

EAST PASCO ADVENTIST ACADEMY

Student Handbook

2024-2025



Quality Christian Education

Love, Learn, Lead

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East Pasco Adventist Academy is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian Pre K-8 school.

The mission of EPAA is to prepare students who love Jesus, learn with excellence, and lead in their communities.

The School Constituency, the School Board, and the faculty are dedicated to promoting an excellent academic program and Seventh-day Adventist Christian values.

Accreditation

The program of EPAA is in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is supervised by the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. We are fully accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association and the Florida Association of Academic Non-Public Schools (FAANS).

Teaching Staff

Our teaching staff consists of certified teachers whose lives support Seventh-day Adventist principles of Christian education.

Non-Discrimination Statement

East Pasco Adventist Academy admits students of any race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, and sexual orientation. Our school does not discriminate on the basis of any of the aforementioned categories in decisions for admission, discipline, or application of education policies. We promote a sharp focus on learning and caring while requiring all students to adhere to behavioral expectations set out in a strict code of conduct supported by the Biblical beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Child Abuse Policy

As mandated by federal and state law, EPAA administrators, teachers, and staff members who have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect will make an oral report immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline. This policy is strictly enforced.

History

The East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church's vision of Christian education for their children was an intermittent reality. Through the years, members planned and worked to give their dream substance. The dream of a local church school came true in the fall of 1982. East Pasco Adventist Educational Center opened with grades one through nine. There were 18 students and 2 teachers. This new school building stood in commemoration to the cooperation and donation of money, materials, and labor by dedicated and faithful Dade City and Zephyrhills Seventh-day Adventist Christians. In 1986, the Activity Center became the focal point for church, school, and community educational, religious, and social activities. Also in 1986, Kindergarten was added to the school program. In 2003, the name of the school changed to East Pasco Adventist Academy. In 2007, Pre-K (VPK) was added.

Philosophy of Education

East Pasco Adventist Academy believes that education is redemptive and seeks to provide an atmosphere conducive to the development of the spiritual life of the student. It is the goal of the school to prepare for society individuals who are maturing Christians and who are productive and worthy citizens.

EPAA provides a learning atmosphere conducive to optimal individual student progress. Faculty members are chosen for their commitment to Seventh-day Adventist values, excellence in teaching, and positive relationships. Students are chosen for their commitment to Christian values, learning, and team spirit.

Objectives

Our spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social objectives focus and direct school activities.

I. Spiritual:

- develop a sound, Biblically-based Christian philosophy.
- recognize Christ's life as the perfect example for all to emulate.
- realize the greatest satisfaction is cooperating with God's plan for their lives.
- form Christian value-based characters integrating love to God and fellowmen.

II. Intellectual:

- develop a recognition of God as the source of all true knowledge.
- form a strong scholastic foundation of the basic skills.
- integrate a life pattern for continuing intellectual development.
- think and act independently.
- successfully cope with life's challenges.

III. Physical:

- understand the close relationship between a carefully balanced mind and body and the development of a deep spiritual life.
- be temperate in all things including health, dress, and behavioral principles.
- develop physically.
- acquire regular habits of personal cleanliness.

IV. Social:

- accept people regardless of social status, religious conviction, or racial origin.
- develop social behavior respecting the rights of others.
- develop family, church, and civic responsibilities.
- exercise self-control and self-discipline.

ADMISSIONS

Admission Eligibility

EPAA welcomes any student expressing an earnest desire for a Christian education, showing due respect for God's Word, maintaining a reverent attitude during religious times, and cheerfully observing EPAA standards and regulations. All student admissions are subject to School Board approval.

EPAA admits students of any race, color, national, or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. However, as the constituent church school for East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church and a member of the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, EPAA gives entrance preference to its members if facility or classroom limitations necessitate.

EPAA has limited ability to accommodate special educational needs. These requests are considered individually.

Pre-Kindergarten students must be four years of age on or before September 1. Kindergarten students must be five years of age on or before September 1. First graders must be six on or before September 1. Any student entering 2nd grade who is not seven may be required to complete placement testing before enrolling.

Transfer students are placed temporarily until EPAA receives proof of placement, such as a report card or transfer certificate.

Admission Evaluation

The School Admissions Committee evaluates students in four areas:

1. Do the student and parents want a Christian education?
2. Can EPAA meet the scholastic and behavioral needs of the student?
Appropriate testing may be required.
3. Are recommendations from personal interviews by the principal and teacher satisfactory? Are school records and other recommendations positive?
4. Will the parents meet the financial obligations?

Admission Procedures

We invite parents and students to visit EPAA. If possible, please notify us in advance to facilitate arrangements for an interview and tour.

To apply for admission, Parents/Guardians must:

1. Review the school handbook to ensure parent and student willingness to support EPAA rules and policies.
2. Be interviewed along with the applying student(s) by the Admissions Committee.
3. Complete and submit application to principal.

Contractual Agreement

Parents who enroll their students in EPAA have entered into a contractual agreement with the school and are expected to live up to their commitment. School records will not be released until all obligations have been met.

The school agrees to provide an academic program which is designed for those students who are able to perform at or above a standard grade level. Students who are deficient may be accepted on academic probation and will be given nine weeks to show that they can maintain a passing grade. The school reserves the right to ask non-performing students to withdraw.

Financial Assistance

There are four sources of funding for families who are unable to meet EPAA financial obligations.

- *East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church Worthy Student Fund*
- *EPAA Home and School Tuition Assistance Fund*
- *Family Empowerment Scholarships (UA, EO)*
- *Step Up For Students Scholarship*

See the Finances section for details on these programs.

Immunization Records/Medical Examination

New students and kindergarten students are required to have complete physical examinations. Florida law requires students to be immunized against polio, DPT, mumps, rubella, and rubeola (measles). A physical exam/immunization record (Form 3040) signed by your doctor or a completed immunization certificate (Form HRS-680) from the County Health Department is required. If a student has had a physical examination within the previous six months, an examination report is sufficient.

Students entering seventh grade are required to complete vaccination against Hepatitis B, a second dose of measles vaccine (preferably MMR), and a tetanus-diphtheria booster. All entering Kindergartners must either have had the Varicella vaccination or the date they had the Chicken Pox.

Students must have proof of immunization **PRIOR** to admission. Any exemptions to this policy will be considered by the school board on a case by case basis.

Registration Procedure

Each student must apply and be accepted prior to completing registration. Registration day is before the first day of school. Those registering without acceptance are on probation until the Admissions Committee reviews their applications. Late registrants who receive full credit for make-up work must pay full tuition.

At registration time, EPAA information forms are completed, medical consent forms are signed, medical records are reviewed, transfer or school records are requested, financial contracts are completed, and the registration fee and the first month's tuition are paid.

Student and Parent Agreement

Every student presenting himself/herself for EPAA admission promises to observe and support Christian principles. If this promise is broken, the student may forfeit his/her place in school. If retained, it is because of the student's reforming behavior and faculty persistence.

The student is responsible to perform all assigned school-related duties to the best of his/her ability.

Parents are expected to cooperate with and support EPAA teachers and school policies. Critical conversations regarding the school should be held with a teacher, the principal, or School Board member outside a student's hearing. When a student enrolls at EPAA, the parents and student agree to accept the school's standards, regulations, and financial obligations found in this handbook.

Student Insurance

EPAA purchases student insurance which provides insurance coverage to all students during the hours and days school is in session and while attending school-sponsored and supervised activities.

The parent's insurance is considered primary insurance for students. The school student insurance then covers any additional medical costs. Should the medical expense exceed the parent's insurance benefits, the school insurance pays the rest.

In case of an accident, parents and/or students are to:

1. Notify school staff immediately and initiate treatment.
2. Commence treatment within 90 days of the injury date.
3. Secure a claim form from the school office. A copy of the filled out form should stay at the school. The original form will be sent with the medical bill to the school's insurance company.

FINANCES

Refer to Appendix A for all current school fees.

After-School Care Charges

After-school care charges are based on an hourly rate. This rate is charged in 15-minute increments between 3:15 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Students not picked up by 5:30 p.m. on Mon.-Thurs. or 5:00 p.m. on Friday are charged the full hourly rate for each 15 minutes, or any portion thereof, beyond 5:30 p.m. (5:00 p.m.) until the student is picked up.

Current hourly rates are listed in Appendix A.

Delinquent Accounts

Should the responsible party fail to pay the account within 60 days of the invoice due date, the parent/guardian will be asked to withdraw their student(s) until the account is current. Accounts more than 90 days overdue are considered delinquent and may be sent to the school's collection agency. The party responsible for the delinquent account shall be responsible for all fees and expenses of collections, including attorney's fees.

Early Withdrawals

When a student withdraws during the first half of a tuition month, there is a 50% refund. Later withdrawals receive no refund. Students withdrawn within the first 60 days of school are eligible for a partial refund.

Financial Assistance

There are four sources of funding for families who are unable and need assistance to meet EPAA financial obligations.

East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church Worthy Student Fund

This is financial aid from East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church for families who are members of the East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church. Each arrangement is unique to the family and situation, wherein a financial agreement is made between the EPSDA Church and the family. Applications are completed online at <https://online.factsmgt.com/aid>.

Step Up For Students Scholarships

This program was created by the Florida Legislature to offer more educational opportunities to low-income families. Students may be eligible to receive up to \$5,677 to attend private schools. Families must meet certain income-eligibility criteria. Applications are completed online at www.stepupforstudents.org.

Family Empowerment (Unique Abilities)

This scholarship is provided by the Florida Department of Education for students transferring from public school or beginning schooling in Kindergarten or 1st grade. Eligible students include students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and who were enrolled and reported for funding by a Florida school district. Applications are completed online at www.floridaschoolchoice.org.

EPAA Home and School Tuition Assistance Scholarship Fund

This fund is for those who don't qualify for the EPSDA Worthy Student Fund, the Step Up For Students Scholarship, the Family Empowerment, or those who need additional financial help even after one of those scholarships.

Monthly Payment Plan

The yearly tuition is divided into ten equal payments. The first payment is due, with the registration fee, at registration. Each monthly payment is due by the 25th of the month with the last payment due by the last day of school in May. See Appendix A.

Music Fees

Private beginning and advanced music lessons are available. These are arranged with the music teacher.

Previous Unpaid Accounts

EPAA reserves the right to deny admission to any student having an unpaid balance with this or any other school until the account is paid or satisfactory payment arrangements are made.

Registration Fee

This fee covers textbook rental, workbooks, student insurance, library fees, yearbook, Student Association, special events fee, and technology fee. It is due at registration time. Students may not enter school until paying the registration fee.

Returned Checks

A \$20 service charge will be applied to all returned checks.

Tuition Rates and Payment Schedules

EPAA has East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church constituent, SDA constituent, and non-constituent tuition rates. The constituent rate is for students who are members or whose parents are members of the East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church or who are full-time employees of EPAA. Other SDAs are considered Florida Conference constituents and receive the SDA constituent rate. All other students are classified as non-constituents.

CAMPUS LIFE

After-school Care

EPAA provides students after-school care Monday through Thursday from 3:15 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. and Fridays from 2:15 p.m. until 5:00. All students remaining at the school at 3:15 p.m. on Monday-Thursday or 2:15 on Friday are considered in after-school care. After-school care charges are based on actual time used. See Appendix A.

Cell Phones/iPods/Personal Electronic Devices

Cell phones, iPods, and other personal electronic devices must remain turned off and put away while on school property unless permission is given by a staff member. Violation of this policy will result in the confiscation of the device by the staff member present and given to administration. Administration will then return the device directly to the parents/guardians with the following penalties:

- 1st offense – Verbal warning
- 2nd offense - Device sent home with parent
- 3rd offense - Student and parent will meet with teacher to talk about how to rectify the situation.

If the above offenses are exhausted the student will not be permitted to have a phone on campus

Computers/Laptops/Tablets

The use of computers and tablets at school is a necessity and privilege. **Computers on campus are to be used only for educational purposes.** Students in grades 5-8 are permitted to bring personal laptops or tablets to classes, but may only connect to the internet through the school's network. Students are required to sign an internet and computer usage agreement at registration. Failure to comply with the usage policy may result in the loss of the privilege of using computers on campus.

Early Student Pick Up

Parents picking up students during school hours must report to the office or homeroom teacher. Except in emergencies, students leaving school early should bring a parent's written note stating the reason for early departure to the teacher before the school day begins.

Head Lice

Head Lice (*Pediculosis Capitis*) occasionally occurs in our community. Lice are highly communicable. If all parents routinely check their children and report an outbreak, the risk of spreading can be minimized and the pest can be controlled. If lice are noticed or nits found in the hair, the child is not to come to school until treated and all nits are removed. The child must be cleared by the school office for re-admittance to school. The health department advises that bedding, articles of clothing, and play areas be treated. Lice shampoo is to be used and the child retreated 7-10 days later. See your county health department for further instructions. **Most importantly, the child cannot be readmitted to school until lice are gone and all nits removed.**

Illness

The teacher has the prerogative to dismiss any student who may have an illness or contagious condition. A physician's written statement may be required upon return to school. A child with a fever should remain at home until the child has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. Parents are asked to **not** give their child a fever reducer before sending them to school. If the student's fever returns,

the parent will be called to pick up their child from school. If the student receives antibiotics for a contagious illness, the student must remain home until the child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours or longer as specified by their physician. If the student has vomited due to illness, they are asked to stay home for 24 hours from the time of vomiting.

Medications

No student shall have any medications in his/her possession at school without written parental explanation and instructions for use. School personnel are not permitted by law to give any medications unless written permission is received. This includes all over the counter medications.

RenWeb/Facts SIS

RenWeb is an online school management program used by all Florida Conference schools as a tool to help schools run more effectively. This program will be used by EPAA for the following:

- Primary communication to parents through email regarding discipline, academic concerns, school news, etc.
- Recording daily attendance, student behavior, grades, lesson plans, homework, and lunch ordering.
- A database of student/family information for school use

Parents of students in grades 5-8 will be expected to utilize this program to check their child's grades, homework, discipline, and attendance. Parents are encouraged to use this program to communicate with school personnel regarding school matters only.

Parents/Adults Approaching Students

Parents or other adults are not to approach students while at or away from EPAA about grievances they may have. They are to communicate with the teacher or administration, who will in turn approach the student. Should a conference be needed, a student must be represented by his or her parent.

School Arrival and Dismissal

Pre-K (VPK)	Tuesday-Thursday	8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Grades K - 8	Monday through Thursday	8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
	Friday	8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Students should be at school at least five minutes early and in their seats at 8:00 a.m. Students in grades PreK-8 may enter the school building by 7:30. They should report immediately to the gym for supervision until 7:55. At 7:55, students go directly to classrooms.

All students on the premises after a school-related activity will automatically be placed in the after-school care program until picked up.

School Visitation Procedure

All visits should be cleared by the office. Parents may attend their child's activities and observe his/her progress throughout the year when arranged by appointment. When visiting, quietly be seated in the room and observe as long as desired. If the students want to visit with you, encourage them to return to their desks to continue their work. The teacher is on duty with the children but will be glad to arrange a time to talk with you after school.

School Volunteers

Volunteers at EPAA are those who are willing to share with students their time, expertise, and enthusiasm. Under the direction of the school administration and staff, these volunteers help to enrich students' educational experiences.

Volunteers serve only in an auxiliary capacity under the direction and supervision of professional school personnel. The volunteer does not take the place of the teacher, but is supportive of the teacher. Teaching and discipline remain the primary responsibility of the teacher. Volunteers' dress and deportment must be in accordance with the Christian standards stated in the school handbook. Volunteers are required to have a level 2 VECHS background screening completed prior to starting. Volunteers should be aware that they are role models for the students. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please come by the office.

Student Selling of Products or Services

School administration must approve selling of any product or service for civic, church, or school benefit. No selling for direct personal benefit is permitted.

SAFETY

Student safety is of primary importance, therefore:

- No playground activity is allowed except under the supervision of an adult.
- Playground activities during the school day are supervised by a teacher or an aide.
- Monthly fire drills are held and tornado and lockdown drills are held semiannually.
- Any damage to school environment/property is to be reported immediately.
- Students are taught safe use of equipment.

Care of Personal and School Property

The school is not responsible for personal property. Lost and found items should be claimed before each school year closes.

Anyone aware of school property damage should report it immediately to the office. This may prevent additional damage and consequent increase to the cost of repairs. School

property willfully misused, broken, or destroyed will be charged to those responsible for the damage.

Skateboards, In-Line Skates, Scooters, Rip Sticks, Heelies

The use of these items is governed by General Conference insurance policies as follows:

- Skateboards are strictly prohibited.
- A helmet and regulation elbow, knee and wrist pads are required when using in-line or roller skates.

EPAA AND CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Adventurer Club

The Adventurer Club promotes Christian character building. Membership is limited to grades Pre-K to 4th grade students. The program is similar to Cub Scouts and Brownies. Adventurers work on class projects, participate in out-reach programs, attend field trips and much more. In May, the Investiture Program highlights the Adventurer's accomplishments. Students completing the class work and other honor activities are rewarded. The Adventurer Club is separate from EPAA, but fully supported by school administration.

Pathfinder Club

The Pathfinder Club is a national, coeducational organization promoting Christian character building and group development. Its programs are similar to Boy and Girl Scouts. Meetings and activities take place after school and on weekends. Pathfinder membership is limited to students in grades 5 and above. The Pathfinder Club is also separate from EPAA, but fully supported by school administration.

Home and School Association

The Home and School Association provides a forum for parents, teachers, and church members to support EPAA and the home. Home and School sponsored events include parent education programs, social events, and fund-raising activities. Notices of events and meetings are emailed, sent home with the students, and/or published in constituent church bulletins.

Student Association

The Student Association (SA) represents all the students of EPAA. The officers for the SA are elected at the beginning of each school year from grades 5-8. SA officers and student leaders may be members of other policy-making committees. In addition, the SA functions as a Student Advisory Committee to the principal, providing student input regarding the general program of the school, student needs, rules, and regulations.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Attendance

EPAA cooperates with the state of Florida's requirement that students maintain regular class attendance. Students missing 15% (27 school days per school year) of their classes may be retained or failed due to absences. This total includes both excused and unexcused absences.

A student is excused from school for personal illness or death in the immediate family. Parents are to arrange in advance for any other absences and are encouraged to make routine doctor or dentist appointments outside of school hours.

EPAA will contact the family after no more than three consecutive days of unnotified absence.

The student is to bring a parent's written excuse, stating the reason for the absence, when returning to school. Students and/or parents are to make arrangements to complete missed school work.

Field Trips

Teachers are encouraged to plan a limited number of student field trips each year to enrich the educational experience and provide valuable learning resources. These trips are a required part of the curriculum and are considered regular school days and therefore count in school attendance requirement.

During the school year, parents are notified in advance of field trips with informational forms sent to the homes. Parents have the right to prevent their child from attending a field trip by written note or phone call to the school. When on field trips, students are to conduct themselves according to EPAA standards and policies.

Grading System

Grades are available to the parents continuously through RenWeb. Notices of current grades will be emailed to parents regularly throughout the school year.

- The kindergarten report card stresses child development.
- Grades 1 - 2 use the independent functioning (I), progressing (P), and needs time to improve (NT) grading system.
- Grades 3 - 8 use letter grades A, B, C, D, F for all courses.

Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences/Report Cards

The school year is divided into four nine-week periods. At the end of each period, a report card indicating the student's progress is sent home with the student or is given at the parent-student-teacher conference held after the first and third periods. Parents or teachers may arrange additional conferences.

Testing

Standardized achievement and ability tests are administered in the fall, winter and spring utilizing the following machine-scored standardized test:

NWEA MAP Growth test	Grades K-8
FAST assessment	Pre-K

Special needs testing for academic or behavioral reasons may be requested by the parent or teacher. Before implementing these tests, the parents must give written consent and the teacher must submit the necessary forms to the principal.

Textbooks

Textbooks are provided on a rental basis as part of the registration fee. Students must handle all textbooks carefully and write in them only at the request of the teacher. Damaged or lost books are charged to the student. These charges are to be paid before the report card is issued.

Transferring

Students transferring to another school must:

1. Return all school property, including library books, textbooks, workbooks, and school-owned music materials.
2. Complete financial responsibilities.
3. Make arrangements with the principal for transferring his/her records to the new school.

Upon completion of the preceding requirements, the student's cumulative record is forwarded to the new school upon written request from the school and with the parent's permission. EPAA reserves the right to withhold transcripts due to unpaid accounts.

If the withdrawal process is not completed, grading and attendance requirements will apply until the process is completed.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum for Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

VPK uses the following curriculums: the *Bible Learning Series & Scripture Bites* from Standard Publishing, *Pebbles* from the Southern Union of Seventh-day Adventists, and *Funshine Express*. These are hands-on curriculums that help build literacy, math, science, and social skills. They help address each child socially, physically, emotionally, and cognitively and stimulate thinking, reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving. For more information on *Funshine Express*, go to www.funshineexpress.com. *LexiaCore5* is an assessment and instructional tool for reading.

Curriculum for Kindergarten

Mental maturity and social maturity are important indicators of a child's readiness for school. EPAA's kindergarten curriculum is prepared for children ages five through seven.

The program is structured to provide a relaxed atmosphere in which each child has an opportunity to succeed, to be creative, and to develop at his/her own rate. The child benefits from individual guidance and shared group experiences as his/her personality and character develop.

The Bible curriculum has a themed approach. Students will study learning to worship, learning to be like Jesus, learning to give thanks, learning about the Promised One, learning to make choices, learning about the Lamb of God, learning to go into all the world, and learning about what the Bible tells me. Wit and Wisdom is the curriculum used for language arts. It is a comprehensive curriculum crafted to help students build the knowledge they need to be successful readers and writers.

Big Ideas is the math curriculum. *Foundations* is used for instruction in phonics. *LexiaCore5* is an assessment and instructional tool for reading. The Biblical creation story is the basis of the science curriculum. Learning emphasis is placed on nature and the Scriptures, thus acquainting the child with a loving God. The curriculum develops the child's senses, arouses natural curiosity, and teaches early observation, classification, and analysis skills which stimulate further study. The discovery approach necessitates active student involvement in learning experiences. A variety of activities provides each child with a program for total development. These activities include stories, music, play, art, cooking, field trips, role-playing, games, videos, and computers.

The curriculum prepares the student for first grade with learning experiences in reading readiness, math, handwriting, music, art, and social interaction. These are adapted to each child's needs to make school an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Evaluation of student progress includes individual testing and teacher/parent observation.

Curriculum for Grades 1-8

The Bible's influence permeates every subject and school activity, thus broadening a person's understanding of self, as well as the surrounding world. This Bible-based curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

Art

Art classes are taught by the classroom teacher for the lower grades. Art experiences depend on materials and the teacher's skills.

Bible

The Bible/Religion curriculum develops independent thinkers, not mere thought reflectors. Individual opinion and questions will be respected as students are led to form Biblically-sound conclusions. Students are encouraged to develop a love for God and His work through personal experience. The Bible/Religion curriculum is included in every grade. Each student is required to have a personal Bible in grades 3-8.

English

Writing, literature, and grammar are components of the *Wit and Wisdom curriculum*. This includes elements such as Deep Dive, Reading, Wit and Wisdom is the curriculum used for language arts. It is a comprehensive curriculum crafted to help students build the knowledge they need to be successful readers and writers. Writing and Grammar The teacher may supplement grammar instruction with a language textbook.

Handwriting

Handwriting for grades PreK-8 focusing on different grade level skills.

Mathematics

The math curriculum includes mastery of basic skills. The practical application of these skills instills values such as accuracy, honesty, economy and Christian stewardship.

The curriculum *Big Ideas Math* for grades K-8. With approval of the math teacher and his/her parents, a qualifying student may take one grade level above the student's actual grade level.

Music

Music for pre-kindergarten through second grade centers around group vocal music and rhythm. Music for third and fourth graders involves choral music, hand chimes. Music opportunities for grades five through eight may include choral music, bell choir, and beginner, intermediate, or advanced band. Group beginner violin instruction is available for all students.

Private lessons, arranged without undue interference with the student's main curriculum, may be scheduled before, after, or during school hours.

Physical Education

Recognition of the physical body as the temple of God leads to a unique respect for it. The physical education program's activities enable the student to develop physical, spiritual, mental, and social qualities. Soft-soled, tied shoes, and clothing that does not hinder physical exercise must be worn.

Reading

Reading skills are basic to a successful academic experience and to spiritual growth. The student's success in reading affects his/her total educational and life experience. Oral reading experiences develop the ability to read with expression.

To uphold high Christian literature standards, Seventh-day Adventist schools use their own *Wit and Wisdom curriculum*. This program includes comprehension skills, literature appreciation, spelling and grammar applications, and writing skills (K-8).

Phonetic skills are an integral part of the reading program. The *Foundations* phonics program teaches applicable word analysis skills, spelling concepts, and handwriting skills for grades K-2.

Reading A-Z is incorporated to improve reading fluency. Students progress through various levels as they master vocabulary. Frequent assessment determines mastery at each level. (K-6)

DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills) testing monitors students' progress in reading fluency. These tests are administered three times a year, and results are sent to the parents. (K-6)

LexiaCore5 and *Reading Plus* are online, individualized, assessment and instructional tools for reading skills.

For more information about these programs, go to the following websites:

<i>Foundations</i>	http://www.foundations.com
<i>Reading A-Z</i>	http://www.readinga-z.com
<i>DIBELS</i>	https://dibels.uoregon.edu/
<i>Lexia Reading Core5</i>	http://www.lexialearning.com/product/core5
<i>Reading Plus</i>	http://www.readingplus.com

Science and Health

The accurate study of science and health leads to the understanding that God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, is the originator of all true scientific knowledge. Awareness that the laws of nature are the laws of God develops an appreciation of the study of science as a means of learning about His character.

Scientific findings are interpreted in the light of divine revelation. The relationship of creation to the Sabbath and other God-given beliefs is emphasized. An appreciation of the human body as the temple of God provides the basis for practicing divinely-given health principles.

Because of the many spiritual applications of science and health, Seventh-day Adventists use their own science and health series with supplementary materials for grades K-8. EPAA uses *ByDesign* a hands-on, inquiry based science curriculum. For more information about *ByDesign* go to <http://adventisteducationbydesign.com/>

Social Studies

The Seventh-day Adventist social studies program includes geography, the history of God's leading among nations, and broad world events. It gives broad, comprehensive views of life, comparing history and current events to prepare students for contemporary living. Social studies encourages integration of Bible-based values into the student's life.

Standard social studies textbooks are used for the core program with supplemental materials used when appropriate.

Spelling

EPAA emphasizes excellence as evidenced by correctness in spelling. Correct spelling is expected in all written work.

Eighth Grade Graduation Requirements

A student must satisfactorily complete the basic eighth grade course of study to be eligible for an eighth grade diploma. The complete eighth grade course of study includes art and music.

The basic course of study includes the following:

Bible	Writing
Grammar	Social Studies
Math	Science/Health
Music	P.E.

A certificate of attendance may be issued to students unable to satisfactorily complete the diploma requirements.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

EPAA Standards

EPAA is a Seventh-day Adventist school, and students are expected to respect these beliefs and uphold behavior that corresponds with these beliefs.

EPAA behavior standards reflect Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and standards. The goal of EPAA behavior standards and policies is to develop character and growth in students.

Every effort will be made to help the student see the importance of cooperating with the school rules as a means of character development and to help the student toward a more meaningful acceptance of the principles of proper student conduct. All rules and principles of conduct remain in force throughout the year and throughout vacations. Serious misconduct or misdemeanors can affect a student's standing in regards to his or her enrollment status at EPAA.

There are some practices that will not be permitted. EPAA does not knowingly receive or retain students who persistently indulge in these practices. Offenses on any of the following fundamental points make the student subject to discipline such as in-class suspension, suspension from school, or dismissal from school:

- Continual or willful disrespect, disobedience, or non-cooperation with those in authority.
- Disseminating ideas or displaying attitudes that undermine the philosophy, ideals, or objectives of the school.
- Using profane language, indulging in lewd conduct or suggestions, or possessing or displaying obscene literature or pictures.
- Using language tactics or relational behaviors that by their nature are excessively intimidating, accusatory, cruel, or are emotionally abusive and disruptive to either the Christian atmosphere desired for this campus or the normal academic functions and co-curricular activities.
- Being dishonest, including theft, willful deception regarding violation of school regulations, cheating on examinations or class work or any phase of school or business.
- Using illegal substances, narcotics, tobacco, or alcoholic beverages in any form or having them in one's possession.
- Participating in gambling.
- Willful destruction of any school property or any vandalism.
- Possession of weapons of any type.
- Involvement in physical fighting or threats of violent behavior.
- Conspiring or participating in any act that injures, degrades, or disgraces EPAA, a fellow student or faculty member.
- Failure to participate fully in the academic program of the school or habitual failure to do assignments and/or projects.
- Engaging in inappropriate behavior toward the opposite or same sex as defined in the following sexual harassment section.

When, because of these or other activities, the student's progress or conduct is unsatisfactory, his/her attitude is out of harmony with the standards of EPAA or his/her influence is found to be detrimental, he or she may be disciplined or asked to withdraw from EPAA.

Respect of Property

Each student is expected to respect the property of the school, school staff, and other students. A student will be required to pay damages done intentionally to school grounds, personal property of staff, personal property of another student.

The school does not assume responsibility for personal belongings such as books, clothing, money or other personal property left by anyone on the school grounds or in the school buildings. Students are instructed to take responsibility for their property and not to leave personal possessions unattended. Clothing left unclaimed will be donated to charity.

Bullying and Sexual/Racial Harassment

EPAA is committed to providing a school environment free from sexual/racial harassment for all students. Incidents of harassment should be reported to the principal and appropriate action will be taken.

Bullying

Three elements that may be present to qualify behavior as bullying and harassment are:

- The intention of the bully is to hurt or humiliate the victim.
- There is a difference in power between the bully and the victim, whether that power difference is height, weight, athletic ability, socioeconomic status, etc.
- The act of hurt and humiliation, on the part of the bully, is repeated.

Sexual Harassment

EPAA values the right of all students to work and study in an environment free of sexual harassment. Such behavior demeans human dignity, erodes morals, and runs counter to the Christian mission and principles on which this school operates.

In addition to being in violation of EPAA policy, sexual harassment constitutes illegal education discrimination under Federal and state statutes, and the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Title IX of the Education Reform Act Amendment of 1972.

Since God has created us with sexuality, we have the responsibility and choice to exercise purity of thought and behavior promoted by the Holy Bible and to avoid what civil law forbids.

EPAA will not tolerate acts of sexual harassment nor will it tolerate retaliatory behavior in response to a student's complaint of harassment. In like manner, false claims of sexual

harassment will not be tolerated. Such actions will result in a timely review, and, if warranted, disciplinary action.

Definition of Sexual Harassment: Any verbal or written behavior, physical touch or gesture, teasing, jesting, criticizing or belittling, regardless of intention, which is expressed against the wishes of the recipient.

This offense may involve:

- touching, grabbing
- sexual remarks, terms, suggestions, or requests
- pornographic pictures, stories, obscene gestures
- dirty or suggestive jokes
- offensive display of sexual objects
- staring, stalking
- embarrassing "practical" jokes or pranks that are sexual in intent or design
- unwanted flirting
- comments about the body

Definition of Racial Harassment: Verbal, nonverbal, graphic, written, or physical conduct that belittles or shows hostility or aversion toward any student based upon race, which may interfere with a student's academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment.

Racial harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following conduct which is based upon race:

- Epithets (name-calling) and slurs.
- Negative stereotyping.
- Threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts.
- Written or graphic material that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is administered solely to bring about correction and growth with careful regard given to the protection of the student's personal integrity and sense of self-worth.

Discipline within the entire program is carried out with consideration given to the child's temperament, disposition, and ability to comprehend the difficulty that a particular behavior is creating. EPAA does not enlist corporal punishment at any grade level.

Parent-teacher communication is a vital part of letting the child know that a team effort is in place to foster the best behavior possible.

EPAA strives to create a safe, effective learning environment for students and faculty. Anything that contributes to positive development of students will be encouraged. Anything that interferes with that growth will be discouraged and the student will be disciplined. When a student is not making a positive contribution, the following procedures will be followed:

1. When a teacher notes a particular behavior or attitude that is disruptive, harmful, or inappropriate, that teacher will address the student regarding the problem and deal with the student according to classroom discipline practices. Parents will be contacted either by the teacher or the principal regarding the problem.
2. If the first step does not cause a sufficient change in the behavior problem, parents will be contacted again and a parent/teacher/principal meeting will be conducted.
3. If the behavior problem persists, the student may be suspended from classes or from school.

All appeals must follow the EPAA Grievance Procedure.

Disciplinary Authority

EPAA operates in accordance with policies outlined in the *PreK-12 Southern Union Code Book*.

Authority for running EPAA on a day-to-day basis rests with the principal and the faculty. The School Board and the Office of Education of the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists set the general guidelines for school operation and the EPAA administration and faculty is responsible for administering regulations, procedure, and discipline.

Grievance Procedure

Communication between home and school is very important. Without proper communication, misunderstandings can develop into serious problems. Please follow this procedure in case of a problem.

1. If there is a question or complaint about a specific classroom or school situation, speak directly to the teacher involved.
2. If still dissatisfied, speak with the principal. A parent-teacher-principal conference may be arranged to discuss the issue more fully to help arrive at a feasible and fair resolution to the problem.
3. If still dissatisfied, a parent or guardian may request a direct appeal to the School Board.

Student Conflict Resolution

EPAA operates under the principle of non-violence for resolution of all conflicts. All disputes and conflicts between students should be resolved by verbal negotiations in an atmosphere of trust and good will. Students are encouraged to utilize a teacher or the principal as a negotiator/facilitator in the communication process. Physical and emotional intimidations are prohibited.

Student Suspension

The EPAA principal, in consultation with the faculty, may elect to suspend a student from the school who commits a serious, overt act that violates school regulations. The

suspension will be effective until the parents appear at the school to discuss the conditions for readmission. The suspension period will not ordinarily exceed three school days and the principal will notify the school board chair of the suspension.

Student Expulsion

The school board is the final authority in the dismissal or expulsion of a student upon the recommendation of the principal.

Damage and Property Restitution

Students will be expected to reimburse the school for damage done to textbooks, school buildings, property, equipment, or student belongings. Restitution will be required for damage done through accidental means, deliberate action, or bad judgment. Parents will be advised in writing of the amount assessed.

HEALTH AND DRESS STANDARDS

We are advised to be temperate in all things (1 Cor. 9:25) because we are the temples of God, and Christ has bought us with a price (1 Cor. 6:19,20). In turn, we are to present ourselves as living examples for Him (Rom. 12:1).

Whatever we do should be to God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31). Whatever we wear should be modest, showing meekness of character (1 Pet. 3:3,4; 1 Tim. 2:9). Your appearance and healthful lifestyle may be the only knowledge of Christianity some people may ever know.

Health Standards

1. EPAA endorses and encourages a balanced vegetarian diet based on its adopted Creation Health philosophy. This diet includes fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, dairy products and eggs. A wholesome, well-balanced breakfast and lunch is a vital part of the educational process. Research finds that students who have a good breakfast are better prepared for their school work and have higher test scores.

We encourage students to have a vegetarian lunch. However, if you choose to use meat, we ask you to follow the Biblical standard. Pork products and shellfish are not permitted. (See Lev. 11 or Deut. 14).

Water, milk, or fruit juices are the preferred lunch beverages. Caffeinated beverages, carbonated beverages, or energy drinks should not be sent in lunches.

2. Possession or use of mind-affecting substances such as alcoholic beverages, tobacco, illegal drugs, or narcotics cannot be permitted.

3. Ordering Lunch - Ordering lunch from a delivery menu is not allowed. This process disrupts class schedules and is generally not conducive to school spirit. The rule does not prevent teachers from ordering for class-sponsored events. Should a student forget his/her lunch or lunch money, the teacher will either make arrangements with the parents or let the student make arrangements with the parent to bring a lunch or lunch money.

Dress Standards

The dress policy is designed to provide for the individuality of the student while at the same time promoting neatness, modesty, practicality and cleanliness. The primary responsibility of the personal appearance of the student rests with the parents.

A student's attire will influence his/her deportment, behavior and the learning atmosphere. Therefore it is recommended that simplicity and common sense be the guide rather than fads or fashion. All clothes shall be appropriate to the physique of the student, at an appropriate length and girth to produce a modest, practical fit and a neat, well-groomed appearance. Extremely tight or "see-through" clothes, or large, baggy clothes are never appropriate.

Girls' Attire

Bottoms – Girls' attire shall consist of solid khaki, navy, or black colored pants, shorts, or skorts of a cotton twill material. The tops of all three must set at the waistline or just slightly below. They must be a proper fit, never baggy or tight. Underwear shall never be exposed. The bottom of pants shall not drag the floor at any time. No Jeans, yogo-style athletic pants.

Tops - Shirts must be the uniform polo with school logo. There is also a uniform t-shirt that can be worn as a uniform top.

Boys' Attire

Bottoms – Boys' attire shall consist of solid khaki, navy, or black colored pants or shorts of a cotton twill material. The tops of the pants shall be at or just slightly below the waistline. They must be a proper fit, never excessively baggy or tight and the hemline shall not be at a length that drags the floor. Underwear shall never be exposed. The bottom of pants shall not drag the floor at any time. Jeans and athletic wear are not permitted.

Tops - Shirts must be the uniform polo with school logo. There is also a uniform t-shirt that can be worn as a uniform top.

General Attire

Shoes – Shoes are required at all times. Soft-sole, tied shoes are required for P.E. **For safety reasons, sandals, open-toed or open-backed shoes are not appropriate.**

Dress down – Fridays are considered “dress down days.” Students may wear a t-shirt of their choice for that day. Students should not wear shirts with offensive language or images. Students may wear uniform bottoms or jean pants with their t-shirt.

P.E. Attire – Athletic shoes must be worn during P.E.

Outer Garments – Outer garments such as coats, jackets, sweaters or other appropriate outerwear are permitted so long as they zip in the front and do not have any offensive language or images on them.

Hair – Hair should be clean and neatly groomed so that it does not attract attention or obstruct vision.

Extreme hairstyles or unnatural color is not allowed. Hats and hoods are not permitted in the school buildings.

Jewelry – Jewelry, such as bracelets, rings, earrings, or necklaces are not to be worn to school. These items, if worn, will be taken and held in the office for pick up by a parent or guardian. This policy also applies to all special occasions such as graduations, dinners, concerts, field and class trips, etc. Medical identification bracelets or necklaces are permitted.

Makeup- Makeup and nail polish that is strongly-colored, or detracting from the natural appearance is not permitted.

Special Occasions- Special occasions are sometimes part of the school's program. EPAA encourages students to help set a sacred and special atmosphere for our religious services by wearing clothes that are appropriate for the program. The staff and/or sponsor(s) will establish acceptable dress for each event within the overall guidelines of the school.

APPENDIX A

East Pasco Adventist Academy 2023-2024 School Year Fees

Tuition payments are divided into 10 equal payments payable from August to May
3% discount for full tuition paid in advance

Registration Fee

*One-time fee due at registration.

Kindergarten	\$575
Grades 1-4	\$575
Grades 5-8	\$625

Tuition

<i>EPSDA Constituent</i>	<u>K-8</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
1st Student	\$5,550	\$555
2nd Student	\$5,400	\$540
3rd Student	\$5,250	\$525

<i>SDA Constituent</i>	<u>K-8</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
1st Student	\$6,500	\$650
2nd Student	\$6,300	\$630
3rd Student	\$6,150	\$615

<i>Non-Constituent</i>	<u>K-8</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
1st Student	\$6,950	\$695
2nd Student	\$6,750	\$675
3rd Student	\$6,650	\$665

Before/After care

\$6.00 per hour for the 1st child
\$5.50 per hour for the 2nd child
\$5.00 per hour for the 3rd child

APPENDIX B

East Pasco Adventist Academy School Staff 2022-2023

Jesse Benton, BA	Principal, Grades 5-8
Tarah Benton, BS	Pre-Kindergarten
Perla Botomo, MS	Kindergarten
Susan Reyna, MEQ	Grades 1-2
Heidi Franks, MS	Grades 3-4
Nirva Joseph, MA	Grades 5-8
Frances Young, BS	Grades 5-8
Victoria Capper	Lunch Coordinator/Before Care
Charles Brainard	Grounds/After Care
Christina Head	Treasurer
Kathie Brainard	Office

School Board 2023-2024

Elected Members

* Ricardo Bariffe, Chairperson, Jean Aguillon, Eddie Lacson, Jean Aguillion, Amy Roth, Kathie Brainard, Scott Cameron, Pat Morrison, Cindy Higgins, Heidi Medina, Randy Reimer

Members by Virtue of Office

Jordan Smith	AdventHealth Representative
Merili Wyatt	Florida Conference Associate Superintendent of Education
Elizabeth Heinrich*	Home and School Association Leader
Greg Cameron	Committee of 100 Chairperson
Jesse Benton*	East Pasco Adventist Academy Principal
Christina Head*	East Pasco Adventist Academy Treasurer
Ray Pichette*	East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church Senior Pastor
Leonardo Oliviera	East Pasco Seventh-day Adventist Church Associate Pastor
<i>*School Board Officer</i>	

Executive/Personnel Committee 2023-2024

Ricardo Bariffe	Chairman
Jesse Benton	Principal
Christina Head	Treasurer
Ray Pichette	EPSDA Church Senior Pastor
Leonardo Oliviera	EPSDA Church Associate Pastor