

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Academy for the Fine Arts
www.fcpsartsacademy.org

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2022-2023



*Reach through enrichment, Challenge through extension,
Prepare through experience*

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WELCOME TO THE AFA!

We are excited to work with you this school year and look forward to the many opportunities we will have to challenge each other, grow, and become better artists and contributing members of our society. We have high expectations for every student as we want everyone to reach his or her full potential before moving on to the next step whether that be college, a career, or time evaluating options.

In order to get the most out of your experience here, be prepared to take ownership of your learning, take risks, and accept constructive feedback designed to highlight your strengths as well as areas for improvement.

One unique thing about the AFA that sets it apart from traditional arts programs is that it is a community of artists consisting of members from all ten FCPS high schools. In this community, musicians, dancers, actors, painters, sculptors, and photographers regularly interact to push the boundaries of creativity and view the world multiple perspectives. This type of interaction has the potential to produce some amazing results; however, without guidelines and expectations, we quickly lose track of how our actions and behaviors impact everyone else around us.

Please read through the guidelines set forth in this handbook carefully and understand that they are in place to ensure that expectations remain high, artistic presentation remains excellent, and the collaborative culture of this program remains healthy and open to everyone's ideas and perspectives.

We look forward to a wonderful school year together!

Sincerely,

The AFA Team

AFA STAFF

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ARTIST CODE OF CONDUCT

- **Professionalism:** Students will understand and hold themselves to a high level of personal discipline, and hold themselves accountable for the rigorous expectations necessary to succeed as a performing artist. Students will learn how to engage with their discipline as a budding professional level working artist, so that they are equipped to handle and engage appropriately with real world, professional/collegiate arts settings.
- **Participation:** A cornerstone and necessary element of arts training is its regular physical practice and engagement. Students are expected to be in class regularly and participate in all class activities with performance quality energy and commitment. Students should be prepared to give their full attention to their classwork.
- **High Quality of Effort and Rigor:** To become a better artist means that students must consistently participate fully and exert themselves both physically and mentally in their class activities. It is not enough to just “go through the motions,” or to “phone it in,” so to speak, but to understand (and practice it accordingly) that arts training requires a consistent high quality of effort and commitment to improving. This may also mean that a student may make mistakes, but mistakes (and the experience of making them) are a necessary component to learning. The expectation is that students want to learn and improve.
- **Collegiality & Conduct:** Students’ conduct and behavior in class is conducive to a smooth and effective classroom environment, and in alignment with classroom etiquette and class conduct. Above all else, students will have respect for themselves and respect for their peers, and take responsibilities for their actions. Collegiality among peers is critical. Because of the amount of time that will be spent together throughout the year, students should see their time together as a privilege and lift each other up with praise and constructive advice.
- **AFA Ambassadorship:** Students represent the Frederick County Public Schools’ Academy for the Fine Arts both in class and in public. During performances, workshops, and fieldtrips, it is expected that they will conduct themselves in such a manner that illustrates the exemplary nature of the program and upholds our high standards. Kindness, acceptance, and encouragement of other schools and participants is required and is a reflection of the AFA. Taking advantage of this exceptional opportunity should be a priority in all we do.

AFA Tentative Calendar 22-23
AFA Tentative Calendar 22-23

Key: Theatre Events; Dance Events; Music Events; Art Events; Musical Theatre Events
Full AFA Events

AUGUST	
Wed Aug 17th	First Day of School

SEPTEMBER	
Sat Sept 10th	In the Streets Festival, Downtown Frederick
Wed Sept 14th	Shadow Day

OCTOBER	
Wed Oct 12th	Shadow Day
Tues Oct 18th	AFA Cabaret

NOVEMBER	
Wed Nov 9th	Shadow Day
Nov 7th-11th	AFA Silent Auction
Tues Nov 15th	AFA Music Recital
Nov 17th-20th	AFA NYC Trip
Thurs Nov 30th	AFA Theatre Performance

DECEMBER	
Sat Dec 3rd	AFA Art Show (tentative)
Wed Dec 14th	Shadow Day
Thurs Dec 15th	AFA Dance Recital
Tues Dec 20th	AFA Dance Recital SNOW Date

JANUARY	
Fri Jan 6th	State HS Dance Festival
Thursday Jan 12th	AFA Musical Theatre Performance

Wed Jan 18th	Shadow Day
Fri Jan 20th	AFA Apps Due

FEBRUARY	
Sat Feb 11th	AFA Auditions
Sat Feb 25th	AFA Auditions

MARCH	
March 1st-5th	National High School Dance Festival
Wed March 8th	Middle School Shadow Day

APRIL	
Sat April 1st	AFA First Saturday Showcase Downtown
Tues April 25th	All County Dance Rehearsal and Performance
Thurs April 27th	AFA Music Recital

MAY	
Wed May 3rd	AFA Theatre Performance
Thursday May 4th	AFA Musical Theatre Performance
Tues May 11th	AFA Dance Recital
Mon May 15th	AFA Senior Banquet/Awards

JUNE	
Wed June 7th	Last day for all (includes 5 built in snow days)

AFA SCHEDULE

AM Focus Areas	
Blended Learning Time	7:30-8:00
Period 1	8:00-9:00
Period 2	9:05-10:05
1 Hour Delay	
Classes begin one hour later than normal. Dismissal occurs at normal time.	
2 Hour Delay	
Blended Learning Time	9:30-10:00
Period 1	10:00-10:30
Period 2	10:35-11:05
2 Hour Early Dismissal	
Blended Learning Time	7:30-8:00
Period 1	8:00-8:30
Period 2	8:35-9:05
PM Focus Areas	
Blended Learning Time	11:00-11:30
Period 1	11:30-12:30
Period 2	12:30-1:30
1 Hour Delay	
Classes begin one hour later than normal. Dismissal occurs at normal time.	
2 Hour Delay	
Blended Learning Time	12:00-12:30
Period 1	12:30-1:00
Period 2	1:00-1:30
2 Hour Early Dismissal	
Blended Learning Time	10:00-10:30
Period 1	10:30-11:00
Period 2	11:00-11:30

COMMUNICATION

Info about AFA events, assignments, and other issues is communicated regularly through the following mediums. Please subscribe and ensure your contact info is accurate in our system:

- **Email:** if you are currently not receiving emails about the AFA, please contact jonathan.kurtz@fcps.org to ensure your info is correct in our system.
- **Twitter:** follow @ArtsAcademyFCPS to see the great things are students are doing!
- **Facebook:** search for Arts Academy FCPS
- **Website:** www.fcpsartsacademy.org
- **Schoology**
- **Instagram:** artsacademyfcps

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is the single biggest predictor of student success in high school. It is viewed as an important commitment that a student makes when applying for admission to the AFA. The quality of the student's educational experience is diminished with each absence from school. An absent student misses the subtle meanings and explanations which are obtained through the classroom experience.

Our students are expected to adhere to the following attendance policy:

- All AFA students are expected to be **on school property by 7:30am**. Students who use morning transportation are expected to be at their home high schools by 7:30am to catch the morning shuttle. All staff have a list of morning shuttle riders and bus arrival times so that attendance can be taken fairly. Students who drive themselves or are dropped off must be in their classroom by 7:30am.
- During Blended Learning Time, students **MUST** check in with their focus area teacher **FIRST** before collaborating with students in other focus areas.
- Students with **more than five unlawful absences in any 9-week grading period** will automatically fail for that grading period.
- **Excessive tardiness (3 or more in a 9 week grading period)** will result in administrative intervention and may result in removal from the Academy for the Fine Arts.
 - Students who arrive late, except for school bus problems or home school schedules, must immediately report to the Front Office/Attendance Office with written verification of their lateness by either an Admit Slip from their home school or a "lateness" note from their parent/guardian. Students who arrive late by driving must have the required written driving permission (see the Student Driving Policy.)
 - The following disciplinary procedure will be followed in dealing with students who are unexcused tardy to school and/or classes:

1 st UNEXCUSED TARDY/TERM.....	Discussion with student by teacher
2 nd UNEXCUSED TARDY/TERM.....	Parent Contact by teacher
3 rd SUBSEQUENT UNEXCUSED TARDIES.....	Referral to administration

When a student is absent or late, it is important to communicate with **BOTH** your home high school attendance secretary **AND** Gov. Thomas Johnson High's attendance secretary to ensure that records are accurate. AFA attendance reports will be run regularly to ensure that students are meeting expectations. The attendance secretary for Gov. Thomas Johnson High is Marcia Tessier (tjhs.attendance@fcps.org, 240-236-8222).

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

In order to be enrolled in the AFA, students must successfully apply and audition meeting the specified requirements outlined for each focus area. The following are considered when selecting students for the AFA:

- Writing quality in application
- Academic rigor and success documented in transcript
- Completion of intro level arts course
- Quality of audition performance/portfolio review
- Interpersonal skills during interview.

Admitted AFA Student

- Any 10th-12th grader who successfully applies and auditions for the AFA will be granted admission into the AFA.
- All students admitted into the AFA have the choice to:
 - Attend TJ High in the morning and their home school in the afternoon
 - Transfer full time to TJ High School
- Students wishing to attend TJ High full time MUST complete the Out of District request form each year. The form can be found at www.fcps.org
- *Continued attendance at TJ High for out of district students is contingent upon continued participation in the AFA.*
- In general, AFA students do not have to reapply to continue within their focus areas; however, if students are not demonstrating growth, are on probation, or are demonstrating poor habits of work, AFA staff have the right to ask students to re-audition in order to re enroll for the next school year

BUS TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY FCPS

FCPS allows students of the AFA to apply for access to the CTC shuttles that run in the morning from each home high school to GTJHS and in the afternoon from GTJHS back to each home school. It is important to note that **seating on these buses is limited to students who applied for it on their enrollment form and were given approval.** Students who ride these shuttles without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action.

If a student misses the shuttle at either the home high school or GTJHS, the student must report to the main office of that school for further instruction. Shuttles are on a very tight time schedule and will always leave and depart on time with or without all students on board. **It is the responsibility of the student to be at the shuttle stops ON TIME EVERY DAY.**

STUDENT DRIVING/PARKING

Driving to the AFA is a privilege. The privilege to drive is subject to the following conditions:

- **Students may not transport other students to or from GTJHS. Violation of this rule will result in disciplinary action and/or loss of driving privileges.**
- Students may only park in the designated student parking area. (spots marked with white painted lines on the south and west sides of the school)
- The speed limit on school property is not to exceed 15MPH. (FCPS POLICY.)
- Parking lots are off limits except when students are arriving and departing from GTJHS
- Students must enter and leave the AFA from the auditorium entrance. Late arrivals must enter via the main entrance and check in with the attendance office.
- Cars are to be locked at ALL times. (FCPS POLICY.)
- Students may not loiter in the parking lot or sit in cars during the school day.
- The school administration has the right to reasonable search of all vehicles.
- The school is not responsible for damage to vehicles or loss of contents while on school property.
- The dismissal time for students driving will be the same as their regularly scheduled dismissal from the AFA.
- A TJ HIGH Parking Pass must be displayed in your car while on school property.

To obtain a TJ High Parking Pass, see Deb Vance in the main office to complete the parking application. If students have already paid for a parking pass at their home high school, there will be no charge for the TJ High Parking Pass.

REQUEST FOR EARLY DISMISSAL

On occasion students have a need to leave the AFA prior to scheduled dismissal time. In these rare circumstances, a written request from the parent/guardian, on an Early Dismissal Pass from the home school must be presented to the student's AFA teacher prior to the beginning of class. Written requests from parents/guardians must include the following: date, time requested to leave school, reason for request, student name, phone number where parent may be contacted to confirm, and parental signature. Students who will be leaving by driving themselves must also follow the rules of the Student Driving Policy. If returning the same day the student must report to the Front/Attendance Office for re-admittance to school.

WITHDRAW FROM THE AFA AND TRANSFER BETWEEN FOCUS AREAS

Students wishing to withdraw from the AFA must see the AFA Coordinator to complete a withdrawal form. Withdraw from the program is easiest if implemented at the semester or the end of the year. If a special circumstance arises, students may be allowed to leave the program in the middle of the term. If the student later decides to return to the AFA, the student must reapply, re-audition, and be admitted.

If a student wishes to transfer to a different focus area, the student must finish the year in his or her current focus area, complete the online application for the new focus area, and successfully audition. If the student is accepted into the new focus area, the student then has the choice to remain in the current focus area or enter the new one. Once a student leaves a focus area, he or she must re-audition to return to it at a later time.

MATURITY IN THE ARTS

In order for students to receive a well-rounded education and understand the arts within proper historical and societal contexts, material will be presented at times that may: contain images of nudity, involve sensitive language, involve discussions of difficult concepts like racism, drug use, abuse, suicide, mental illness, and other topics. In any circumstance, AFA staff will always strive to present a variety of perspectives and viewpoints and will teach students effective strategies for participating in civil discourse. If at any time students feel uncomfortable with the material being presented in class, they should inform their instructor.

GRADING

Students receive the best instruction the AFA is capable of providing. The teaching-learning process requires the active cooperation between student and teacher to produce positive results. Learning is an active process and unless students work at gaining knowledge and skill "...no genuine learning ever occurs, no matter what teachers try to do to make it occur (Adler)."

The instructional staff will maintain a record of each student's work and progress on a regular basis. It is recommended that the record contain at least one to two grades per week. Grading will be done in a professional and equitable manner and will accurately reflect the student's achievement. Grading is guided by a specific and precise written plan prepared by the instructor and shared with the student which reflects Frederick County Public Schools' regulations and industry standards.

Grading in all courses and programs will adhere to Frederick County Public School's Regulation 500-5.

All AFA Courses are weighted. Success in these courses produces a high GPA, but poor performance in a weighted course can significantly lower a student's GPA.

The Principal is the final authority in all appeals and disputes concerning grades for all students at the Academy for the Fine Arts.

AFA Students must meet the following grading expectations to remain in the program:

- Maintain a 2.5 GPA overall
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA in AFA courses
- A final grade of a D or F in any AFA course is prohibited.

Failure to meet these grading requirements will result in academic probation and possibly removal from the program.

LATE WORK

All student work is expected to be submitted on time.

The classroom teacher always has the option to accept late work based on various circumstances, but is not obligated to do so.

It is the responsibility of the student to communicate early and often with AFA staff if work is not going to be submitted on time or situations arise that will prevent work from being completed.

HABITS OF WORK RUBRIC

Topic	4	3	2	1	0
<p style="text-align: center;">Professionalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students hold themselves to a high level of personal discipline. ● Students hold themselves accountable for the rigorous expectations necessary to succeed. ● Students engage in their discipline as a budding professional level working artist. ● Students strive to engage appropriately with real world, professional, and collegiate arts settings. 	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not enough effort was present to evaluate.
<p style="text-align: center;">Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students participate in all class activities with performance quality energy and commitment. ● Students give their full attention to their classwork. ● Students are on-time and prepared for class, rehearsals, and performances. 	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not enough effort was present to evaluate.
<p style="text-align: center;">High Quality of Efforts and Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students participate fully and exert themselves both physically and mentally in their class activities. ● Students accept criticism with grace, understanding that mistakes and criticism promote individual artistic growth. ● Students push themselves individually to consistently learn and improve. 	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not enough effort was present to evaluate.
<p style="text-align: center;">Collegiality and Conduct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student conduct and behavior in class is conducive to a smooth and effective classroom environment. ● Students exhibit proper etiquette and class conduct. ● Students respect themselves, their peers, and diversity of thoughts, opinions, and cultures. ● Students take responsibility for their actions. ● Students exhibit an understanding that time together is a privilege and creates a supportive, praise worthy, and constructive environment. 	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not enough effort was present to evaluate.
<p style="text-align: center;">AFA Ambassadorship and Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During performances, workshops, and field trips, students conduct themselves in such a manner that illustrates the exemplary nature of the AFA program and upholds our high standards. ● Students exhibit kindness, acceptance, and encouragement of other schools and programs. ● Students exhibit leadership skills both collaboratively and independently. 	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not enough effort was present to evaluate.

CONCERNS AND CONFLICTS

Occasionally, concerns or disagreements arise in the classroom amongst students or between students and staff. When these situations occur, the following steps should be taken.

1. Attempt to resolve the issue with the other party first (student or teacher) and make sure the other party understands that there is a concern or a conflict. If someone is unaware that an issue exists, then there is no chance to remedy the problem. Transparent communication is difficult, but extremely important to the viability of an artistic community.
2. If a discussion with the other party is not possible or the results of that discussion are unsatisfactory, contact should be made with an administrator.
3. If the results of the administrative discussion are unsatisfactory, students and parents may follow the grievance procedures outlined below:
 1. The grievance should be solved at the lowest level if possible. (Between student and instructor)
 2. If the grievance is not solved at level I, the student or instructor must write the complaint on a Grievance form, which may be obtained in the Guidance Office or the Front Office.
 - a. The complaint must be a specific violation of the Responsibilities and Rights Document.
 - b. All information must be provided on the form. (Requested redress should be included)
 3. The Student/Faculty Grievance Committee will meet to hear pertinent witnesses as necessary.
 - Written records of the grievance hearings will be maintained.
 - The decision of the committee should be made to the principal.
 - The decision of the committee should be made no later than 10 days after receipt of the complaint.
 4. The maximum time between an alleged violation and the filing of a written grievance will be one (1) week.
 5. The student or teacher filing a complaint will be notified of the committee actions in all cases. All the committee actions will be posted in the proper manner in order that all students may be informed. Anonymity in the parties will be maintained.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline procedures at the AFA are consistent with the guidelines set forth in Frederick County Public Schools Regulation 400-8 available at www.fcps.org and delineated in the FCPS Calendar Handbook. These documents outline categories of student misbehavior and the appropriate administrative action ranging in most cases from probation to expulsion. Please refer to these documents for specifics.

PROBATION

Grades and habits of work are reviewed regularly with AFA students. At the end of every midterm and term, students who are not meeting academic or habits of work requirements will receive a letter of warning, or will be placed on probation. If little to no improvement is noted after being placed on probation, the student may not be given permission to continue at the semester or the end of the school year.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

Just as students will apply specific skills they learn in their various programs here at the AFA, we expect our students to display positive behavior and outstanding character as members of an artistic community. The progressive discipline procedure is designed to add uniformity and consistency to discipline problems. Major infractions will result in automatic disciplinary referrals to the administration. All offenses reaching the referral level are shared with the student's home school and are part of the student's high school record.

1. Discussion with the individual student.
2. Parent Contact
3. Parent follow-up conversation (meeting, call, and/or conference with School Support, Guidance, or Case Manager as needed)
4. Referral to Assistant Principal (sent immediately for Major Behavioral Offences and repeated offenses)

SUSPENSION POLICY

There is a close working relationship with each home school; therefore, students who are suspended from GTJHS due to conduct occurring at the AFA or from the home school are automatically suspended from both. When in the best interest of a student, an in-school suspension may be administered and served during the AFA's hours.

DISCIPLINE FOR OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Students can be disciplined for off-campus activities where there is a reasonable belief that the health and/or safety of others in school could be in danger or that school operations or activities may be disrupted.

BULLYING, INTIMIDATION, OR HARASSMENT

Students should feel respected and safe in Frederick County Public Schools.

Any student who feels that they are being bullied, intimidated or harassed should talk to a teacher, guidance counselor or school administrator as soon as possible. GTJHS Administration will follow up on the complaint upon notification.

Examples of conduct that may constitute discrimination/intimidation/harassment may include:

- Name-calling, jokes or rumors
- Threatening or intimidating conduct directed at another
- Notes, cartoons, or graffiti
- Specific slurs or negative stereotypes
- Written or graphic material containing comments or stereotypes, which is posted or circulated and which is aimed at degrading individuals or members of affected classes
- A physical act of aggression or assault upon another
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage

Reporting forms are available in the front office, the guidance office, in a form holder outside the guidance office and online at www.fcps.org by selecting forms and then Harassment and Bullying forms. Complete copies of FCPS Regulation 400-48 which addresses bullying, intimidation and harassment are available on the FCPS web site (www.FCPS.org).

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Student possession and use of electronic devices on school property and at school-sponsored events on and off campus is a privilege, not a right. Students may use devices to participate in teacher-approved activities and for educational reasons in support of Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) curriculum for instructional purposes, such as keeping track of classroom assignments, research and other related class activities. Teachers may ask students to put away devices at any time. Refusal to comply may result in disciplinary steps, and the student having to turn in the device to school administration. A school administrator reserves the right to take temporary possession of an electronic device during a student discipline investigation to ensure the integrity of the fact-finding process. FCPS is not responsible for theft or damage to the electronic device.

MEDICATION

If students require medication to be administered during AFA hours, parents must contact the health room at GTJHS and provide the necessary medication to the GTJHS Health Tech. Parents may contact the health room by calling 240-236-8283.

Under no circumstances may students carry medications with them without the express consent of the student's physician and the GTJHS health room.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The AFA produces many performances and showcases throughout the school year. A calendar of events is provided to students at the beginning of each year and can be found online at www.fcpsartsacademy.org.

AFA performances and showcases are assessments that count towards each student's grade; therefore, students are expected to be present at ALL mandatory showcases. If a student is unable to attend a showcase/performance, written notification must be presented to the instructor at the beginning of the school year. In these cases, an alternate project may be assigned to make up for the loss of credit.

Students who do not attend a mandatory showcase with no prior notice provided will receive a grade of "F" for the event.

We occasionally receive requests for performers for various FCPS and non-FCPS events. When those events arise, students shall be provided at least 3 weeks' notice with a chance to check schedules and either commit or not commit to an event. **When students commit to an event, they will be held to the same grading standards as a mandatory showcase.** We understand that AFA students are typically involved with other activities and arts programs at their home schools and may not be able to participate in all opportunities that arise throughout the year.

When the snow emergency plan is in effect in Frederick County, after-school, evening and weekend programs and activities will be cancelled.