

PARENTS' GUIDE



SUPPORTING YOUR FVSU STUDENT'S SUCCESS



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FVSU OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT



You love your child.
You raised them well.

**Now it's time to
empower them.**

Freedom is what all young adults want, but using that freedom as a springboard to success can be complicated. Many are living away home for the first time, dealing with a loosening of the regimented structure they may have become accustomed to. No one will be checking to make sure they wake up on time, that they study at night, or that they associate with the right set of friends. Part of becoming an adult is learning to make your own decisions, but for sure, learning to make the best decisions is a lifelong process. That's why your work as a parent does not end once you drop your child off to move into the dorms. Really, it is just beginning.

**“When you leave
this house, you
better act right.”**

How many times have you said that as a parent? Your child's behavior outside of your home was a direct reflection of you and your values. That's still the case once they become FVSU Wildcats. How they treat others, the values they exhibit, and the actions they engage in directly reflect on the quality of student development at FVSU. We take it seriously, because a student's behavior impacts not only themselves, but also the living and learning environment on campus. You may not be qualified to be an academic professor, but you are the most qualified person in the universe to help your child understand what it will take to succeed in a college like Fort Valley State University.

Fort Valley State University's Living and Learning Environment



A safe and comfortable campus



Productive and positive student neighbors



Fair and equitable opportunities for students



Engaged and responsive faculty and administrators

START POSITIVELY

No matter what they tell you, chances are that you, as a parent, is who your child most respects. Sure, they are eager to test the power in their newfound independence, but they are also looking for reassurance from you. The most important thing you can do to support your child is to understand and reiterate the expectations the university has of each student and the expectations each student should have for him or herself in terms of maturity, personal growth, self-confidence, and achievement.

You don't have to be an expert in higher education to encourage your child to:



Know the rules and make choices that will make the path to graduation easier, not harder.



Develop a study schedule right from the start, study each day, and study in the same place so they develop the habit.



Find friends with the same values and outlook for the future, who will support their dreams and not their impulses.



Have fun but avoid risky behavior that will come back to haunt them later.



Take advantage of positive educational, service, and social activities.



Get help for academic, physical health, or mental health issues when needed using resources on campus

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS



NAVIGATING COLLEGE

FVSU.EDU/HANDBOOK

The FVSU Student Handbook provides invaluable insight on how to navigate the college experiences. It is much more than a set of rules. It definitely helps students (and parents) understand the scope of acceptable behavior, but beyond that, it lays out a pathway for success. It also helps them understand which departments handle critical areas like fee payment, financial aid, and housing and meals, and how to chart their economic progress. It also highlights how to get involved with student organizations and take advantage of co-curricular learning activities.

Familiarizing yourself with the Student Handbook is a great way to help your child set themselves up for success at FVSU.

FVSU Handbook areas include:

- Campus Buildings and Locations
- Key Administrators
- History and Traditions
- Financial Aid
- Payments and Refunds
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Campus Police and Safety
- Local Transportation
- Campus Life
- Leadership and Student Organizations
- University Bookstore
- Academic Colleges and Departments
- Academic Advising
- Counseling
- Tutoring
- Differently-Abled Student Services
- Medical Issues
- The Library
- Information Technology
- Career Services
- The FVSU Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Student Rights
- Freedom of Expression
- Dispute Resolution
- Student Government

THE CODE OF CONDUCT

FVSU VALUES

Just like in your household, FVSU has its own set of values we expect all Wildcats to embrace and exhibit. These are both they types of proactive, positive habits which lead to academic excellence and career advancement, but also the types of negative behavior we expect our students to avoid. These values are clearly written in the FVSU Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is part of the FVSU Student Handbook.

Students who violate the Code of Conduct are subject to discipline including suspension or expulsion. You've worked hard to help your child get to this point in their lives, and you certainly do not want it derailed by bad decisions. Talk to them, and keep talking to them, long after they have decided that "they know it all." It is important that they make the best decisions for their future, and there is no return from some bad choices.

Following are some offenses that will immediately put students in hot water:

- **sexual misconduct** including rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, unwanted touching, and failure to receive consent, domestic violence, dating violence, or verbal abuse
- **academic misconduct** including cheating and plagiarism
- **behavioral misconduct** including

- theft (property and identity)
- inappropriate weapons possession and usage
- drug use and possession of other illegal substances
- breaching campus safety by damaging safety equipment, obstructing access to buildings, or entering buildings when unauthorized to do so
- hazing
- vandalism
- intimidation
- providing false information
- disrespect and insubordination
- noise disturbances
- gambling
- inappropriate dress
- smoking

**Please note: This is not an exhaustive list of offenses and violations. For additional information, consult the Student Handbook.*



SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

FVSU takes allegations of sexual misconduct very seriously, and chances are, the standards of acceptable behavior has changed dramatically since you were there age. Consent is now one of the most important words when it comes to physical relationships, and “no means no” has been eclipsed by “yes means yes.” In addition, more is understood now about what kinds of verbal and nonverbal interaction are appropriate between two people so that both parties feel safe and comfortable.

FVSU students, faculty, and staff are required by the federal government to participate in Title IX training, referencing the federal statute governing gender-related conduct (and misconduct) in higher education. Violations of sexual misconduct policies are considered extremely serious, and often carry with them corresponding legal issues.

We want the experience of all of our students to be productive and progressive, and becoming the victim of sexual misconduct *or* a knowing or unwitting perpetrator of inappropriate behavior are contrary to that goal. Please make sure that you and your child understand the standards of acceptable physical interaction and relationship engagement at Fort Valley State University.

FVSU is required to investigate alleged sexual misconduct, even if a police report has been filed or it has been adjudicated through the criminal court system.

- Inappropriate behavior includes (but is not limited to) date violence, domestic violence, non-consensual sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and stalking. This includes situations where a person is incapable of giving consent due to drug or alcohol use.
- Sexual harassment creates a hostile environment that interferes with or limit’s a student’s ability to participate or benefit from educational programs.
- FVSU is required to take immediate action to eliminate sexual misconduct and prevent its recurrence.

DRESS

FVSU students are here primarily to prepare themselves for meaningful careers, and that requires a learning environment which promotes professionalism and pride. You can help a lot by working with them to refine their wardrobe.

GOING TO CLASS

Normally, it's fine for students to be comfortable when going to a regular class. This doesn't mean, however, that they should wear clothing that is too revealing or considered inappropriate. Students should respect their professors, peers, and visitors by dressing in a neat fashion.

PROFESSIONAL DRESS

Often students will be required to dress professionally for class presentations, interviews, assemblies, meetings, or other events. It is important that they understand what that means and that you help them acquire the clothing they will need when the time arises. While students do have free expression rights, FVSU does require that students observe

categories of dress as appropriate.

Dressing conservatively- Though professional dress is always subject to style discretions, dressing conservatively is always the right place to start.

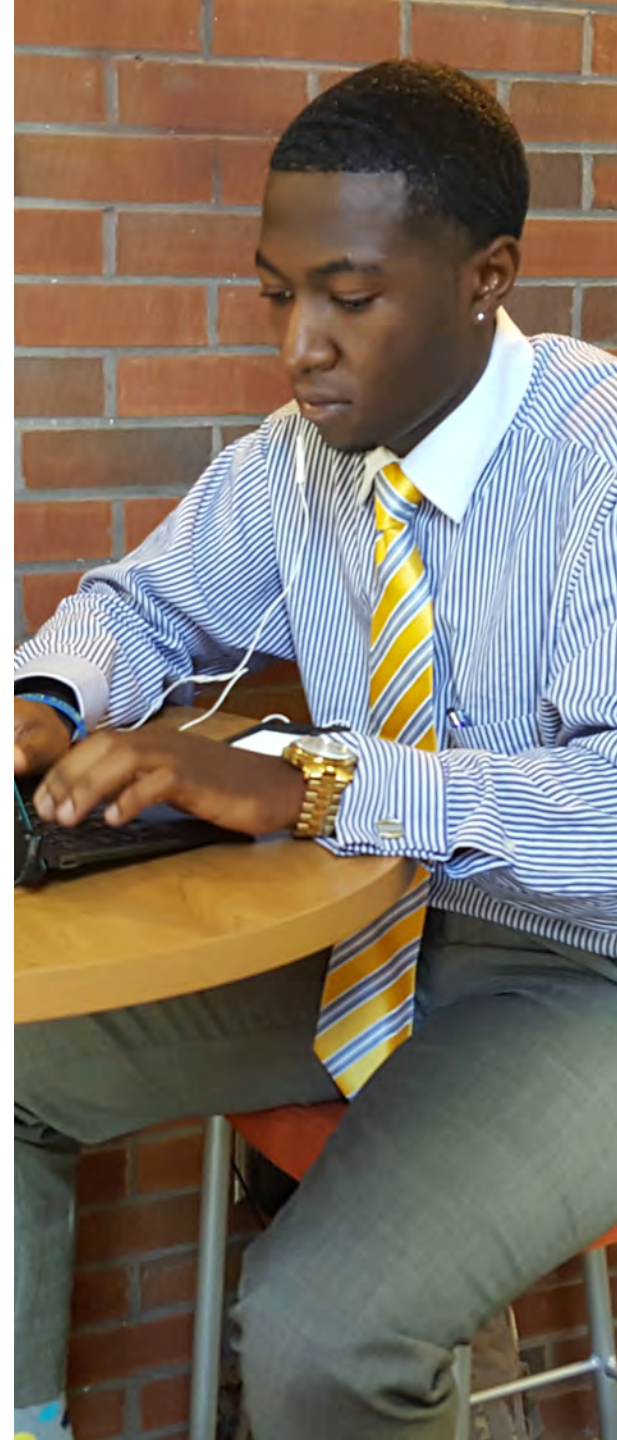
Shirts- Students generally need a collared shirt which they can wear with many different outfits and accessories, so a white or light colored shirt is an essential part of their wardrobe.

Pants or skirts- Dress slacks/skirt are often called for, though khaki pants/skirt are sometimes acceptable. It's best to stick with dark colors for dress slacks/skirt.

Blazers- A blazer is often needed to round out a professional outfit. It is recommended that students own a blazer they can wear with multiple pants/skirt/shirt combinations.

Ties- Ties demonstrate power through attention to detail and will often be needed to complete an outfit.

Shoes- Dress shoes are often a must for both female and male students.



DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND SANCTIONS

If a student engages in inappropriate behavior, it could result in sanctions ranging from minor teachable moments to suspension (temporary separation) or expulsion (permanent separation). That is why it is critically important that they understand how things work in the real world and that they are consequences to both positive and negative behavior.

All students are responsible for becoming familiar with the Student Code of Conduct. For clarification or questions pertaining to the Student Code of Conduct, please contact the Office of Student Conduct or Office of Dean of Students. Outcomes to violations of the Student Code of Conduct generally result in an administrative disciplinary meeting with possible sanctions. As a result of sanctioning, a student disciplinary file is created and housed within the Office of Student Conduct.

Additional outcomes may include, but are not limited to:

- A **disciplinary file**, whether sanctioned or not, will remain at the university for a period of five years after the last day of enrollment or graduation. Other colleges and universities can request copies of disciplinary records to review to determine admission
- A **suspension or expulsion** is noted on your academic transcript and is a permanent notation
- **Administrative hold** on a student's account due to failure to complete disciplinary obligations which will prohibit the student from accessing all student information (i.e., academic records and financial aid)
- **Disciplinary probation**, during which a student will not be

allowed to serve in a leadership capacity at the university disciplinary file (from inception to completion of sanctions) will be ineligible to participate in membership intake activities

- **Fines** which may range from \$150 to \$1,000
- **Ineligibility** to become a member of campus organization including Greek-lettered organizations

Adjudication Process

Students who allegedly commit a violation are always granted due process through FVSU's Office of Student Conduct. an *administrative meeting* they can acknowledge that they committed the violation and accept the recommended sanction. Alternatively, they can be afforded a *student conduct hearing* where members of the university community will hear the allegations against them and their side of the story, render a decision, and issue sanctions and disciplinary actions. The student can still *appeal* that decision to the vice president of student affairs, then to the university president, and ultimately to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. FVSU, in the interim, enforce preliminary sanctions while the appeal is in progress.

FVSU Police and Other Law Enforcement

FVSU rules are very important, but violations of the law are another matter entirely. FVSU's Police Department carries the same authority as any other police department and are actively involved in protecting the safety of our students and enforcing the laws of the State of Georgia. Once police become involved in a situation, you and your child need to understand that they have likely become part of the criminal justice system in this state.

THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The federal government really does recognize college students of age 18 and older as adults with a right to privacy. That means that information which is part of a student's educational record, including their grades, cannot be shared by the university with anyone without the student's consent. *This includes parents.*

The law that governs this called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). More information can be found at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guide/fpco/brochures/parents.html>.

This also includes disciplinary issues. FVSU cannot discuss disciplinary issues with parents without the written authorization of a student waiving his or her FERPA rights. That's why it is important that you maintain open and frequent communication lines with your child, so that you can stay informed about what is happening in their lives by hearing it directly from them.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM PARENTS

Q. My child just received a letter detailing that he/she is facing disciplinary action from the Office of Student Conduct. How can I find out what is happening?

A. The first step, as a parent, is to discuss the situation with your child. It is the policy of the institution to communicate with the student on all student conduct matters. The Offices of the Dean of Students and Student Conduct can only share specific case information when a student has signed a FERPA policy waiver within the Office of Student Conduct. Communication will still continue directly with the student. Students must represent themselves during the duration of the student conduct process at all times.

Q. My child just told me that he/she was involved in a student conduct matter. What can I do?

A. The student conduct process at Fort Valley State University does allow the parent limited involvement. It is encouraged that the parent speak with their child and provide moral support. The parent may give the child advice and ask questions of him or her, and even attend the hearing with their child. The parent cannot speak on behalf of the student or participate in the hearing.

Q. My child was told to appear at a hearing. May I attend this hearing?

A. The parent can attend the hearing, but cannot participate in the proceedings. The student conduct process calls for those who are directly involved being able to participate in the student conduct proceedings.

Q. My child and I are concerned that the student conduct proceedings could result in separation from the university. Should I hire an attorney for the hearing?

A. The decision to hire an attorney for a student conduct hearing is not necessary; however, it is a family decision. But understand that the attorney is prohibited from participating in the student conduct process. The attorney cannot represent the student in lieu of the student attending the hearing. An attorney is permitted to be present with the student during the student conduct proceedings, but only as an advisor to the student.

Q. My child was found not guilty of the charges in criminal court, why is the university proceeding with charges on campus?

A. There may be times where a code of conduct violation is also a criminal act that is being adjudicated through the court system. The Student Conduct Hearing Committee is not a criminal court and is solely concerned if rules of the university were violated by the student. It is possible that the criminal court finds a student "not guilty" or "charges are dropped" while the Student Conduct Hearing Committee finds the student "in violation" of the Code of Conduct on campus.

Q. My student is being held accountable for an incident that happened off-campus? Why and how can FVSU do this?

A. The Student Code of Conduct extends to behaviors that occur both on and off campus. A student's actions away from campus can initiate student conduct charges. Those charges will be adjudicated through the Office of Student Conduct.

OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Formerly the Office of Judicial Affairs)

The mission of the Office of Student Conduct is to support the university's educational mission and goals by engaging and empowering students, staff and faculty in the process of creating a safe, orderly and positive university environment. Efforts facilitate and support community values, standards and expectations which enhance just and fair disciplinary processes, student learning and support student intervention efforts.

The Office of Student Conduct is established to serve FVSU students in two capacities:

- 1. Advocacy:** Students who feel aggrieved by fellow students, faculty and/or staff can file grievances and complaints. This office can also provide general assistance to any student in need.
- 2. Disciplinary:** Violations of this code of conduct are processed through the Office of Student Conduct and, where deemed appropriate, forwarded to the Office of the Vice Provost for Student Affairs.

FVSU.EDU/OFFICEOFSTUDENTCONDUCT

Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. (Monday through Friday)

Phone: (478) 825.6258, Fax: (478) 825.6328

Email: StudentConduct@fvsu.edu" StudentConduct@fvsu.edu

Webpage: <http://www.fvsu.edu/home/current-students/student-code-of-conduct/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FVSUStudentConduct/>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/OSC_FVSU

Incident Reporting: <https://publicdocs.maxient.com/incidentreport.php?FortValleyStateUniv> .





IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS FOR PARENTS

Emergency: 911

Office of Student Conduct: (478) 825-6258

Dean of Students: (478) 825-6290

FVSU Police: (478) 825-6500

Vice President of Student Affairs: (478) 825-6291

Student Health and Counseling Services: (478) 822-1035

SAY SOMETHING

Fort Valley State University's first priority is a safe campus operating ethically and efficiently. No student or employee should ever feel unsafe, harassed, or pressured to keep secret their witness to an unethical act. If this ever occurs, please say something.

Visit fvsu.edu/saysomething for more information.