



Student & Parent Handbook

The First Tee of Aiken
901 Houndslake Drive
Aiken, SC 29803
(803) 226-0053

www.thefirstteeaiken.org

What is The First Tee?

The First Tee Mission

To impact the lives of young people in the Central Savannah River Area by providing learning facilities and educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf, and to provide an affordable and accessible golf facility, primarily to serve those who have not previously had exposure to the game and its positive values.

About The First Tee®

The First Tee was created in 1997 to introduce young people of all backgrounds to the game of golf and the life lesson it teaches. Through The First Tee Life Skills Experience™, a curriculum for teaching character education through specific life skills, children and teenagers around the world discover how the skills essential to success on the golf course can help them flourish in life. These skills include self-management, interpersonal communication, goal-setting, mentoring and effective conflict resolution. The Life Skills Experience sets the First Tee apart from other junior golf programs and youth initiatives, and ultimately hopes to instill in participants The First Tee Nine Core Values™: honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, courtesy, judgment, confidence, responsibility, and perseverance.

About The First Tee Nine Core Values™

Golf is an ideal context for acquiring The First Tee Nine Core Values, because it is a voluntary activity that provides challenges, requires commitment and effort over time, and has clear rules. The First Tee Life Skills Experience creates a youth-centered, mastery driven climate in which young people are empowered to explore options and make decisions, two elements that are critical to the development of a child's value system.

The Nine Core Values

1. **Honesty** - Golf is unique from other sports in that players regularly call penalties on themselves.
2. **Integrity** - Golf is a game of honesty, etiquette, and composure. You are responsible for your actions and personal conduct on the golf course.
3. **Sportsmanship** – You must know and abide by the rules of golf and be able to conduct yourself in a respectful manner.
4. **Respect** - In golf, it is important to show respect for yourself, your partners, your opponents, and the golf course as well as for the honor and tradition of the game.
5. **Confidence** – Confidence plays a key role in the level of play that you achieve. You must have confidence in your abilities every time you play.
6. **Responsibility** – In golf, you are responsible for yourself and your actions on the golf course. It is up to you to keep score, repair divots, rake bunkers, repair ball marks on the green and keep up with the pace of play.
7. **Perseverance** – To succeed in golf, you must learn to persevere through bad breaks and your own mistakes.
8. **Judgment** – Using good judgment is critical in golf. It comes into play when deciding on strategy, club selection, when to play safe and when to take a chance, the type of shot you consider executing, as well as understanding and abiding by etiquette.
9. **Courtesy** – A round of golf should begin and end with a handshake between fellow competitors. Show courtesy toward others by remaining still and quiet while they prepare and execute a shot.

The First Tee Experience

The First Tee Life Skills Experience is one of the unique features that separates The First Tee from many other successful junior golf programs. Through the Life Skills Experience, participants learn valuable lessons about the importance of maintaining a positive attitude; how to make decisions by thinking about possible outcomes; how to define and set goals, and how to transfer values such as responsibility, honesty, integrity, respect, confidence, and sportsmanship from the golf course to everyday life.

What is The First Tee of Aiken?

The First Tee of Aiken Mission

To impact the lives of young people by providing educational programs that build character, instill life-enhancing values and promote healthy choices through the game of golf.

The First Tee of Aiken Vision

To teach The First Tee Nine Core Values™; providing the vehicle through which kids can accomplish their dreams, thrive socially, excel academically and athletically, and become productive members of society with integrity, strong family values and commitment to community.

About The First Tee of Aiken

The First Tee of Aiken was established in August 2009, and is a locally owned and operated nonprofit organization. The First Tee of Aiken is located at 901 Houndslake Drive. The First Tee of Aiken formed a partnership with Houndslake Country Club, a 27-hole championship course designed in 1974 by Joe Lee, who planned Doral, La Costa and Disney World. Enrolled students receive quality life skills and golf instruction, discounted green fees and range balls, free use of equipment if necessary, supervised practice privileges and more. No student or group will be turned away based on their inability to pay. Special emphasis is placed on youth that are at-risk-youth, economically disadvantaged, girls, minorities, and youth with disabilities.

Registration

REGISTRATION IS ONLINE at www.thefirstteeaiken.org. Classes are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Registration will not be accepted via telephone or fax. Payment must be made at time of registration, unless the student is requesting a Fee scholarship (request form by phone, email, in-person, or online). Returning members may pay the Annual Membership at any time during the year, prior to registering for a class. By doing so, they agree to register for a class and participate in it with 80% attendance or better. Failure to do so results in payment in full for the membership of \$350.00. To ensure that all students are learning from The First Tee Life Skills Experience, the Annual Membership Fee will only be accepted from new members upon registering for a class.

Membership

All students registered for the current calendar year will receive a temporary membership card. This card is used to encourage responsibility, and must be presented to receive discounted range balls and green fees. The First Tee of Aiken photo membership cards may be issued upon request and successful completion of a Birdie Level Certification Class. Without the presentation of a membership card, public rates will apply. Lost or badly damaged cards will be replaced for a fee of \$5.00. Membership privileges may be suspended at any time due to lack of student attendance (drop-outs), participation or disciplinary reasons.

Membership Privileges

Active Members receive the following privileges:

- \$1.00 bag of range balls
- \$2.00 9 hole round green fees (walking)
- Member Opportunities – See current class schedule for Member Opportunities
- Opportunities to apply and participant in local, regional, and national The First Tee events

The First Tee of Aiken Code of Conduct

All members and guests are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct

- Respect for Self
- Respect for Others
- Respect for Surroundings

Dress Code

The required dress code is a collared shirt and knee length shorts/skorts/skirts or slacks. No jeans or denim at any time on the golf course or practice areas. Athletic shoes or golf shoes (no spikes).

- Males must have their shirt tucked in
- Girls: If it has sleeves it does not need to have a collar, but if it does not have sleeves, it has to have a collar.
- Club appropriate denim is only allowed in the Clubhouse and will not be permitted at The First Tee of Aiken facility or on the golf course. Note – club appropriate denim is defined as denim which is neat and clean but does not include cut-offs, overalls, denim that is soiled and stained or has holes, tears or frayed material.

Remove hat indoors

- Caps and visors must be worn properly at all times. Male patrons are expected to remove their caps upon entering the building.

Respect Houndslake Country Club Member only areas and rules

Safety Rules

- Pay attention at all times
- Do not swing a golf club if someone is in your safety zone
- Do not swing golf clubs inside the facility
- Do not hit balls at the range picker
- Do not swing a club or hit balls toward anyone
- No running, yelling, throwing, bad language, or horseplay will be tolerated
- Do not collect golf balls on the driving range
- Head to the clubhouse immediately in the event of inclement weather
- No students are allowed to drive golf carts, unless they are 16 year old with a valid driver's license
- Check in at the Pro Shop desk before playing a round of golf. In the event of an emergency, we'll know who's on the golf course.

Our Expectations

All students are expected to:

- Abide by The First Tee Code of Conduct
- Follow all safety and course rules
- Be on time
- Listen carefully to Coaches and Volunteers
- Be friendly, helpful and meet new friends
- Wear spike less golf shoes or athletic shoes
- Label your personal equipment
- Come prepared with balls, glove, tees, ball marker, and divot tool. If you are unable to purchase them, you can earn them. Ask us how.
- Respect each others' differences and abilities
- Practice! Practice! Practice! Attending class once a week is not enough to master golf or life skills
- Properly request range balls at the Pro shop desk
- Return your eating area, or any area you use at The First Tee facility, to a clean and tidy condition
- Respect Houndslake Country Club Members Only Areas

Repeated violations of safety rules, code of conduct and program policies will result in disciplinary action or suspension.

Off Limits to Students

The following areas are off limits to students:

- Behind Pro Shop and Food & Beverage counters
- Maintenance Shed
- Cart Barn
- Members Only Areas

Consequences for Misbehavior

1st Time – Verbal Warning

2nd Time – 5 minutes of “time out”

3rd Time – Time-out for the remainder of class and possible contact with parent/guardian

4th Time – Parent/guardian contact and possible suspension from the program

*Yet, all consequences are at the discretion of The First Tee of Aiken staff and will be based on the level of misbehavior.

Golf and Life Skills Certification

Upon registration in The First Tee Program, students will begin training to successfully complete The First Tee golf and life skills Certification Requirements. Once a student has successfully completed the certification requirements for their current level, he/she will be promoted to more advanced program levels: PLAYer, Birdie, Eagle and Ace Levels. The length of time needed to advance from one level to the next will vary from student to student. It is not a race, but a journey that assures each student receives the necessary tools to have a fun and rewarding life on and off the golf course.

Certification requirements

The First Tee curriculum offers five progressive levels of golf and life skills instruction: PLAYer, Par, Birdie, Eagle, and Ace. Participants must successfully complete all of the golf and life skills requirements with a score of 80% or higher, and meet the minimum age requirement, before advancing to more advanced program levels. In the best interest of the student, a Coach may recommend that a student retake a class if all certification requirements have not been met. Successful completion of certification requirements will be tracked on student bag tags, and in the Certification Tracking database. Students and parents may request a transcript of classes and certification requirements completed from the Coaches or in The First Tee Classroom/Office.

Certification Classes

The 8-week, golf and life skills certification classes meet once a week for 1.5 hours, and incorporate positive life skills with quality golf instruction. The First Tee Coaches and trained volunteers use: modeling/role playing, feedback/asking open-ended questions, peer mentoring, opportunities for self-monitoring, games, humor, reinforcement and repetition of concepts, direct instruction, and creating coachable moments to teach and reinforce The First Tee curriculum, concepts and Nine Core Values.

Make-Up Classes.

Missed class cannot be made up. However, students are allowed two excused absences. Class assignments are expected to be made up.

Permission to Leave the Premises

ALL students are expected to remain on The First Tee grounds at all times. If parents would like to give students' permission to leave with other parents, students or other areas off-site, please speak directly to lead coach to arrange.

Inclement Weather

Classes are not cancelled on rainy days. Member Opportunities will not meet in the event of inclement weather. Parents and participants will be contacted if extenuating circumstances present. Weather related cancellations and closings follow the Aiken County Public School decisions. In the event a member is on the course and there is inclement weather that requires the member to come off the course, The First Tee of Aiken staff or coaches will bring them to safety.

The First Tee of Aiken Course Rates

Open to Members and their Guests

The First Tee of Aiken Members MUST have TFTA Issued ID for current year

Green Fees - Walking

	Non-member/ <u>Guest</u>		<u>TFTA Member</u>
9 holes	\$10.00		\$2.00
18 holes (9 2x)	\$15.00		

Green Fees – Riding (must have valid driver’s license to operate golf cart)

9 holes	\$19.00 per person (GF \$10.00 + Cart \$9.00)
18 holes (9 2x)	\$32.00 per person (GF \$15.00 + Cart \$17.00)

Driving Range

	Non-member/ <u>Guest</u>		<u>TFTA Member</u>
Small Bags	\$3.00		\$1.00
Large Bags	\$6.00		

Hours of Operation

Monday- Sunday	7:30am – Dark
Sunday Range Closes	5:00 pm

**Please note that the last range balls and tee time are sold approximately one hour before closing (6pm, 7pm after daylight savings). *All members playing without an adult are asked to return to the Pro-Shop and sign out 45 minutes before dark.*

For Tee Times Call Pro Shop

803-648-3333

The First Tee of Aiken members can play The First Tee of Aiken designated course with their membership card for rates posted. Guests of the member may play with a member for rates posted.

Members without membership card will pay guest rates to play.

The First Tee of Aiken members may play the course with an adult at their leisure. A member may play the course with another member(s), buddy system, if they are Birdie or higher. To play the course alone a member must have coach’s approval.

PROGRAM LEVELS

See certification document at the end of the handbook for more details.

For many of our participants, The First Tee program will be a new experience. In addition to meeting other young people from different backgrounds, they will be exposed to golf in a fun environment that emphasizes courtesy, honesty, self-management, and respect. Let us re-emphasize that the length of time needed to advance from one level to the next will vary from student to student. It is not a race, but a journey that assures each student receives the necessary tools to have a fun and rewarding life on and off the golf course.

PLAYer Level

The PLAYer Level focuses on interpersonal skills and self-management for successfully achieving PLAYer certification. Welcoming and showing respect, courtesy towards others, responsibility on the course, the honesty of PLAYers, modeling sportsmanship, developing confidence, using good judgment, playing with perseverance, living with integrity and more.

Par Level

The Par Level focuses on interpersonal communication and self-management skills in preparation for successfully achieving Par Certification. Participants learn how to explore the game, respect the rules, meet and greet, have fun while they learn, stay cool, find their personal Par, as well as fundamental golf skills. Each participant must successfully master the Par golf and life skills before advancing to the next program level.

Birdie Level

The Birdie Level focuses primarily on goal setting. The Birdie level curriculum teaches and emphasizes developing goals, goal ladders (plans/steps to achieving their goals), and how to deal with challenges when faced with adversity. The golf skills in this level focus on advanced putting and short game skills, competitive play and a more intense instruction in the rules of golf. Students will develop goals for their golf game and work to achieve those goals.

Eagle Level

Eagle Level students have demonstrated a commitment to The First Tee Program and to the game of golf. Students enrolled in this level will be leaders, mentors and role models for younger students in the program and will be eligible to participate in national First Tee activities. Eagle Level students learn about health and wellness, building a support team, dealing with conflicts, appreciating diversity and planning for the future. Students will focus on getting the most out of their practice sessions, learning to self-check their swings, improving their accuracy and course management.

Ace Level

Ace Level students have demonstrated a commitment to The First Tee Program and to the game of golf. Students of this level will be leaders, mentors and role models for younger students. Ace focuses on personal planning and reinforces interpersonal communication, self-management, goal-setting, self-coaching, and resistance skills that were applied in the earlier levels. Participants also receive additional support in developing their golf skills and, for those who choose, in pursuing competitive golf. Ace participants engage in four projects that center on activities designed to help them further develop as individuals and assets to their communities. Projects: Enjoy golf for life, investigate career possibilities, give back and explore educational activates.

Student Achievement Program and The First Tee National Participant Opportunities

The First Tee of Aiken rewards students for their achievements on and away from the golf course. Students are encouraged to submit their academic, golf and volunteer hours earned at TFTA via the Student Achievement form found in The First Tee Classroom.

- A/B Honor Roll: Annually, Chapters report to the home office their participants who have earned all As and/or Bs (or the equivalent) on their report cards. All participants, regardless of age, are eligible for this recognition. At the end of the school year, participants should reply to emails from Coach Heidi requesting information. A member of our staff will verify the grades, and record in our database.
- Other Participant Opportunities (more details available in TFTA Classroom):
 - Future Leaders Forum
 - Life Skills and Leadership Academy
 - College Prep Academy
 - RBS Achievers of the Year Awards
 - Scholars Program
 - John Deere Girls Golf Academy
 - USGA STEM Academy
 - The First Tee Open at Pebble Beach

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to get involved in the following ways:

- Reinforcing core values and life skills at home
- Encouraging students to practice
- Joining The First Tee of Aiken Parent Council
- Becoming a trained Volunteer

Parents Attending Class

Parents sometimes get over enthusiastic and want to become involved with their own children during the class. Although well intentioned, this may disrupt the class and makes many students feel uncomfortable, which can detract from the learning process. Parents are asked to observe at a distance, approved by Coach, and not distract or be involved with the student during class time.

Play the Course Outside of Scheduled Programs

With parents, guests, other members or alone.

Clubs:

- If you need clubs, use the clubs that are provided by The First Tee of Aiken. Please return where you got them from and leave the club storage room better than you found it.
- If you are a beginner, you do not need a full set of clubs. You will need the following: 3 wood, 5 iron, 7 iron, putter and a bag that fits your sized clubs. Also, you need tees, balls, ball markers.

Carts/Golf Cars:

- The First Tee of Aiken cars are not for members or family use.
- If you want to ride, you must have a valid driver's license and you have to rent the cart from the Houndslake pro shop.
- Outside The First Tee of Aiken classroom there are several pull-carts available for use. Please return them in the same condition, or better, than you found them.

Check-In:

- Always check-in in person at the Houndslake pro shop before playing
- Have your member ID or you will pay the guest fee, not member fee.

Playing:

- Beginners do not need to play from the teeing ground. It may be more fun for you to play the par fours and par fives from 150 yards from the green, indicated by a white marker in the middle of the fairway.

Pace of Play:

- Always let faster players play through.
- For beginners, 9 holes of golf should take no longer than 2 hours and 30 minutes
- If players are consistently taking longer than pace of play, they will be required to play with a coach.

Taking Care of the Course:

- Leave the course looking as good, or better, than you found it – PERIOD.
 - Don't leave trash, apple cores, banana peels, water bottles, etc. on the ground.
 - Fix divots, rake bunkers and repair ball markers.

Finally...THE #1 RULE:

- HAVE FUN!

Need Golf Clubs?

Students may borrow clubs from The First Tee of Aiken as needed. The First Tee of Aiken will also provide free or discounted clubs (or shoes, bags, etc.) to students based on need. These items are made available from our supply of donated items; therefore, we may not be able to fill each request immediately.

Tournaments and Special Events

The First Tee of Aiken hosts tournaments and special events to give students opportunities to experience competitions and meet new friends in a fun environment. Watch for information regarding special events in weekly Updates and Reminders emails!

Communication

We will make every effort to keep students and parents informed of club activities.

Please check the following regularly for important information:

- Email is our primary method of communication.

Please provide us with parent's or student's email address on registration form.

- Pro shop & Classroom Bulletin Boards
- www.TheFirstTeeAiken.org

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