

French Camp Academy 'In a Nutshell'

Thank you for inquiring about French Camp Academy. 'In a Nutshell' covers many areas of life at FCA about which you might have questions. French Camp Academy, established in 1885, is an inter-denominational ministry to young people. We accept students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, economic background, or religion. All that we do at FCA is founded on our belief in the inerrancy of Scripture and in God as the ultimate authority of our lives. All of our policies and procedures are founded on Biblical principles.

The Campus & School—French Camp Academy is located in French Camp, Mississippi, a small, historic village on the scenic Natchez Trace Parkway near mile marker 180. The Home Department consists of 13 homes, 6 for boys and 6 for girls each housing from 10 to 16 students for a total of approximately 200 students. The last home, Onesimus House, alternates between groups of boys and girls and is dedicated to the education and discipline of students in a smaller, more intimate, and secluded setting. Our student body also includes high school day students from the community. The high school is fully accredited by the State of Mississippi and offers a wide variety of academic courses. Activities include Beta Club, drama productions, the opportunity to train for d.j. and production work on WFCA, our 100,000-watt Christian radio station, an award-winning choral music program, and private lessons in piano or strings. Track, cross country, football, tennis, softball, baseball, and basketball are inter-school sports we play against local 1-A public schools. Children in grades K-8 attend the public school adjacent to our campus and benefit from the Academy's music and sports programs.

Who comes to French Camp Academy?—Our students are typical kids with normal physical and emotional health who are able to perform at grade level in school. Most come to us from a home situation that has been impacted by divorce, separation or death of a parent, or some other problem not necessarily of their own making. Often they have a single parent or grandparents who are unable to give the time, structure, and care that is needed. The common thread is that these young people come from situations that are unhealthy for them, and they need a stable environment.

Resident Life—Each child lives with one roommate in a 14-16-student dormitory/home. The kitchen, den, bathroom, and laundry areas are shared with other students in the home during free time. A house-parent couple, with or without children of their own, lives in the home and does all they can to make a happy home life for the students. Houseparents supervise study hall, take children to the doctor, cook an occasional meal with students, attend student activities, and are available to the students all day, just as parents would be. Students and staff have daily meals together in the dining hall.

Recreation—Recreation for our young people, especially on the weekends, includes riding horses or bikes, hiking trails, fishing, swimming, playing tennis, and using the fitness center. Our Student Union has table games, a snack bar, and plenty of fellowship. Organized games on a typical weekend include volleyball, softball, or basketball. Our Camp of the Rising Son features low ropes challenge course, a climbing tower, a frisbee golf course, and canoeing on Lake Ann. Students interested in astronomy have access to Rainwater Observatory and Planetarium, the largest facility of its kind in the state.

School Work—Most of our teachers live on campus so students have every opportunity for a good and growing relationship with them. Teachers and house-parents stand ready to assist any child who needs help. Evening study hall is required for all students except those on the honor roll. Each child is offered tools for academic success with help sessions and extra attention. We cannot force a young person to study, but our structure and consistency make it possible for one to learn good study habits. Online library helps are available to the students in the evenings. FCA also has nationally-recognized reading programs available both during the school day and in the evenings.

Discipline—Forms of discipline, ranging from restrictions to corporal punishment, are administered to encourage young people to work harder or to correct habitually bad conduct such as tardiness, disobedience, disrespect, lying, or stealing. A child who does not respond to discipline may be asked to leave FCA. A young person whose attitude, words, or actions cause more harm than the good s/he is receiving must leave FCA. Certain offenses such as use/distribution of drugs/alcohol, leaving the dormitory after hours, inappropriate sexual behavior, or purposely doing harm to one's self or another result in immediate dismissal.

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Student Work Skills Program—Students are assigned to small teams supervised by FCA staff. Every 9 weeks they rotate to another team with different responsibilities and objectives to learn. This unique program is designed to teach basic skills, dependability, and a good work ethic, and to introduce the students to different career choices. Students, 7th grade and above are assigned to a supervised crew for an hour and a half each weekday after school and three hours on Saturday morning. Crews involve the students in work such as office skills, retail sales, landscaping, equine management, arts & crafts, building maintenance, photography, and dining room service. Upon graduation from French Camp Academy a student will have a resume' of experiences that can be used for future employment opportunities.

Worship—Though our school was founded by Presbyterians, we are an interdenominational school/home. No child is turned away because of religion, and we do not force our beliefs on a child. Students are, however, required to attend church on Sunday and weekly chapel and vespers services. Respect for the Lord and others is expected during these worship times. There are also personal discipleship opportunities for students. Our ultimate goal is young people who love God with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves.

Financial Aid—If a student qualifies to attend French Camp Academy, he/she will not be turned away because of an inability to afford tuition. Financial aid is available to families who apply, qualify and demonstrate a willingness to partner with FCA. The financial aid process, which includes a financial aid application, a copy of the previous year's tax return, and an interview is used to determine eligibility. We expect families to join with us at some sacrifice to help care for the needs of their child. A child needs to know that his parents or guardians care enough to make sacrifices. French Camp Academy looks to many other individuals and groups for contributions to help cover other costs for operating its ministry. We depend on the family to network with their extended family, friends, churches and other entities to help defray the costs.

Expenses—The cost to board and educate a resident student is \$18,000 per academic year. A non-refundable annual entrance fee of \$350 in addition to first month's tuition is expected when the student enrolls at FCA. This fee covers laundry supplies, some school supplies, a medical deposit, a school yearbook, and activity fee. No more than \$50 per month is recommended for your child's personal spending money.

How to apply—After reading this summary, if FCA sounds like the place for your child, you must complete an application packet which is either attached or may be requested by calling the number below. The application process has two basic components that must be completed before a child is considered: a packet of written forms and a campus interview with you and your child. Both are crucial elements of our decision-making process. If your child is accepted, you will be notified if a room is available or if your child is on a waiting list. You will also be contacted if your child is not accepted so that you can pursue other options.

Reasons a child may not be accepted

- Youth court involvement - We consider both the frequency and the gravity of the offense(s).
- Unwillingness to come to French Camp Academy - We are not a detention facility. A child chooses to be here out of a desire for change. No child who desires to leave, after a time of adjustment, is kept against his will.
- Requires specialized education - We have neither a program nor personnel to meet special needs. This includes a child who is several grades below grade level.
- Health problems or limitations - Some problems cannot be accommodated in a setting such as ours.
- Emotional problems that require ongoing counseling or therapy - We do not have professional counselors or psychologists on our staff.
- History of inappropriate sexual activity
- Violent or destructive behavior

Parent or Guardian: Based on this list, if you question whether or not your child meets the general criteria for admission to FCA, you should call and discuss the situation with admissions personnel prior to completing the application packet.

May God bless you and your family as you seek the best for your child.