to harm, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, or spitting on
- Possession or use of a controlled substance or a substance that is otherwise illegal for the use of a minor
- Possession or use of a weapon, fake or real, without the consent of the principal
- Possession or use of an item that has the ability to inflict or cause harm, jeopardizing the safety of the school
- Gross misuse of any form of media that is conduct unbecoming of a Christian
- Theft or unauthorized use of another person's property
- Extreme or repeated cases of vandalism which include but are not limited to: writing on, damaging, or defacing any part of the school building, school grounds, furniture, non-consumable textbooks or other property of the school. Students and/or parents/guardians will be responsible for the cost of cleaning or repairing all defaced or damaged property

## APPEALS PROCESS

Appeals must be made in writing (email or hard copy) to the Principal ([seth.herrmann@awlcs.org](mailto:seth.herrmann@awlcs.org)) no more than ten (10) business days after the notice of expulsion. All appeals should include the following:

- Date
- Your full name
- Your child's full name
- Your contact information
- Reason for the appeal

Upon receiving the appeal the steps are as follows:

1. Interview the classroom teacher
2. Review any evidence related to the situation
3. Staff's eyewitness account (when warranted and if available)
4. Disciplinary notes and history concerning the student
5. Review the disciplinary process that took place regarding the situation
6. Review the parent communication process
7. Review the Family Handbook – Discipline Section
8. Principal turns all pertinent information over to the School Board; whereupon they make official decision over the appeal
9. Principal will contact the home regarding the final decision of the appeal

## GROOMING AND DRESS CODE

It is important that all children come to school neat, clean, and well groomed. Clean clothes and a clean body have a definite influence on student attitude and work ethic. As Christians, we recognize that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and what we wear is a reflection of who we are. In questionable situations, the principal shall have the final decision on what is appropriate. However, the following guidelines have been established to promote a Christ-centered atmosphere at Abiding Word.

### Grooming for Boys and Girls

- Daily hygiene should be maintained for all students. All student's hair should remain natural colors.
- Boys: Hair should be maintained and styled well. Eyes should be visible at all times. The hair length should not extend past the collar of a shirt.
- Girls: Bangs/ hairstyles should also be maintained so the student's eyes are visible.
- Facial hair is not permitted.
- Extreme cuts and styles are not allowed.
- Make-up is reserved for 7th and 8th grade girls only and must be modest and natural in appearance.
- No makeup should be brought to school.
- No tattoos, decals, or unnatural markings on the body will be allowed (If you were not born with it, then it should not be on your body).
- Girls may wear earrings.
  - Dangling earrings may not be longer than an inch. Hoops may be worn, but should not be bigger than the diameter of a quarter.
  - No gage earrings are permitted.
- Body and facial piercings are not allowed.

## Monday - Friday

### 3K-5K

- Abiding Word logo collared polo shirt OR t-shirt (Cougar Blue, Blue, or Black)
- Khaki pants, khaki knee-length skirt or khaki knee-length jumper
- Socks (worn with khaki pants)\*
- White tights, White ankle, or white knee socks (worn with khaki skirt and jumper)
- Casual or athletic shoes (no boots, crocs, moccasins, open toe, or open heel)
- Black or brown belt is optional.

**\*all bottoms may have elastic waistbands**

### 1st- 2nd

- Abiding Word logo collared polo shirt (Cougar Blue, Blue, or Black)
- Khaki pants, khaki knee-length skirt, khaki knee-length jumper\*
- Socks (worn with khaki pants)
- White tights, white ankle, or white knee socks (worn with khaki skirt and jumper)
- Casual or athletic shoes (no boots, crocs, moccasins, open toe, or open heel)
- Black or brown belt is optional.

**\*all bottoms may have elastic waistbands**

### 3rd-8th

#### **GIRLS (all clothes are to be clean, fitted, neither tattered nor torn)**

- Abiding Word logo collared polo shirt (Cougar Blue, White, or Black)
- Khaki Pants, capris, shorts, skirts, skorts, and jumpers must be properly fitted and worn at the waist. (NO tight pants, jeggings, or skinny jeans allowed)
- Brown or black belt (only mandatory for pants/capris/shorts)
- White or black socks\*
- Casual or athletic shoes (no boots, crocs, moccasins, open toe, or open heel)

**\*color or pattern does not matter when worn with khaki pants**

#### **BOYS (all clothes are to be clean, fitted, neither tattered nor torn)**

- Abiding Word logo collared polo shirt (Cougar Blue, Blue, or Black)\*
- Khaki – Pants or Shorts
- Pants and shorts must be properly fitted and worn at the waist.
- Brown or black belt (only mandatory for pants/shorts)
- White or black socks\*
- Casual or athletic shoes (no boots, crocs, moccasins, open toe, or open heel)

**\* polos must be tucked in at all times except for recess or physical activity**

**\*color or pattern does not matter when worn with khaki pants**

**All grades : Any outside wear (Sweatshirts, long-sleeve jackets, etc.) must be plain, have an Abiding Word logo, or a logo that does not exceed 2" by 2". Additionally, outside wear may only be worn inside with the teacher's permission.**

### **Physical Education Class Dress Code**

All students must wear athletic type tennis shoes for physical education class.

Students in grades 5-8 must wear proper athletic attire for physical education class. This includes athletic type tennis shoes, properly fitted shorts or sweatpants, and a plain T-shirt or sweatshirt. Logos are not to exceed 2"x2".

### **Wednesday Dress Code Option for 1st-8th grade**

Students who have an AW shirt with the current year's theme may wear that shirt with properly fitted jeans (no rips, tears, or tatters).

### **Dress Code Violation**

In the event of a student violating the grooming and dress code the following steps of correction will take place:

1. The first major violation per quarter (any violation that cannot be immediately remedied by the student) will result in a dress code reminder and a phone call to the parent(s) to discuss the violation. If possible, the student will be provided with school clothing to correct the violation.
2. The second major and subsequent violations per quarter will result in a phone call to the parent(s) to discuss the violation, and a detention will be issued. If possible, the student will be provided with school clothing to correct the violation.
3. Multiple (5 or more) major or minor violations in a quarter will require a parent meeting and may result in a suspension.

## **COMMUNICATION FROM SCHOOL**

Abiding Word recognizes that communication between home and school is critical for student success and family enjoyment. Abiding Word publishes Paw Prints, a weekly newsletter, which provides parents with school and classroom information. Paw Prints is emailed home the first school day of every week. At times, other memos are sent home to inform families of special events. Abiding Word maintains a Facebook site with up to date information. School and classroom information is also available at our website: [www.awlcs.org](http://www.awlcs.org)

## **RECESS**

Abiding Word recognizes the value of recess for all students in grades K-8. Recess provides a mental break from academic studies and promotes physical fitness. The following recess guidelines have been established to promote student safety:

- Recess is supervised by a teacher and/or teacher aide at all times.
- Children are expected to participate in recess activities unless a written excuse is sent by a parent, guardian, or doctor.
- Playground and athletic equipment is to be treated with care and respect.
- Injuries, even of the slightest nature, are to be reported to the supervising teacher and treated by the school personnel.

## **SINGING IN CHURCH**

The students of Abiding Word are expected to sing with the school choir on occasion at Abiding Word Lutheran Church. This is an opportunity to put their faith into action through song. Parents are always notified of singing times with an annual calendar and via weekly Paw Prints. In the event a child is unable to attend a scheduled singing date, parents are to notify the music teacher. When singing in worship, a special dress code will apply (see **"Sunday Dress Code"** in the dress code policy above).



## CHURCH ATTENDANCE

*"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" Psalm 122:1.* Abiding Word recognizes weekly worship as an opportunity for families to be spiritually nourished and strengthened by Word and Sacrament. In addition, regular worship helps establish good spiritual habits for children that they will take with them into adulthood. Families are encouraged to attend church at their home congregation on a regular basis. Families are also invited to worship at Abiding Word on a regular basis.

## WEEKLY CHAPEL

Weekly chapel services are held every Friday morning at 8:15am in the church sanctuary. This is an opportunity for the student body, faculty, and parents to gather together for worship, singing, and prayer. In addition, students are encouraged to bring an offering to chapel as a way to show their love to God. Chapel offerings are used to support mission projects in the United States and around the world.

## PARENTAL HELP

Parental involvement is critical for a child's enjoyment of school. The following tips will help you and your child enjoy school and experience success:

- Let God's Word guide your family in all phases of daily life.
- Have regular family devotions and prayer.
- Attend church regularly as a family.
- Encourage your child to be respectful and courteous to teachers and fellow students.
- Discourage your child from bringing distracting items to school.
- Refrain from being critical of school procedures in front of children.
- Show your child through your own involvement and concern that school is important.

# *Student Services*

## EXTENDED CARE

Abiding Word operates an extended care program. For further information regarding extended care and its rates, please contact the school office at 281-895-7048.

## TECHNOLOGY

Abiding Word Lutheran School views technology use as a 21st century literacy skill. Therefore, the use of computers and other internet connected devices has been integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. Abiding Word Lutheran School has created a safe and nurturing digital environment for student learning by implementing several layers of protection. Parents should review the Abiding Word Lutheran School Technology acceptable use policy with their child. **Because of the integration of technology into our curriculum, parents and students are required to sign and return the Internet and Acceptable Use Policy.** Students may not use school technology without the parent's/guardian's authorization to use school technology.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Abiding Word recognizes the value of educational field trips. Throughout the school year, children have the opportunity to attend educational field trips. Parents are informed of such trips via classroom notes and are required to sign a permission slip allowing their child to attend. In addition, some field trips require a fee. Parents may also be asked to chaperone and/or assist with driving responsibilities. Teachers will be in charge of assigning students to parent chaperones. A parent chaperone should have a cell phone to take on the field trip. Students are not allowed to have cell phones or other electronics on field trips. In the event a parent volunteers to drive for a field trip, he/she is required to complete a safe driver form, fill out a volunteer form, and agree to a simple background check prior to the day of the event. Students are required to wear their field trip shirts for field trips and are reminded to behave in a Christian manner at all times.

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Each Fall AWLS informs parents/guardians of their legal rights in relation to school records. Should you have a question about school records please consult the school principal.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

In our athletic program, our coaches encourage students to develop personal commitment, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Abiding Word offers organized after-school athletic programs including co-ed soccer, volleyball, cheer, basketball, and track are offered as interscholastic sports for all boys and girls in grades 5-8. Students in grades 3/4 have the opportunity to participate in Junior Cougar soccer, volleyball, cheer, and basketball. This is an "in house" program that provides skill development and competition. Other activities such as science fairs, forensics, fine arts fairs, math contests, geography bees, spelling bees, tone chimes, choirs, plays, and musicals may be sponsored by the school during the year.

Active participation in athletics strengthens friendships, enhances team building skills, improves coordination and strength, and promotes physical well-being. The children ultimately learn to view sports competition as both fun and rewarding. Dates and times are released seasonally.

To remain eligible to play interscholastic sports, a student must maintain a C average, and may have no lower than a C- in any class. Eligibility will be assessed every two weeks. In the event of academic ineligibility, a student must sit out of games and practices until the next eligibility assessment. In the event that a student is ineligible for more than half the season of any sport, they will forfeit their roster position.

# *Student Health*

## **HEALTH RECORDS**

Abiding Word keeps health records for each student and strongly recommends a yearly physical and dental exam for each child. Documentation of all required immunizations are to be provided to Abiding Word prior to enrollment. In addition, documentation of subsequent immunizations after enrollment should be turned in to the school office. Valid immunization records require a doctor's signature or clinic stamp including the child's date of birth. By State law, the following immunizations are required:

- DPaT-Five (5) doses required with the last one (1) dose on or after 4th birthday, (For children born before

1997 only 4 doses are required). After these, Td is required at age 14, or ten (10) years after the last dose.

- Polio-Series of three (3) with one (1) dose on or after 4th birthday.
- Measles (Rubella)-Two (2) doses- by their 5th birthday.
- Rubella-one (1) dose on or after first birthday.
- Mumps-one (1) dose on or after first birthday.
- TB skin test-All students are to have had one (1) within one (1) year of entering or re-entering Abiding Word.
- HibCV (haemophilus influenza type B conjugated vaccine) one (1) dose received between 15 months and five years of age.
- Hepatitis B-Students born on or after September 2, 1992 are required to have three (3) doses by their 5th birthday.
- Varicella (chicken pox) – For children born on or after September 2, 1988, or a statement of serologic evidence, or a written statement from the physician or parent stating the approximate date the child had the disease.
- HEP A– Two (2) doses by 5th birthday, with the first dose received on or after the first birthday.
- Meningococcal– One(1) dose in seventh grade, one(1) dose in eighth grade.

## **VISION AND HEARING SCREENING**

Abiding Word conducts a free vision and hearing screening for all students in grades K-8 by a State Registered Screener. Parents are provided with a copy of the screening results upon request.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Students who require medication during the school day will be administered such medication by the School secretary under the following guidelines:

- Parents must complete a Medication Authorization form available in the school office.
- Children are not allowed to keep any medication in their possession at school. All medication must be checked in at the school office.
- Prescription medication should be in a pharmacy container labeled with the child's name, directions, and dosage. Most pharmacies will provide an extra container for school purposes.
- Over the counter medications, any product with a warning "Keep out of the reach of children", will only be administered according to package directions unless alternate directions are received by a physician. Over the counter medications need to be in the original packaging with the directions, dosage, active ingredients and expiration date clearly listed along with the students name.
- Any medication left at school at the end of the school year will be destroyed. Abiding Word is not responsible or liable for any reaction suffered from any type of medication given in accordance to package or physician directions.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

From time to time there are health concerns that arise that require guidelines as to when a child can return to school. The following is a general listing. However, your physician may advise differently for individual conditions and should be consulted if you have any questions.

- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye) -Child should be kept home until there is no more discharge from the eye.
- Head Lice -Child should be kept home until a treatment of medicated shampoo or lotion has been applied and there are no nits (eggs of lice) to be found.
- Impetigo, Scabies, Ringworm -Child should be kept home until treatment has begun and measures are taken to cover the affected areas from coming in contact with others.
- Strep Throat -Child should be kept home until body temperature is within normal range and antibiotic treatment is in its second day.
- Bacterial, Viral, Influenza (or illnesses affecting respiratory or digestive systems) -Child should be kept home until body temperature is within normal range and no vomiting has occurred for 24 hours.
- Fevers and Vomiting -Child should be kept home until body temperature is within normal range and no vomiting has occurred for 24 hours.
- Other illnesses lasting longer than three days should be treated by a doctor with a recommendation on when to return to school.

## **ASBESTOS REGULATIONS**

Abiding Word Lutheran School was constructed without the use of any asbestos-filled materials. However, in accordance with EPA regulations the school does keep on file an AHERA asbestos management plan. For any questions concerning this matter, please contact the school office.

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

An Abiding Word Crisis Management Plan (CMP) has been formulated in the event of any threat to its students, teachers, staff and or physical plant. This multi-hazard management plan shall encompass, but not be limited to, evacuations for fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other hazardous storms or disasters in which serious bodily injury might occur (hostage siege, terrorist activities, bomb threats, etc.) The plan for lockdowns, sheltering-in-place, and evacuations shall be reviewed annually for each school building.

The Crisis Management Plan shall be reviewed annually and updated as needed. The Crisis Management Plan will assist teachers, school administrators and others in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergency incidents on school grounds.

## **SEVERE WEATHER**

Unless otherwise notified by Abiding Word Lutheran School, we will follow the Spring ISD's announcement regarding school closure and openings.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS AND REPORTING**

In compliance with state regulations, evacuation fire drills are performed once a month. Tornado and lockdown drills are practiced once per year or at administrative discretion. For the safety of all, detailed drill procedures are shared and periodically reviewed in each classroom.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Medical Emergency**

Upon an injury to a student on school grounds, the faculty will give immediate attention to the child, caring for both physical and emotional trauma. Contact a parent if there are any questions regarding the child's condition. When contacting a parent, the faculty will use their discretion as to the seriousness of the injury. Upon no response from a parent, the faculty will call the emergency contact person listed on the student's registration forms. Begin observation of the child as long as the child remains on school premises. The faculty's responsibility for the child will continue until a parent or emergency contact person arrives at school. In the event that a parent or emergency contact person cannot be reached, the responsibility of medical care will be given to the principal.

### **Fire Emergency**

Fire drills are conducted monthly. During fire drills, students learn classroom procedures, escape routes, and the location of safety areas.

### **Tornado Emergency**

Tornado drills are conducted in the fall and spring of the year. During tornado drills, students learn classroom procedures and the location of designated emergency areas in the building.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, Abiding Word will follow the Spring Independent School District closings. Please carefully monitor the radio, television, or internet for information.

# *Student Attendance*

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

Classes for Kindergarten through Grade 8 begin at 8:00am and conclude at 3:00pm.

School doors open at 7:40 am to welcome students to another day of learning. Children should arrive in time to prepare for the school day and be ready for devotion by 8:00am. A student arriving after the 8:00am bell will be marked tardy. Five marked tardies in a quarter results in a student detention. Students arriving before 7:40 am must be supervised by their caregivers, otherwise they will be placed into Before Care at the parent's expense.

Classes are dismissed at 3:00 pm. Students should be picked up by 3:15pm. Students who are not picked up by 3:15pm will be placed in Extended Care, if they are currently registered for Extended Care. Students who are not enrolled in Extended Care will remain with a supervising teacher. The family will be charged \$5 for every 15 minutes that the parents are late.

## ATTENDANCE

State law requires that all school age children are to attend school regularly during the full period of hours that the school is in session. Abiding Word expects students to be regular in their school attendance. Each school day runs from 8:00am-3:00pm for grades K-8. Occasionally the entire school observes a half day. (8:00am-12:00pm) These days are listed on the School Calendar or announced through the weekly note.

Regular attendance is the first step in ensuring academic success. In order for students to reach his/her personal best, they must show up and make their strongest effort at school each and every day. Generally speaking our instructional time exceeds the state requirements, our expectations for our students are higher, and our curriculum is accelerated. Being at school every day is essential for students to keep pace. Missing school due to student illness, serious health problems, or a death in the family are considered acceptable absences. We ask that you do not allow your child to miss a day of school except for the reasons stated.

**Definition of an Absence:** A student is considered absent if he/she arrives after 10:00 a.m. or leaves school before 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**All Absences – “Excused” and “Unexcused” – Are Considered Absences:** Any scheduled school day your child does not attend is considered an absence; regardless of circumstance. We expect and appreciate a call or written note from the caregiver. We request a doctor’s note if the student is out sick for longer than two full days. Contact can be made by phone, a note sent in with a sibling, an email, or in person. If we don't hear from you by 8:30 a.m., you can expect a phone call from us. Verbal explanations by brothers or sisters will not be acceptable. If no contact is made by 10:00 a.m., then the absent child will be marked as unexcused.

It is the sole responsibility of the caregiver to collect any work missed by the child and to see to it that the work is completed as soon as possible. Students absent from school will have the number of days absent plus one to complete missing assignments. Assignments submitted beyond the acceptable timeframe will be considered late and graded accordingly.

**Don’t Miss School for Appointments:** We ask caregivers to schedule their child’s medical/dental appointments outside of school time. The best times for scheduling such activities are after school hours or days when school is not in session. In the rare case that a student has an appointment during school, he/she should not be absent for the entire day.

## TARDINESS

Success in school, as in life, starts at the beginning of each day. Tardiness and/or not being ready to begin school on time is not acceptable. It results in students missing essential instructions, disrupts the learning of others, and ultimately puts student’s academic success at risk. Therefore, every tardy your child acquires will result in a consequence.

**Tardy:** The school doors open at 7:40 am and students are expected to be in their classrooms by 8am. Students who arrive after their expected time will be considered tardy. There is no distinction between excused or unexcused tardies. All tardies, regardless of circumstance, will be counted. Students will receive a consequence from the classroom teacher for each tardy. It is appreciated when the caregivers call and let the school know if or when they will be tardy.

**Truancy:** Truancy means any absence of one or more days from school for no legal cause. Every teacher is required by the state to keep records of truancies and report cases to the Principal. Legal authorities may be contacted regarding a child’s truancy.

## RECORDING TARDIES AND ABSENCES

A child will be considered tardy if he/she arrives at school after 8:00am but before 10am.

A child will be given a ½ day absence if he/she arrives at school after 10:00 am or leaves school prior to 2pm on a normal school day. Acceptable communication by the parents must be made with the school. Failure by the parents to make acceptable communication to excuse a child for excessive tardiness or early dismissal will result in a full day unexcused absence.

**Tardiness – Consequences:** Classroom teachers are responsible for issuing appropriate consequences for a student being tardy. Chronic tardiness of twenty (20) or more tardies will result in caregivers meeting with the principal; upon which an action plan will be established.

Students exceeding thirty (30) tardies in a school year will result in a second meeting between the principal and caregivers to discuss the future of the student’s enrollment at Abiding Word.

### **Attendance – Consequences:**

- **5 absences in a year** are considered problematic. The caregivers will have a meeting with their child’s teacher and discuss ways to ensure better attendance.
- **10 absences in a year** are considered a serious issue. The parents/guardians will be called to meet with the principal. An action plan will be developed and discussed with the parent.
- **15 absences in a year** are considered a chronic issue and will result in a second meeting with the principal. At this point, the purpose will be to discuss your child’s future at Abiding Word.

## *Final Thoughts*

Abiding Word Lutheran School is committed to providing your child with a quality Christ-centered education. Above all, we pray that your child will grow in faith and love of Jesus Christ as his/her Savior. May home and school work together to this end!