

Ascent Classical Academy of Grand Junction



Family and Student Handbook
2024-2025



THE VISION

Ascent Classical Academy Charter Schools develop the moral and intellectual skills, habits, and virtues upon which independent, responsible, and joyful lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis for a free and flourishing republic.

THE MISSION

Ascent Classical Academy Charter Schools train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a classical, content-rich education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue in an orderly and disciplined environment.

CORE VIRTUES

- Courage ● Moderation ● Justice ● Responsibility ● Prudence ● Friendship ● Wonder

MOTTO

ad maiora ex tenebris

Out of the darkness towards the greater things

LOCATION

Ascent Classical Academy of Grand Junction
545 31 Road, Grand Junction Colorado 81504

Headmaster: Carissa Drake

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This document collects the procedures that ACAGJ uses to implement the policies identified in the Family Handbook. The material in this document is site-specific and will not apply to other Ascent schools outside of Ascent Classical Academy of Grand Junction.

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Introduction to the Family Handbook

The ACAGJ Family Handbook is a site specific document that details the policies and procedures of our campus. This document complements and is in alignment with the Ascent Classical Academy Charter Schools Board Policy Handbook. For Board level policies, which include grievance policies, expulsion, retention and promotion, etc. please see the ACACS Board Policy Handbook. For all Ascent Classical Academy of Grand Junction, site related policies, please review this handbook in detail.

ACA Educational Philosophy

Philosophy

Ascent Classical Academy Charter Schools' mission is derived from the history and philosophy of liberal education in Western Civilization and in America. Currently, traditional, classical education is experiencing a renaissance in this country after decades of neglect. Within this broader reform, Ascent Classical Academy Charter Schools follow the principles and curriculum of what might be called an American classical education, whose mission encouraged the formation of human beings and citizens who will flourish in life and serve their communities and country in manifold way. To embrace the mission, the school holds certain essays and texts to be foundation. Among these are the following:

- *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them* by E.D. Hirsch
- *The Making of Americans* by E.D. Hirsch
- *The Great Conversation* by Robert Maynard Hutchins
- *A Classical Education for Modern Times* by Terrence O. Moore

Important Historical Sources:

- *Proposals Relating to the Education of youth in Pennsylvania* by Benjamin Franklin
- *Virginia Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* by Thomas Jefferson
- *A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools* by Benjamin Rush

Hillsdale College Candidate Member School

Ascent Classical Academy of Grand Junction is proud to be a Hillsdale College Candidate Member School. As a candidate member school, ACAGJ employs the Hillsdale College K-12 curriculum and receives training and support from the Hillsdale K-12 academic team. Hillsdale College was founded to provide the kind of sound learning necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty. For over 175 years, it has offered an outstanding liberal arts education for undergraduate students. Restoring excellence to American K-12 education is a natural extension of the College's mission, and Hillsdale has been helping K-12 schools for over three decades.

Hillsdale teaches K-12 schools to provide an education that is both classical and American in its orientation; one that is rooted in the liberal arts and sciences, offers a firm grounding in civic virtue, and cultivates moral character.

Honor Code

Consistent with its mission to develop students with good character and virtue, ACAGJ sets forth the following honor code:

I am honorable and responsible in conduct, honest in word and deed, respectful of others, and will promote the same.

Consistent with the above honor code, ACAGJ takes instances of plagiarism and cheating very seriously. Our mission is to guide students towards virtue and responsibility. As such the following process will be followed when instances of plagiarism or cheating are discovered.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. Students progress academically only by receiving comments and corrections on work they turn and by taking these comments and corrections to heart in order to improve their performance. The entire system of assessment rests on the assumption that the work a student turns in is his/her own. Plagiarism compromises the system, is unfair to other students in the class who do their own work, and constitutes a form of theft of others' ideas and labor.

Plagiarism is defined as the appropriation of another's ideas or words in order to present them as one's own. An instance of plagiarism can be as long as a term paper or as short as a sentence. Simply rephrasing can an author's words can also constitute plagiarism. The words of authors can only be used when properly quoted and cited. Teachers will provide the guidelines of acceptable citation. When in doubt, the student has the responsibility to ask how an author should be used in an assignment.

Whenever a student has been caught plagiarizing, the following process will be followed:

1. The teacher will keep a copy of the student's assignment and, whenever possible, a copy of the plagiarized work. The teacher will write a brief description of the instance of the plagiarism. These materials will be placed in the student's permanent record.
2. The teacher will inform the headmaster and the Dean of Students of the plagiarism.
3. Either the teacher or the Dean of Students will inform the student's parent(s) of the plagiarism.
4. The student will receive an F on the assignment if it is the first offense. (It will be at the discretion of the teacher if the student will be allowed to do a new or alternate assignment.)
5. For the second offense, the student will fail the entire course, and further disciplinary action, to include suspension or expulsion, may be instituted.

A disciplinary referral slip will be issued if plagiarism has occurred. High school students found guilty of academic dishonesty will not be ranked, and therefore cannot be Salutatorian or Valedictorian.

Cheating

Like plagiarism, cheating will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. Cheating occurs when a student uses someone else's work or a prohibited source of information in order to gain an unfair advantage on a test or an assignment and to avoid doing his/her own work. Cheating comes in many forms. One student copying off another, a student using a "cheat sheet" to answer questions on a test, and a student trying to pass off another student's work as his own are examples of cheating.

Whenever a teacher suspects two students of cheating, he/she should confront the students individually. Otherwise, the same process outlined for plagiarism should be followed in instances of cheating. A student who allows other to copy his/her work will also be held accountable in the same fashion.

A disciplinary referral will be issued if cheating has occurred. High school students found guilty of academic dishonesty will not be ranked, and therefore cannot be Salutatorian or Valedictorian.

Educational Priorities and Curriculum

The Governing Board desired that all students receive a classical, liberal arts education. To this end, the Board has determined the following educational priorities.

1. Basic cognitive skills: reading, writing, mathematics
2. Core Subjects:
 - a. English language and literature
 - b. History, geography, and government
 - c. Physical and biological sciences
 - d. Mathematics
3. Other classical subjects: Latin, art, and music
4. Auxiliary subjects: Foreign languages, physical education, and performing arts
5. Extracurricular activities of any type

Curriculum Guidance

ACAGJ's teachers create their own lessons within the scope of a content-rich K-12 scope and sequence with the guidance of the Hillsdale College K-12 Program Guide, founded on the following principles:

1. The centrality of the Western tradition in the study of history, literature, philosophy, and fine arts;
2. A rich and recurring examination of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions;
3. The use of explicit phonics instruction leading to reading fluency, and the use of explicit grammar instruction leading to English language mastery;
4. The teaching of Latin;
5. The acknowledgement of objective standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth intrinsic to the liberal arts;
6. A school culture demanding moral virtue, decorum, respect, discipline, and studiousness among the students and faculty;
7. A curriculum that is content-rich, balanced and strong across the four core disciplines of math, science, literature, and history;
8. A faculty where well-educated and articulate teachers explicitly convey real knowledge to students using traditional teaching methods rather than using so-called "student-centered learning" methods;
9. The effective use of technology without diminishing the faculty leadership that is crucial to academic achievement; and
10. Grades K through 12 within a single school.

Academic Progress and Success

Grading

Grades are not the be-all and end-all of education. Nonetheless, grades are a useful tool to evaluate and communicate a student's mastery of the curriculum. Teachers will assign grades in order to reflect accurately the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge of a subject. To this end, the following letter grades have these meanings:

A - Mastery

B - Proficiency

C - Sufficiency (Competence)

D - Insufficiency

F - Failing

In addition to these general parameters, we will use a 4.0 grading scale. The following grading scale will be used for all grades K-12:

A	94-100%	4.0*
A-	90-93%	3.7
B+	87-89%	3.3
B	84-86%	3.0
B-	80-83%	2.7
C+	77-79%	2.3
C	74-76%	2.0
C-	70-73%	1.7
D+	67-69%	1.3
D	64-66%	1.0
D-	60-63%	0.7
F	0-59%	0.0

*GPA calculations only apply to students in 9-12 grade.

The grading scale as defined above is utilized for all students. Incompletes will only be given under special circumstances as determined by the headmaster. It is the responsibility of parents and students to remain informed of the student's progress.

Weighted GPA

ACAGJ does not inflate student grades, since doing so poorly prepared students to lead independent, responsible, and productive lives. Nevertheless, the larger academic world does not share our view, and to

ignore this would do a disservice to our students as they apply for some colleges and scholarships. In order to maintain the integrity of our classrooms while recognizing the pressures of the broader academic world, ACAGJ adopts the following weighted grading policy.

For purposes of official high school transcripts only, honors courses and courses that count for both high school and college credit will be weighted on a 5-point scale as follows:

A	94-100%	5.0
A-	90-93%	4.7
B+	87-89%	4.3
B	84-86%	4.0
B-	80-83%	3.7
C+	77-79%	3.3
C	74-76%	3.0
C-	70-73%	2.7
D+	67-69%	2.3
D	64-66%	2.0
D-	60-63%	1.7
F	0-59%	0.0

For report cards, retention and promotion decisions, clubs and athletic eligibility, honor roll designations, eligibility for in-school honors, and for all other purposes, the standard 4-point scale applies.

Promotion Requirements

For detailed information regarding promotion requirements for K-6 and 7-12 students, see the Ascent Classical Academies Board Handbook.

Grade Level Retention

The purpose of promotions and retentions is to provide maximum consideration for the long-range welfare of the student and to provide an opportunity for each student to progress through school according to his/her own needs and abilities.

It is expected that most students will be promoted annually from one grade level to another upon completion of satisfactory work, however, a student may be retained when his/her standards of achievement or social, emotion, mental or physical development would not allow satisfactory progress in the next higher grade. Retention normally occurs before the student leaves the primary grades.

Parents/guardians who wish to appeal the decision for retention must first contact the headmaster. If parents/guardians do not accept the decision of the headmaster, an appeal may be made in writing.

Graduation Requirements

For detailed information regarding graduation requirements, see the Ascent Classical Academies Board Handbook.

Academic Support

Conference

Students in grades 7-9 have conference time built into their weekly schedule on a routine basis. Conference time is intended to offer students the opportunity to consult with teachers during the school day. Conference time is especially important for students with extracurriculars and after-school commitments.

Conference is academic time, not break time or free play. Students are expected to work independently and studiously under the guidance of a teacher. Students who do not need to consult with a teacher should treat this time as an opportunity to begin homework, catch up on personal organization, or read quietly. Students will remain in their current classroom unless they have signed out to visit a teacher with a specific purpose. Students may not wander the halls or visit other rooms socially.

Clubs and Houses may be permitted to conduct meetings during conference time. Academics come first: students who need to use conference time to consult with teachers or take care of makeup work must meet those obligations prior to attending House or club events. Conference time may also be used for special events or presentations for upper school students, such as guest speakers.

Students who abuse conference time may lose their privilege to travel between classrooms or attend club and House events during conference time. Disciplinary action may also be taken for repeated or egregious misconduct during conference time.

Intervention

Students in grades K-6 have intervention time build into their daily schedule. This time is intended for specific intervention in mathematics and literacy. During this time, special education teachers and paraprofessionals may pull students in order to meet the required goals of an IEP or 504 plan or for therapy. Additionally, the reading interventist will push into classrooms to offer further support for students not meeting reading goals or for students on READ plans. Classroom teachers will use this time to offer extension activities or provide remediation.

Tutoring

Tutoring is offered on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 3:15 PM to 3:45 PM. Thursdays are reserved for staff development. Teachers may offer tutoring on Fridays at their discretion. Tutoring is offered to our families free of charge.

Tutoring is intended to support students who are struggling with current concepts. Tutoring is not a time for intensive remediation, nor can tutoring be considered a substitute for missed class time.

Tutoring (K-5th grade)

Tutoring in grades 1-4 is run in a small-group format. Should your child need more individual

support, your child's teacher may propose a personalized tutoring program specifically targeted at an area that requires additional attention. Parents may be asked to attend these sessions with their child in order to reinforce the materials and methods that require individual support.

Parents who feel their child needs additional support in a particular area should contact their child's teacher to make arrangements. Please note that same-day requests for tutoring will not be accommodated. Tutoring must be scheduled at least one day in advance.

Tutoring time may be used to complete makeup work for extended absences at the teacher's discretion.

Tutoring (6-9)

In grades 6-9, tutoring is run in an office hours format. As these students are older and own more of their learning process, they are expected to make arrangements to meet with their teachers for extra support during tutoring time. Students in grades 6-9 may also arrange to complete makeup work with teachers during tutoring. The student planner will be used to help students prepare for tutoring and communicate home.

Teachers will determine specific days of the week to offer subject specific tutoring. Students who are not meeting content benchmarks will be required to attend tutoring and information regarding available times will be communicated from the teacher to parents via phone or email.

Tutoring is a privilege at ACAGJ. Students who abuse tutoring through disruptive or disrespectful behavior may be prohibited from attending tutoring. Should students be registered for tutoring but be found wandering the school building, they will be delivered to After School Care, and parents can pay the drop-in fees associated.

As academics come first at ACAGJ, students attending tutoring may be excused from extracurricular activities or obligations (e.g., sports practice) without penalty, so long as arrangements for tutoring are communicated in advance to the coach or activity leader.

Questions or concerns about tutoring should be directed to your child's teacher.

Mandatory Tutoring

Tutoring is an important aspect of school culture and student success. ACAGJ encourages students to take ownership of their learning, seek out support when needed, and make every effort to develop responsible academic habits. To this end, ACAGJ has a mandatory tutoring program intended to help students achieve proficiency in academic content areas.

Mandatory tutoring structure:

- 4 weeks into each grading period a progress report will communicate student performance and progress towards academic goals.
- Per the cut offs below, students will be assigned after school or conference mandatory tutoring.
- The teacher, Deans of Grammar School and Upper School, and Dean of Students will work together to develop a tutoring schedule for the student and communicate this schedule to the students and his/her parents.
 - In the event that an upper school student has deficient grades in multiple subjects, multiple days may be assigned with different teachers.

- Students will remain on mandatory tutoring until the end of the grading period or until the student has reached proficiency or a C or better.
- Grades will also impact extracurricular eligibility. (see the ACAGJ Athletic Handbook for more information)

Students who would be required to attend mandatory tutoring are as follows:

- K-3rd grade students who are below or approaching proficiency.
- 4th-6th grade students with grades of D or below.
- 7th-8th grade students with grades of C- or below.

Questions or concerns regarding mandatory tutoring should be directed to the Dean of Students, Dean of Grammar School, or Dean of Upper School.

Homework

One of the best ways for parents to be involved in their child’s education is to provide support and structure for homework. Homework is an opportunity for students to practice skills taught in class and, for our older students, prepare for the next day’s classes. As a general guideline, the homework assignments set by our teachers should be tasks the average student could complete in ten minutes multiplied by their grade level (e.g. if your child is in third grade, they should have no more than 30 minutes of homework plus reading). This number represents the total homework time across ALL subjects that the average student should spend per grade level:

The Average Time for ALL Homework Assignments, by Grade:

- K-1st: no more than 10 mins (other than student/parent read-aloud)
- 2nd: 20 min (other than student/parent read-aloud)
- 3rd: 30 min
- 4th: 30-40 min
- 5th: 40-50 min
- 6th: 50-60 min
- 7th-8th: 60-75 min
- High School: 60-90 min

These times include the time required for a student to complete a literature/history reading assignment.

Note that a student outside of the average could take more or less time to complete all their assignments. Students requiring far more time than these guidelines to complete their work should be encouraged to attend after-school tutoring and parents should reach out to the teacher.

PowerSchool

At ACAGJ we are under the philosophy that a letter grade within itself is not the end goal for our students, but that the grade and the student ownership of maintaining their grade is a reflection of a learner living out our core virtues.

As grades are an important indicator of a student’s performance and level of content mastery, the PowerSchool Parent portal is the primary means of communication regarding student academic progress.

Parents have 24-hour access to their child's online gradebook through the parent portal and are able to see scores as well as teacher comments on assignments. Parents are encouraged to check PowerSchool regularly to make sure they are aware of their child's progress and potential academic needs.

ACAGJ encourages parents to provide grade book access to students in grades 7-12 so that students can take responsibility for their own academic success. A student who can see their missing assignments and scores is better equipped to seek out additional support from their teacher. Upper School students are also invited to visit the Post-Graduate Advisor to check their grades during lunch time or conference.

Should parents be unable to log into PowerSchool, they should immediately contact our Registrar to have their password reset.

Summer Assignments

Educators and parents alike have long lamented how much students forget over summer break. Studies show that prolonged detachment from academic endeavors sets a young mind back significantly. Unfortunately, teachers must spend a considerable amount of time at the beginning of each year getting rid of the academic rust students accumulate over the summer.

A summer assignment attempts to remedy this situation. Summer assignments are not intended to burden students during a time best spent with friends and family. Rather, the assignments attempt to enhance summer break by showing students how to spend their time wisely. Upper school students are given a specific assignment that they are required to complete before the first day of school. These assignments are particular to each age and course of study they will be completing in the fall. Both returning and new upper school students are required to complete this assignment. Please make sure to affirm the importance of this endeavor and support your child and the school in its completion.

For younger students, we have a suggested summer reading list posted on our website and encourage you and your children to explore its richness, build memories, and habituate their hearts towards reading over the summer break.

Questions about the summer reading assignment should be directed to the Headmaster.

Teacher Communication

ACAGJ grammar school teachers send out a Weekly Newsletter as a first line of communication with parents regarding routine information and curricula for the upcoming week. We recommend that parents review the newsletter for upcoming events and content weekly.

Teachers may also share additional information or resources in their newsletters that parents and students may find helpful. Students in grades 3-6 will be expected to use the Ascent provided planner, which will be checked daily. Parents should refer to their child's planner for detailed homework assignments. Large projects and general information will be provided in the Weekly Newsletter, but homework specifics will come home in student planners. This is meant to train healthy homework habits. Upper school students are expected to maintain a planner but it will not be checked daily by teachers. Students are expected to be responsible for their daily work.

All students will have a planner with the expectation that it will be used on a daily basis.

- 3rd-4th grade students will fill out planners with teacher support. Teachers/TAs and Parents should initial their planner nightly.
- 5th-6th grade students will copy weekly or daily homework assignments. Parents should initial their planners nightly.
- Upper school students will copy a weekly agenda with due dates, upcoming assignments or events as adding daily homework assignments.

Testing

Philosophy of Testing

In general, standardized tests do not align with our educational philosophy for a number of reasons. When these assessments are used as accountability measures, schools are incentivized to prioritize test results, “teaching to the test”, to ensure tested standards are mastered above all else. This has the potential to limit the breadth and depth of a school’s curriculum, as well as place undue pressure on students to perform within a narrow set of prescribed standards. At Ascent, we are fortunate to have a classical, content-rich curriculum that more than meets the limited scope of state requirements, and we trust that our students will perform well on the standardized assessments as a matter of course.

Standardized Tests at ACAGJ¹

ACAGJ participates in several different standardized tests throughout the school year, including DIBELS8, MAPS (NWEA), CMAS and PSAT. Ascent does not teach to the limited scope of these tests, but we use the data collected from these assessments to evaluate and improve the delivery of our classical education program.

¹ Per ACACS Board Handbook policy AP-13.0, ACAGJ administers standardized tests via paper-based testing whenever possible. Questions about standardized testing at ACAGJ should be directed to the Testing Coordinator.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Carline

Carline is the means by which students at Ascent Classical Academy are dropped off and picked up from school. Morning drop-off begins at 7:15 AM; parents may arrive on campus as early as 7:10 AM to begin lining up. Carline ends at 7:38 AM. Parents must walk their students into the building to check in at the Front Office after these times. It is imperative that students are dropped off in time to get to their classroom by 7:40.

Carline Drive Plan and Morning Drop Off

All traffic will enter school from the west entrance and exit campus using the east entrance. Incoming traffic will use the I-70B Frontage Rd to access Hoover Dr. All cars should head north on Hoover Dr. to E ¼ Rd. Cars will turn right onto E ¼ and then make a quick left into campus. Please be mindful not to block the road or driveways in respect to our neighbors.

Cars should follow the drive path through campus and drop students off at the student drop off area across from the main entrance to the school. Cars will then exit through the east exit onto E ¼ Road to 31 Rd.

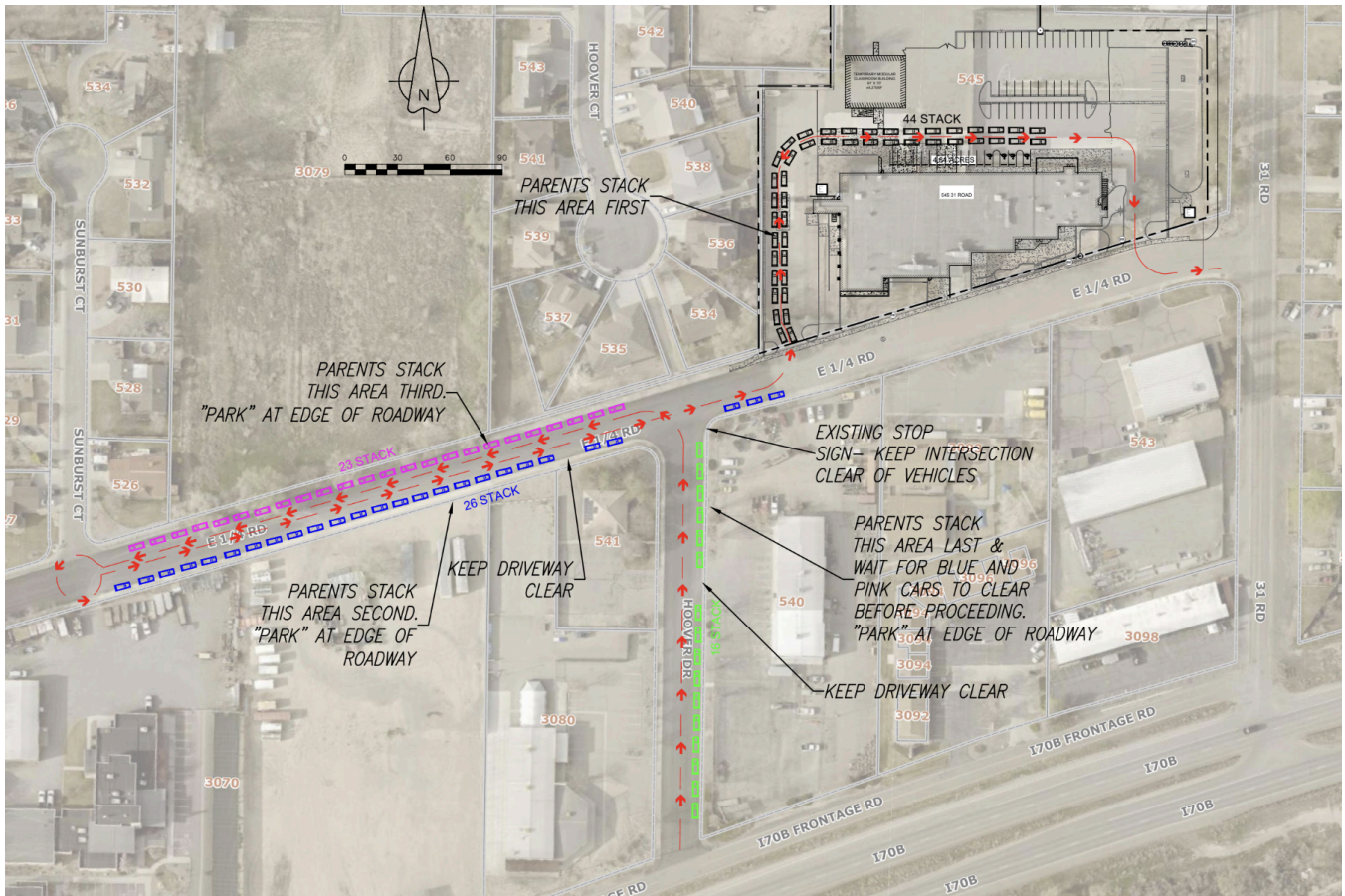
Carline Pickup Procedure

Almost all students will be dropped off and picked up through the carline. As a result, we strive for an efficient and speedy process. To aid in this endeavor, ACAGJ utilizes the Pickup Patrol app. All parents/guardians will need to download the Pickup Patrol app and use this app to provide the school with a default pick up plan for each day of the week, notify the office of early pickups (for doctor's appointments and the like), and provide approved people who can pick up their child(ren).

Each family will be provided with a car number sticker. To pick up a student, this sticker must be visible in the vehicle front or driver window. Numbers will be tied to all family members in that vehicle and will be used to dismiss students from class starting at 3:00 PM. If an individual arrives to pick up a student without proper approval through the Pickup Patrol app, carline attendants will ask the driver to park and check in at the front office. He/She must show photo identification. If the school has not been notified of the pick up change, the office staff must get verbal permission from a parent/guardian before releasing the student(s).

If a change has been made to the normal pick up person by a parent in the Pickup Patrol app prior to dismissal, a flag will appear on the student's profile. The carline attendants will ask for photo identification before dismissing the student.

Driveline Map



Carline Safety

Parents in the carline are expected to be cautious and alert whenever driving on campus, especially during carline, following all traffic regulations and rules of the road unless otherwise directed by ACA staff. Technology such as phones should never be used in the carline. ACA staff will direct parents using technology in the carline to put the device away before the vehicle proceeds. When arriving at the carline, there will be a wait as we load students into cars. We will endeavor to do this as efficiently as possible. While parents are waiting, they are expected to help ACAGJ fit as many cars in the driveline as possible by getting as close to the car in front of them as possible. When students are loading or unloading, cars must be in park.

Carline Start and End Times

Parents arriving before the specified carline start time will be asked to leave the property and return at the appropriate time. Afternoon pick up has two phases.

Non-Ascent sibling Kindergarten Pickup

Kindergarten students who do not have an Ascent sibling will dismiss at 2:40 PM. Parents may arrive at 2:30 to begin lining up for student dismissal. Parents should use drive lane "2", the inside lane. Each vehicle should have their vehicle number clearly displayed. A carline attendant will dismiss students through the Pickup Patrol app as the vehicle enters the top of the carline at the West entrance.

Ascent Sibling Kindergarten-9th Grade Pickup

Afternoon pick-up begins at 3:00 PM; parents may arrive on campus as early as 2:50 PM to begin lining up. If a student does not arrive to their car in time, the car will be moved on to the waiting zone just around the corner. A staff member will redirect students with rides in the waiting zone to that place. The afternoon carline ends at 3:30 PM.

Student Walkers/Bikers

Students in 3-9th grade or younger students with an older sibling may be given permission to walk or bike off of campus by their parent/guardian. This designation must be noted in the Pickup Patrol app. All student walkers and bikers will be released at 3:15 to avoid the height of carline traffic. Students will be released from their classroom, exit through the main entrance, and follow the crosswalk paths off campus and onto 31 Rd or E ¼.

Aftercare Program

ACAGJ offers an aftercare program from 3:30-5:30 pm on site. This is a fee based program that is offered to families as a benefit and service to the community. The cost of the program will cover a student snack, supplies, hourly rate for aftercare employees, and other expenses to run the program. We do our best to keep fees low while also providing an important service to our community.

General Program Schedule

- 3:30-4:00 Snack and community time
- 4:00-4:30 Outside play (weather permitting)
- 4:30-5:30 Inside activities (homework, reading, and craft/game opportunities)

Aftercare Fees

Aftercare is signed up for on a monthly basis with a 5 day a week or 3 day a week option. Parents who wish to sign up for aftercare need to register and pay prior to the last school day of the preceding month (e.g. If parents wish to have aftercare in September, registration and payment need to be made by the last business day of August). Parents who need emergency care should contact the front office as soon as possible if a need arises.

- 5 days a week: \$200 monthly
- 3 days a week (flexible): \$144.00 monthly

Parents/guardians should contact the front office for questions regarding payment or financial hardship.

Aftercare Pickup Procedures and Expectations

As members of a community it is important that we respect the time and needs of all parties. The aftercare program is designed to support students and families, but depends on the commitment of faculty and staff to remain after hours. We ask that parents and guardians be conscientious of this and make every effort to be timely when picking up their child(ren). If a parent or guardian expects to be late, we ask that they reach out to the aftercare coordinator as soon as possible. Parents, guardian, and authorized individuals are expected to pick up their students by 5:30 PM. Parents who arrive after 5:30 will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$10.00 to cover staff costs. After 3 instances of late pick up, the students will not be allowed to use

the aftercare program for the remainder of the semester. If there are continued late pick ups, the student(s) will no longer be allowed to attend aftercare.

Parents and guardians should park in the school parking lot and come to the front entrance to pick up their child(ren). Parents will use the Pickup Patrol app to dismiss students from aftercare. Non-parent/guardian individuals will need to have photo identification in order for a staff member to dismiss the student.

Attendance

Excessive Absences

Per ACA board policy, students who miss more than 10 days of school for any reason in a single school year may be declared habitually truant and have credit withheld. **Students in the Grammar School (K-6) with 10 days of absence or more may be retained. Students in the Upper School (7-9) with 10 days of absence or more may lose credit for their courses and be ineligible for graduation.** For the purposes of attendance, three tardies count as a single unexcused absence.

To support parents in attendance matters, the school office will send graduated notifications as absences accrue towards the 10 absence threshold. Parents of students who are chronically absent may be required to meet with school administration to develop an attendance plan. Chronically absent students may also lose their privileges to participate in extracurricular activities, including fine arts, clubs, and athletics until habitual attendance is re-established.

Questions regarding attendance records and updating absence reasons should be directed to the Attendance Receptionist. Questions regarding attendance policy and excessive absence procedure should be directed to the Dean of Students.

Advance Work

Occasionally, parents or students request work in advance of a planned absence. While we appreciate the forethought and desire to take care of responsibilities prior to absences, ACAGJ also understands that such requests present an additional burden to teachers. Parents and students may request advance work prior to a pre-arranged absence but must understand that the teacher is not obliged to pre-teach, plan, or create additional materials to support an absence. Additionally, many assignments may not be able to be accommodated in advance (e.g., tests).

The best way for a student to maintain pace with their class is to be present in class. Parents and students should consult the teacher and weekly newsletter to review what was/will be assigned during an absence. Students should make sure they understand their teacher's expectations and procedures for submitting makeup work.

Questions about advance work should be directed to your child's teacher.

Early Pickup

Parents wishing to pick up students early from school for appointments must pick up their child before 2:45 PM. Our office staff may not be able to assist with early pickups after 2:45 PM as they are preparing for carline and general dismissal. Pick ups after 2:45 will need to join the carline.

To pick up your child early, please update the Pickup Patrol app as soon as possible to notify the front office so we can prepare your child for timely dismissal. If you have appointments pre-scheduled or that occur on a regular basis, the Pickup Patrol app can be updated for any day throughout the entire school year or up until 1:30 on the day of.

To pick up your child, please park and walk into the front office with your photo ID. A staff member will verify your identity and call your child down to the office. Please note that we do not pull students early from class to wait for pickup in order to maximize their learning time. Anticipate up to a five-minute wait for your child to walk to the front office from class.

Late Arrivals

Our carline closes at 7:38 AM. All vehicles arriving on the property at or after this time will need to park and walk their students into the front office to be checked in. Students may not be dropped off to enter the office alone.

Students must be present in the classroom and ready to learn to be considered on time. Upper School and Grammar School begin at 7:40 AM. Students arriving at or after 7:40 AM will be marked as tardy. Three late arrivals are considered a single unexcused absence for attendance purposes.

Late Pickup

To respect the time of our teachers and staff who must remain on site to supervise students, parents must pick up their students promptly at the end of the school day and/or after school activities. Late pickup is defined as arriving on site to pick up a student after the school office has closed, OR 10 minutes after the end time of the after-school activity should it extend past the time the office closes (e.g., if sports practice ends at 5 PM, parents must pick up by 5:10 PM). School staff will make every effort to contact parents and emergency contacts by phone once this window has passed.

Should no phone contact with any guardian or emergency contact for a student be established within 20 minutes after the school office has closed or an after-school activity has ended, school staff will deliver students to onsite aftercare, where parents may pick up students and pay the drop-in fees associated. Aftercare closes at 5:30 PM.

Following the third occurrence of late pickup, parents may be charged an additional late fee for aftercare.

Makeup Work

Over the course of the school year it is inevitable that a student will be classes due to illness, appointments, or other family obligations. ACAGJ's policy allows 2 days for every day of excused absence. If a student is absent in the days leading up to or on the day of a pre-scheduled test, essay or project, the student will be expected to take the test or turn in the essay or project upon returning to school. Questions about makeup work should be directed to your child's teacher. Questions about our makeup work policies should be directed to the Dean of Grammar School or Dean of Upper School.

Fees and Finances

Financial Support

ACAGJ does not wish student fees to present a financial hardship or obstacle to attendance for families in need. To that end, we waive student fees and offer additional financial assistance towards uniforms and lunches for qualifying families. Families interested in receiving financial assistance may complete the Family Economic Data Survey, which can be found in the front office. Families may qualify for either Tier 1 or Tier 2 assistance. This is based on the same rubric as Free and Reduced Lunch standards.

Questions about exemptions to student fees should be directed to our Registrar. Questions about paying student fees, including payment plans, should be directed to the front office.

Student Textbooks

Students are responsible for the textbooks and materials check out to them. Teachers will train students in how to properly and respectfully handle books and other school materials.

Workbooks (i.e. *Dimensions Math*) and literature books are considered textbooks that students use during the year for their education. If a student loses their workbook or literature book and needs a replacement, a parent/guardian will need to pay for a replacement book.

Lost and Damaged Textbooks

Students are check out various textbooks and resources during the school year. Should an item not be returned, school staff will contact the parent via email to note the missing item and offer a window for the book to be found and returned. A form will also be sent home with the student for the parent to sign and return acknowledging the book is lost. If a student loses a consumable item, such as a literature book, the school will replace the book but charge parents a replacement fee.

Should an item be returned in a damaged condition, school staff will note the damage and provide evidence of the damage to the parent, as well as evidence that the book was assigned to their student. School staff will determine if damage reaches a level beyond regular wear and tear that requires replacement.

An invoice for lost or damaged items will be sent to parents over email from our Inventory and Finance Specialist. We offer a variety of payment options. If payments represent an undue financial burden for your family, please speak with our Inventory and Finance Specialist regarding alternate arrangements.

Questions regarding lost or damaged textbooks should be directed to our Inventory and Finance Specialist.

School Supplies

ACAGJ purchases school supplies for its students using a portion of student fees. Students are expected to treat school supplies with respect to ensure that supplies last for the expected life of that particular item. Students will be provided with required materials at the start of the school year. Replacement or additional supplies are made available by request through the teacher. Intentional destruction or misuse of supplies will result in disciplinary action.

Parent Engagement Guidelines

Campus Meetings

Drop in or same-day requests for meetings of any kind cannot be accommodated at our campus. Parents wishing to schedule a meeting with a teacher should contact that teacher directly and understand that such meetings are likely to be scheduled after school rather than during the school day. Parents wishing to schedule a meeting with an administrator should contact the front office to request an appointment. Please be sure to provide a short summary of what needs to be discussed so that the meeting can proceed productively.

We often find that phone calls can be accommodated in a shorter turnaround time than in-person meetings. If there is a concern that a meeting will take too long to arrange, a phone call may be requested instead. We want to be sure to address any concerns as soon as we can.

Classroom Observations

Parents are always welcome to visit our campus and observe classes in session. Visiting a classroom can be a great way for parents to gain perspective, see our faculty in their elements, as well as have a framework for which they can speak to their children about what they are learning. We ask that parents schedule a classroom visit through the teacher and the front office. ACAGJ cannot accommodate same day requests for classroom observations.

Before visitors arrive, they must understand the expectations in order to have a valuable observation experience but also allow for continued decorum in our classrooms. The purpose of a classroom visit should never be to critique the teacher.

Parent/Teacher Email Etiquette

As a campus, ACAGJ has adopted a professional and respectful approach to communications between staff and families. Any communication sent in haste and/or heightened emotional state that is intended to cause harm rather than bring about a solution to a problem is counterproductive to finding a collaborative solution. What we have found is that such communications are not only unproductive but damaging to the parent-teacher partnership, and indicative of a buildup of frustration or breach of trust and respect in the relationship.

When an aggressive email is sent or received, ACAGJ will support parents and staff in pausing all communication until a face-to-face meeting can be had and these interpersonal issues resolved. Only when parents and teachers are working together for the betterment of students can real progress be made on solving problems.

Weekly Newsletter

To maintain communication with our families about upcoming events and important announcements, ACAGJ publishes our e-newsletter once a week. Out of courtesy to our busy office staff, please make sure to consult the newsletter and/or any of our handbooks and guiding documents, such as these guidelines, before reaching out with questions.

Parent Code of Conduct

Just as we hold ourselves accountable to set an example of virtue and wisdom for our students, we ask our parents as partners with us to hold themselves accountable to the following standards of conduct:

- Demonstrate good character at all times and in all circumstances
- Understand the mission and philosophy of Ascent Classical Academy
- Not speak poorly of teachers or other staff in order that students may have the best opportunity to learn from all teachers
- Follow school procedures as outlined in the Board Handbook and this ACAGJ Family Handbook document
- Hold high expectations of student performance - regardless of final grades, students should be putting forth their best effort in all their educational endeavors
- Encourage students in their learning by asking questions and discussing what they have learned on a regular basis
- Help your children develop effective study skills and work habits
- Oversee your child's progress
- Support the school by getting children to school on time

Parent-Teacher Communication

Out of respect for our employees, we ask parents to use official ACAGJ communication channels to discuss school/student business. As a close community, many ACAGJ teachers and staff may have personal connections to our families from outside of the school. ACAGJ employees are not permitted to discuss school or student business through personal channels, such as social media accounts and text messaging.

Visitor Expectations

Please follow the below guidelines when visiting campus:

- Class observations must be scheduled ahead of time through the receptionist.
- Visitor dress is reverent and non-distracting, keeping within the spirit of our student uniform and non-uniform dress code.
- Observations should be for a set time and not the whole day.
- Visitors may not wander the building to observe other classes unannounced. Visitors found doing this will be asked to leave by a member of our administration and visiting will not be permitted again.
- Visitors should not interject into the class discussion or offer to assist students in their learning during class time.
- Visitors are not permitted to grade assignments at any time.
- Visitors should not, at any time, take photographs or videos during their observation. This is a direct break of student privacy and visitors will be removed immediately. Exceptions will be made only for parents attending an Opening Ceremony where their student is being recognized for an award. At this time, photos and videos must be only of their student(s).
- Observations are different from volunteering in a class. Those desiring to volunteer on campus should reach out to the front office.

Questions about visiting campus can be directed to our Receptionist.

Volunteering

Volunteers are critical to the success of Ascent Classical Academy, and we are deeply appreciative of the time and effort our parents and community members invest in us. We know that children enjoy greater success in school when the adults they admire most take an interest in their education. No matter what kind of volunteer work a parent does, or who they do it for, there are some common qualities that will help them be a successful volunteer at Ascent Classical Academy.

Volunteers must complete a background check through our Raptor system before they may volunteer on campus. Volunteers must also read and sign the [Volunteer Agreement](#) and the [Student Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement](#) before volunteering. These documents provide important expectations, policies, and information about volunteering on our site. Volunteers must also attend a volunteer training session before beginning to assist on our campus. Sessions are held periodically throughout the school year.

Questions about volunteer opportunities and needs can be directed to the front office.

Student Discipline

Philosophy of Discipline

How a school approaches discipline might be one of the most important factors in the development of its school culture. As with anything we do, we align our philosophy with our school's mission and vision. If we are truly working to develop 'the moral and intellectual skills, habits, and virtues upon which independent, responsible, and joyful lives are built', then we cannot approach discipline in any other way than working to form good human beings.

This must be done with a transformative mindset and not a punitive one. Punitive measures may curb unwanted behavior but will never transform the soul. Schools that focus their efforts on only curbing behavior will bring about an attitude of bitterness and suspicion of hypocrisy. Therefore, a school should envision the future they desire for their students and develop their discipline policies and procedures to that end - to help students understand why their actions, or inactions, were harmful to the community, desire a better life for themselves, and inspire the child to strive towards excellence.

ACAGJ uses a blend of approaches, with elements from *Love and Logic for Teachers* and *Assertive Discipline*. We encourage parents to read *Love and Logic for Parents*, a sister text to *Love and Logic for Teachers*.

Consequences at ACAGJ

Each teacher has a range of tools at their disposal to help students develop the academic and moral virtues necessary to succeed in school. ACAGJ does not have a prescribed sequence of consequences that all teachers must follow; teachers have the discretion to apply consequences as appropriate for the particular student and circumstances. Below you will find short descriptions of common consequences used at ACAGJ. These are options that you may see employed depending on the severity of behavior.

Yellow Slip/Reflection Form

Yellow slips are usually given after reminders and redirections have not succeeded in changing a problem behavior. This form is a single sheet completed by students as a structure for and record of a conversation about their behavior with a staff member. The sheet requires the student to answer the following questions:

- What misbehavior took place?
- Who was affected by the misbehavior?
- How can we correct any problems that come up as a result of the misbehavior? (e.g. apologizing, restoring taken property, cleaning up a mess)
- How can we prevent this misbehavior from happening again?

These questions form the core of the conversation our staff have with students who are misbehaving. The yellow slip is sent home with the student for the parent to sign so that the parent can participate in the conversation. Yellow slips should be returned to the school the day after they come home.

Letter of Advice

An administrator may sit with a student to draft a letter to parents to discuss a misbehavior. The student writes a letter to their parents explaining the problem and asking for their parents to share some advice, ideas, or strategies for how to resolve the misbehavior. The student will then be responsible to go home and have a conversation with their parents, then bring back the letter with their notes on their parents' advice. This consequence allows the parent to play an integral role in conversing with the student to solve problems in the classroom.

Behavior Action Plan

A teacher or administrator may sit with a student to write down an action plan to tackle a problem behavior. The plan includes a description of the behavior, strategies for redirecting or preventing the behavior, and consequences - both positive and negative - that may accompany the behavior if it continues. The student completes the action plan with the input and guidance of the teacher, who agrees to help the student enforce their action plan. This consequence allows the student to take responsibility for addressing the misbehavior and lays out clearly for them the plan the staff will follow to help them improve.

Service to School

Students may spend a portion of their free time during the school day (usually the lunch/recess period) to assist around the school. This consequence is intended to help students build up the school community and take pride in how they can contribute to a strong and healthy school environment.

After School Detention

After school detention is usually assigned as an escalating consequence, to be used when other consequences have not produced results. Students who earn after-school detention are required to serve the detention on designated days. Detention takes precedence over extracurricular activities, including club meetings and athletic events. Missing or skipping detention will result in a second after-school detention. Parents will be notified of after school detentions.

Office Referral

Students who receive an office referral will visit with the Dean of Students or another designated administrator (e.g. Dean of Grammar School or Dean of Upper School) to discuss the misbehavior and chart a corrective course of action. An administrator may assign any of the consequences above in addition to an office referral. Per the policies in the Family Handbook, repeated office referrals may result in escalating or significant consequences to the student, including loss of eligibility for extracurriculars as well as suspension and/or expulsion.

Questions about particular discipline situations should first be directed to your child's teacher or the relevant staff member. Questions about discipline policy should be directed to the Dean of Students.

Discipline Procedures

The best form of discipline is a proactive structure to redirect misbehavior before it occurs. Nonetheless, accidents and mistakes will happen. Each teacher at Ascent may have a slightly different approach to discipline, but all teacher will follow the same general procedures when addressing routine student misbehavior:

- Redirect student back to expected behavior
- Have a conversation with the student to correct misbehavior and address the issue.
- Apply consequences for repeated misbehavior in an escalating sequence
- Refer students to the office for chronic or egregious misbehavior

Communication with parents is essential to the discipline process and its expected of teachers and staff throughout these procedures.

Questions about discipline procedures or philosophy should be directed to the Dean of Students.

Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices must be powered off and may not be used during the academic school day, including drop-off and pick-up, without express staff permission. Students may not keep electronic devices on their person during the academic school day. Such devices include but are not limited to laptops, portable audio devices, head/earphones, hand-held video games, cell phones, and any other device or accessory with wireless or cellular capabilities, including but not limited to watches and eyewear. Exceptions will be made for necessary medical devices and at the headmaster's discretion.

Any student who is using a phone or other electronic device during the day will have that device confiscated until the end of the day. If there is reason to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation, the device may be powered on and searched.

Students who break this rule will be subject to fines and other disciplinary action. Once a device has been confiscated, the following procedure will be used to return the device:

- 1st confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up by the student or parent when school is dismissed.
- 2nd Confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up only by a parent when school is dismissed.
- 3rd Confiscation: The student will be required to leave his or her device in the front office each day and pick it up at the end of the day. If the student fails to follow this procedure he/she will no longer be allowed to bring a cell phone to school.

A parent will be notified of all instances of confiscation. If a student continues to flout the rules regarding cell phone use, additional disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school may occur. ACAGJ is not responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of these items.

Student Health

Health Office

Our Health Office strives to create a comfortable environment for our students. Per Family Handbook policy SE-26.0, students who are sick with contagious illnesses or communicable diseases may not attend school. Common signs of contagious illness or communicable disease include:

Coughing/Sneezing

If a student has mucus that is yellow or green, it is advised that they stay at home. If a student has a persistent cough, they must remain home until it eases. If a student comes to school coughing and/or sneezing and it is a disruption to the class, they will be sent home.

Diarrhea

If a student is having diarrhea at home or at school they will need to stay home for 24 hours when they stop having symptoms. Please do not bring them to school when they are actively experiencing diarrhea, as this will spread to other children if proper hand washing is not performed and it is very uncomfortable for the student.

Fever

If a student has a fever above 100 degrees, keep them at home. If they come to school and have a fever of 100 degrees or above, they will need to be picked up immediately. All students need to be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for a full 24 hours before returning to school.

Vomit

If a student vomits at home, they must stay home and may not return for at least 24 hours from the last time they vomited. If a student vomits at school, they will need to be picked up immediately and must stay home for at least 24 hours without another incident.

'Frequent Flyers'

Students who are found to repeatedly visit the Health Office during the course of a school day will have their parents called and/or emailed. Students may need to be picked up if they cannot remain in the classroom.

The Health Office does provide students with peppermints and/or saltine crackers to help soothe mildly upset stomachs. Tampons and pads are also available for our female students.

Questions about student health should be directed to the Health Technician.

Medications On Campus

Per Family Handbook policy SE-26.0, in order to have student medication (including over the counter medications) the Health Office must have a medical, allergy, and/or asthma form completed by the student's doctor. Authorized providers that can complete this form are MD, DO, PA, NP, NPP, and DDS. No other types of providers are accepted on this form.

Once this is filled out, parents will need to bring the form and the medication into the Health Office and sign a medication form. Expired medications will not be accepted. Medication must be in its original bottle

and have the student's name on it. All forms of medication, including Tylenol and ibuprofen, must have a doctor's note.

Students may not self-medicate or transport medication to or from the school. Students cannot bring in their own medication and keep it with them without prior authorization from the Health Office. We are not authorized to give out cough drops or cough medicine to students.

If a student would like to carry an inhaler or epi-pen, parents still must have their student's doctor fill out an asthma form and bring it to the Health Tech. The student then must have a brief meeting with the Health Tech and Nurse to sign a Self-Carry Form and demonstrate that they know how to use their inhaler or epi-pen and when to bring it with them during the day.

Any student that has a health condition that needs medication may warrant a meeting with the Nurse and Health Tech. If parents have a health plan from their student's doctor, this must be brought to the Health Office for recordkeeping and adherence to the health plan.

Menstrual Supplies

ACAGJ wishes to use the anxiety or discomfort many young ladies feel when first managing the menstrual cycle. Our nurse's office stocks pads and tampons in the case they are forgotten or in case of emergencies, but students should plan to bring their own supplies on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to prepare menstrual packs for their daughters. A simple, opaque, small zippered pouch or pencil case can easily be transported to the ladies' room.

Our nurse's station can provide heating packs for easing cramps, but we cannot dispense medication (including aspirin, naproxen sodium, or ibuprofen) without following the medication procedures outlined above. Students are not allowed to self-medicate while on campus without meeting the above requirements.

Student Life

Awards and Ceremonies

Philosophy of Awards

Ascent Classical Academy wishes to recognize students for their effort and success in accomplishing difficult things. Nonetheless, we also wish to honor the balance between rewarding achievement and rewarding participation. Winning an award at Ascent should represent leadership and exemplary conduct amongst the student body, whether academically or behaviorally. For this reason, Ascent carefully considers each award created and given.

Opening Ceremony

Opening Ceremony is a special time of assembly each morning where our students and faculty contemplate our purpose and delight in being in school each day. Opening Ceremony is an opportunity to discuss historical events, celebrate student accomplishments, and reflect on virtue. Students may perform pieces for their peers during Opening Ceremony, such as a music piece or poem recitation. We also recite the pledge of allegiance and our student creed during Opening Ceremony, as a means of coming together as a student community around our purpose of American Classical Education. Parents are invited to attend any of our all-school Opening Ceremony held on Wednesday mornings and will need to check in through the Front Office as visitors.

Student of Character Awards

Once a quarter, Ascent teachers nominate students for virtue awards. Virtue awards are not given for single acts: a student must demonstrate virtue consistently and in multiple aspects of their academic career in order to be nominated. Students who have particularly represented one of our school's virtues in their conduct and work receive these awards. Students may be recognized multiple times for virtue awards. Parents of students who have won awards will be invited to attend Opening Ceremony when their student is presented with the award.

Extracurricular Activities

Athletics

ACAGJ offers competitive athletic programs for middle school and high school students. Questions regarding the athletic program and athletic offerings should be directed to the Dean of Student Activities.

Students who participate in athletics must meet behavior and academic expectations in order to be eligible. For a full description of expectations and guidelines, parents should review the ACAGJ Athletic Handbook.

Clubs

Clubs for students in grades 1-4 must be formed and led by a faculty or staff member. Students wishing to form a club must complete a club application form, available in the front office. Club applications are approved by the Dean of Student Activities.

Students must meet extracurricular eligibility requirements to participate in club activities. Students may not attend club meetings unless they are officially a club member. Club membership should be consistent; students who frequently join and/or drop from clubs may be prohibited from club membership for the remainder of the school year.

Questions about student clubs should be directed to the Dean of Student Activities.

Extracurricular Eligibility

Per Board Handbook policy SE-17.0, students must meet certain requirements to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities through ACAGJ. Extracurricular activities include clubs, athletics, school social events, and fine arts activities or groups.

Academic Requirements

- Academics comes first. Mandatory tutoring takes precedence over extracurriculars, including performances, competitions, and games.
- ACAGJ students must remain in academic good standing to remain eligible for participation in extracurriculars. Progress reports are run weekly.
 - See Mandatory Tutoring
- When grades for an academic quarter are finalized, any students who have failed a class or dropped below the eligible grade point average will be ruled ineligible.

Attendance Requirements

- Students must be in regular attendance at school to participate in extracurricular activities. Excessive tardies and absences harm a student's ability to participate fully in class and benefit from Ascent's classical curriculum.
- Students must be in attendance at least 50% of the school day on the day of an extracurricular activity or event, otherwise they may not participate.
- Students who miss 10% of the school year to date are considered chronically absent. Students may also be declared chronically absent if they accrue 10 full-day absences for the year or 4 absences within one month. Students who are chronically absent will be placed on probation to focus on regaining academic ground lost to excessive tardies and absences.
- Students who are considered truant according to the Board Policy Handbook will be ruled ineligible for extracurricular activities.

Behavioral Requirements

- Virtuous conduct is expected. Any student who has multiple behavioral infractions for a school rules violation may be denied the privilege of participation in all afterschool activities for a period determined by the Headmaster and Deans.
 - Students who receive one suspension are ruled ineligible for the remainder of the athletic season and/or academic quarter.
 - Students who receive more than one suspension are ineligible for extracurricular activities through ACAGJ for the remainder of the year.

Probation

A probationary period begins when the student's grades, behavior, or attendance falls below the requirements outlined above at the time of a progress check. The duration of a probationary period and requirements of students who are on probation are determined by school policy.

Ineligibility

Students who fail to attain eligibility requirements during a probationary period are deemed ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

- Ineligibility restrictions and duration for academics are determined by the school eligibility policy. Durations will be based on weekly progress reports. (e.g. Athletics, Fine Arts)
- In addition, students must meet school policy with attendance and behavior requirements.

Questions or concerns regarding extracurricular eligibility should be directed to the Dean of Student Activities or the Headmaster.

Lost and Found

The lost and found is located near the Front Office. Students may check the lost and found for items during arrival, lunch, recess, and just before dismissal begins. Our staff routinely go through the lost and found to identify items that are labeled with a student's name. The lost and found is donated once a quarter. Any unlabeled items that are not claimed by the end of the semester will be included in this donation. Unlabeled and unclaimed uniform items are added to our uniform closet.

The items that most frequently make it to the lost and found are jackets, water bottles, lunchboxes, and books. Please make sure everything that comes to school has your child's name on or in it.

Lunch and Recess

Catered Lunch

Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, ACAGJ will participate in the National School Breakfast and Lunch program. All students will be provided an opportunity to each a balanced breakfast and/or lunch each day. ACAGJ will send out a bi-weekly lunch menu. We ask that parents indicate which days their child(ren) will be participating in the lunch program at the beginning of each quarter. A form will be sent out through the Weekly Newsletter at the beginning of each quarter. Students may bring their own lunch. Hot water and microwaves will be available for student use in the lunch room.

Breakfast Times

Breakfast service will be provided starting at 7:15 each morning. Kindergarten students will eat breakfast in their classroom, while students in 1st-9th grade will eat breakfast in the lunch room. Students in 3rd-9th grade may take their lunch outside if so desired.

Breakfast service is quick. Students who would like to eat breakfast need to be on campus with enough time to eat and get to class by 7:40. Students are expected to gather their meal, eat quickly and quietly, clean up their trash/eating area, and then move on to their classroom or class gathering area.

Lunchroom Rules

Our lunchroom is overseen by an employed lunch monitor and their team of parent volunteers. While lunchtime is a free period in our students' day, ACAGJ expects all students to follow the set of rules below:

- Be safe and polite while eating.
- Use your indoor voice and follow the instructions of the lunchroom monitors.
- Raise your hand if you need assistance from an adult.
- Clean up after yourself, and cheerfully help others if needed.
- Listen carefully when an adult is making announcements.
- Do not share food or drinks.

Parents volunteering during the lunch hour must follow instructions and expectations set by the school and its designees. Parents unable to follow directions from staff will not be allowed to volunteer in the lunchroom.

Recess Rules

Our recess field is overseen by a team of employees and their team of parent volunteers. While recess is a free hour in our students' day, ACAGJ expects all students to follow the set of rules below:

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated
- Respect school property
- Stay in sight of an adult. Do not go inside without an adult's permission.
- Report injuries to an adult as soon as possible.
- Your personal property is your responsibility.
 - Students are not permitted to bring toys, stuffed animals, blankets, etc. for recess. These are distracting and create conflict between students.
 - Students may bring their own football, soccer balls, etc. under the assumption that they will share these.
- When the whistle blows, run to put away your equipment and line up silently.
- Students are not permitted to remain unaccompanied outside after recess ends.

Our staff are trained to be actively supervising all students during the recess hour. Volunteers who witness students straying from the rules above must report these incidents to a staff member.

What to leave at home?

ACAGJ is not responsible for items lost or damaged at school. We strongly urge parents to be aware of what their child brings to school to avoid valuable or sentimental items being lost, damaged, or stolen. Additionally, items brought to school often pose distractions or temptations for students during class.

Common items that are best to leave at home are:

- Toys
- Money
- Trading cards (Pokemon, sports, etc)
- Electronic devices (phones and smart watches are not permitted in the classroom; they must be off and in a student's backpack)
- Digital watches that make noise
- Board games
- Anything expensive or fragile
- Anything your child values deeply or finds special

Special Events

Class Parties

Per Board Policy Handbook policy AP-16.0, special events or parties must be directly tied to the curriculum and added to the instructional environment. Typically we do not change our routines to commemorate historical holidays out of the context of their historical period (Columbus Day, Presidents' Day, MLK Day, etc.). We study various historical figures and events as part of our history curriculum, and may recognize some of these holidays with special presentations and performances at Opening Ceremony morning assemblies. Teachers may craft a morning work that highlights a specific historical holiday for students with appropriate research and reflection in accordance with school culture. Any special event or party is approved in advance by the Headmaster or her designee.

Questions or concerns regarding class parties should be directed to your child's teacher.

Student Birthdays

Due to health concerns, students may NOT bring in birthday treats to share with other students. Parents may bring a special treat to the school for their child to enjoy or stop by the lunchroom to spend the time with their child, but may not distribute candy, toys, or any other items to other students. Balloons, flowers, or other gifts delivered to the Front Office for a student's birthday may be kept at the office until the end of the school day if deemed distracting for the learning environment.

Recognizing that birthdays are a special and significant event, especially for younger students, teachers are able to recognize student birthdays in the classroom in small, non-distracting ways. Such recognitions are at the teacher's discretion. This includes birthday recognition during lunchtime.

Invitations for parties or events that are brought to school for distribution must include an invitation for each student in the class. Invitations for exclusive events or parties may not be handed out on campus.

Questions or concerns regarding celebration of student birthdays should be directed to the Dean of Students.

Wonder Days

Each semester we celebrate a Wonder Day themed around what our students are studying. Wonder Days are a time for celebrating our students' love of learning and their accomplishments. These days can include activities like arts and crafts, costumes, themed escape rooms and field day events. Wonder Day events often need a lot of parent volunteer involvement and support. We would love to see you there!

Uniforms

Families should become familiar with the ACAGJ Uniform Guidelines. This document provides the most detailed information regarding what is required, optional, allowed/not allowed elements of the uniform. There are slightly different requirements for K-2, 3-6, and 7-9 grade bands. These differences are to allow for flexibility with the uniform, especially for younger students who grow quickly and tend to be harder on their clothing. In addition, these differences acknowledge the maturity of students as they get older.

Common Uniform Violations

Dress code is an excellent opportunity for students to practice virtue in the small things. To help our families adjust to expectations of dress code, we are providing this shortlist of the most common uniform issues and violations:

Both Boys and Girls

- Belts are required for all students wearing pants or shorts in grades 3 and up.
- Collars of uniform shirts must be visible under sweaters and jumpers.
- Non uniform approved jackets and hoodies may not be worn indoors. Students will be expected to remove their jackets upon entering the building and hang those up in their classrooms. Students are welcome to wear uniform approved sweaters, sweatshirts, and jackets in the classroom. Please see the uniform guidelines for acceptable options.
- Long sleeve undershirts may not be worn with short sleeve uniform shirts.
- Polo shirts are not part of the FORMAL uniform.
- Shirts must be tucked in.
- Shoes may not have open toes, heels, or other accents.
- Socks with bright colors or patterns may not be worn to school.

- Students are not permitted to change into street clothes while on campus. The school uniform or athletic uniform must be worn during all activities before, during, and after school unless express permission is given.
- Students may not write or draw on their skin (including temporary henna).
- Earrings must be stud only - no dangling or drop earrings.
 - Earrings cannot be excessive in size or distracting.
 - Piercings on other parts of the face or body beside ears are not permitted.

Boys

- Pants must be worn on formal days (Wednesdays).
- Ties are required for students in grades 3 and up as part of the formal uniform.
- Undershirts must be in uniform colors (navy, black, and white).

Girls

- Nails should be a natural length so as not to interfere with the ability to participate fully in class (e.g. PE or handwriting). The school may ask young ladies with false or press on nails to remove them if they become distracting in class.
- Skirts and dresses should be a minimum of 2" above the knee.

Dress Down Days

As a general rule, ACAGJ does not allow for costume days or non-uniform (dress down) days during the school year. Exceptions may be made for special events, such as Wonder Days or field trips. When these events occur, families will be provided with dress code guidelines in advance of the event. All attire worn to school events should meet the non-uniform dress code, provided below.

Non-Uniform Dress Code

All ACAGJ students must remain in uniform while on campus during the school day. 'Street clothes' are not permitted. Students must remain in uniform during extracurricular activities such as clubs, tutoring, sports practice. Students who need to change out of the school uniform to participate in physical activity must wear the athletic uniform.

Students may wear 'street clothes' to a variety of student life events, including lock-ins, dances, and other social opportunities offered by the school. These types of student life events typically take place in the evening or on the weekends, and do not require students to wear the school uniform or PE uniform. Nonetheless, students must meet certain standards of attire to attend school-sponsored events in 'street clothes'. Students who do not meet these standards of dress for student life events will be unable to participate in student life events until they are in compliance with dress code expectations. The following guidelines must be observed by all students attending student life events where uniforms are not required:

- Bodies must be covered from shoulders to knees. Crop tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, sheer or cut-out tops, or tops in poor repair are not permitted. Necklines may not come below the armpits. Undergarments should not be visible.
- Jeans must be in good repair. Excessive distressing, rips, or tears are not permitted.
- 'Athleisure wear' - to include yoga pants, leggings, sports bras as tops, visible sports bras or bralettes, and sweatpants - is not permitted.
- Words and graphics on clothing must be 'G' or 'PG' in nature and appropriate for a general school setting. Slogans and images that are intended to be divisive or denigrate, disrespect, or demean others are not acceptable.
- Footwear should be appropriate for the event or activity. Sandals, if worn, should have more

than one strap. Flip-flops are not permitted for safety reasons.

Formal dress events, such as school dances, will have a particular event dress code announced to students and parents well in advance of the event.

Athletic Uniform

Students are expected to wear a plain gray t-shirt and navy blue athletic shorts or pants. The athletic uniform should be worn for all sports practices unless specialized attire is required for the sport.

- Shorts may not be shorter than mid thigh.
- Jewelry of any kind except stud earrings is not permitted.
- Students must wear athletic shoes.
 - Dress or street shoes (e.g., Converse) are not permitted for safety reasons.
- Yoga pants and/or leggings are not permitted.

Uniform Enforcement Procedure

Students in grades K-2 who are out of line with the dress code will have an email sent home to their parents detailing the violation to be addressed. If a student in grades 3-8 is inappropriately attired, the student will be pulled from class to address the infraction.

If the dress code infraction is minor (i.e., the student would not need new clothing or to disrobe to correct the infraction), then the student will return to class. The student will be assigned a uniform violation and an email will be sent home detailing the violation and consequences.

If the dress code infraction is major (i.e., the student would require new clothing or to disrobe to correct the issue), the student will collect their belongings and wait in the front office for a parent to come pick them up or bring the appropriate change of clothing. The issue must be corrected - or a plan of correction communicated with the school, (e.g., a date of a hair appointment) - before the student can return to class. An email will be sent home detailing the violation and consequences as laid out in the student handbook.

Multiple violations will be assigned consequences as indicated in the uniform policy. Students are required to remain in uniform until they leave campus, unless participating in an after-school activity that requires them to change.