

Elementary

Student Handbook

American Christian Academy

2300 Veterans Memorial Parkway

Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35404

www.acacademy.com

Phone: (205) 553-5963

Fax: (205) 553-5942

Dual Accredited by

Association of Christian Schools International

and Cognia

Member of the

Alabama High School Athletic Association

2024 – 2025

American Christian Academy is a coeducational school operated as a nonprofit, non denominational, independent, Christian organization. The school is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Directors. American Christian Academy admits students without regard to their race, color, religion, or national origin.

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

The Student Handbook provides students, parents, and staff with a clear, concise statement of the basic policies, procedures, and philosophy of American Christian Academy. Although the Handbook is not intended as an exhaustive statement on these subjects, it is written to answer the most frequently asked questions about the policies and procedures of the school. In the Handbook, no attempt has been made to explain the rationale for every policy or procedure; however, they provide ways to implement our goals in Christian education as well as to provide for a safe, orderly, efficient, and consistent approach to problems.

The Bible clearly indicates that parents are responsible for the training and instruction of their children. The Christian school exists to assist parents in their God-given responsibilities. In formulating a philosophy of education and discipline, the school has attempted to align itself as closely as possible with the Bible's instructions to parents so as to provide the utmost consistency for the child between training to be taught at home and at school. In that same spirit, the school likewise assumes parents will direct and discipline their children accordingly. God expects parents or other authorities to teach children to become more self-disciplined and require less supervision as they mature. American Christian Academy's philosophy of education exists to serve and further this ultimate spiritual goal. During school hours and at other school related and school-supervised functions, students are to respond to school faculty and supervisory staff members with obedience and respectfulness.

Commitment to these policies and procedures by students, parents, and staff enables the school to run on a smooth, orderly basis. Consistent support of these policies, however, will provide even more significant and lasting accomplishments for the students. These policies and procedures are basic guide-lines which should be viewed as one way we encourage and train students to recognize and assume responsibility for their actions. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of this book is to allow parents, students, and teachers to be "of one mind" in the great privilege we have of training children to honor God with their whole lives.

The School Board, which approves all major policies and procedures of the school, reviews policies as needed. Your written suggestions and input are invited. Please submit your written questions or recommendations to the Chairman of the Board or to the Head of School by January 31, 2025 in the front office.

Current board members are listed on the school website.

MISSION STATEMENT

American Christian Academy exists as a partnership with parents to instill Christian character and academic excellence for all students.

VISION

It is with deep conviction that American Christian Academy desires to provide a safe learning environment, biblical integration into challenging academic work, athletic events and other curricular and extracurricular activities. We invite you to join us on this journey by being involved in classroom activities, athletic events, facility improvements and travel opportunities.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

American Christian Academy is a non-denominational Christian school dedicated to teaching biblical truths related to the understanding of the Father God, Jesus Christ, His Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Conflict Resolution from a Biblical Perspective:

MATTHEW 18 PRINCIPLE

Matthew 18 sets guidelines for Christians on how to resolve conflict. We are to first go to our brother or sister who has offended us or where perhaps a misunderstanding has taken place to resolve the conflict at the lowest level.

Matthew 18: 15-18 says, “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’”

Parents are asked to go to the teacher, coach, staff member or administrator when a conflict takes place to resolve things quickly, while not acting in anger.

During times of conflict, it is also important to pray for the individual that the conflict exists with, so that we don’t gossip about one another. Gossip should not have a place at ACA. It is our desire to resolve conflict with parents and families in a manner that is glorifying to God so that we can effectively partner together for the student’s success.

Ultimately, God has entrusted the responsibility of raising and educating godly children to the parents. Parents have engaged ACA to help in the important task of training children. To the degree that we maintain this partnership will be the degree to which we will be successful in that. Let us join together for our children and the glory of God.

HISTORY OF AMERICAN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

American Christian Academy was founded in 1979 by Kurt Porter. The school relocated from its original location on Greensboro Avenue to 701 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. in Northport where enrollment grew to about 150 students. Dan Carden was hired as Head of School in the spring of 1989. Over the next thirteen years, the school grew until the facility was no longer adequate. On December 20, 2002, American Christian Academy purchased and moved into the former Eastwood Middle School located on Veterans Memorial Parkway, with about 450 students. It took hundreds of parents, students, and other volunteers over the course of 5 weeks to accomplish the task of renovating our new home and moving everything from the Northport building. During the renovation, the entire Bible was read over the intercom while volunteers painted, cleaned and waxed floors. The new facility is in a wonderful, centralized location for the school population.

The impact of the new facility with its larger capacity, changed the atmosphere of the school, attracting new families. Since being in this location we have added beautiful baseball and softball fields, installed artificial turf to our football field, and built field houses and indoor practice facilities. A major renovation was also done on both our preschool building and elementary playground to meet the needs of our younger students. We have renovated and updated all student bathrooms, retiled the cafeteria and hallways, paved the parking lots and developed a music wing for our band and choir. In 2016 we were again in need of classroom space and updated science labs. The new Science and Technology Building added 9 classrooms including state of the art science labs and 6 additional classrooms. As God provides, we would like to build a new and larger gymnasium.

We have been fully accredited by Cognia (formerly AdvancEd and SACS) since 1990. Having successfully completed the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) accreditation process Spring 2021, we are now dual accredited with ACSI and Cognia. We have passed the 1,000 student mark and are nearing capacity. Our students consistently perform well on standardized testing and each year our seniors receive large scholarships to major universities. God has been good to ACA.

Future goals include a gymnasium with classrooms and enhanced technology infrastructure. Please be in prayer with us as we work together to provide an education for the hundreds of students God sends us each year. It is our desire for American Christian Academy to be a place that will glorify God and make disciples for Christ.

HEAD OF SCHOOL'S WELCOME

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome back to school as we begin another exciting year at ACA. I am writing this letter during my Interim term as Head of School. I was enjoying our retirement life, but God had other plans in mind. Although I did not anticipate myself back at ACA, Janie and I are at peace that God has a purpose in our return. We have been impressed with the incredible student body, faculty and families that call ACA 'home' and the welcome we have been given.

ACA has built a reputation in Tuscaloosa as being a well rounded school with strong academics, a band/music program that is second-to-none, and a huge array of athletic teams which consistently receive AHSAA recognition. I have always considered it a privilege to work alongside such a caring and professional group of educators, But the greatest joy for us is knowing that we are seeking to make an impact for eternity in these young people who are created in the image of Almighty God and therefore have immeasurable value.

Please understand that when we require assignments, attendance parameters, research papers, etc., it is from a desire to prepare you for a successful future. Someday you will appreciate it! Learn to use your agenda to plan your week and organize your time. Students who write down their goals are more successful than those who do not. Attend classes, do your homework, and work hard. It will be worth it!

Every aspect of our lives should honor God. I love the scene in the movie "Gladiator" where Russel Crowe says, "Men, what you do in this life, echoes in eternity."

I trust this year will be special for you. Mrs. Carden and I plan to come and visit you often.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dan Carden

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2024-2025

August 7 th	First Day of School
September 2 nd	Labor Day, school closed
October 18 th	Teacher In-Service, no school
November 11 th	Veterans Day, school closed
November 22 nd	Grandparents Day, ½ day of school
November 25 th – 29 th	Thanksgiving Holiday, no school
December 13 th	Christmas Party Day, ½ day of school
Dec 16 th – Jan 3 rd	Christmas Holiday, no school
January 6, 2025	Back to School
January 20 th	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, no school
February 17 th	Teacher In-Service, no school
March 7 th	Teacher In-Service, no school
March 10 th – 14 th	Spring Break
April 18 th	Good Friday, school closed
April 21 st	Easter Monday, school closed
May 20 th	K5 Graduation
May 22 nd	5 th Grade Graduation
May 23 rd	Honors Day/Last Day of School, ½ Day

CLOSED DATES FOR DAYCARE

July 29th- August 6th – Staff and teacher workdays (Monday-Friday)
 September 2nd – Labor Day Holiday
 November 11th- Veterans Day
 November 22nd- Grandparents Day
 November 27th- Closes at noon
 November 28th- 29th – Thanksgiving Holiday
 December 23rd- January 1st, 2025 --- Christmas Vacation
 April 18th- Good Friday
 April 21st- Easter Monday
 May 23rd- May 30th Summer Camp Prep
 July 4th- Independence Day

GRADING PERIODS

August 7 – October 4, 2024

October 7 – December 13, 2024

January 6 – March 7, 2025

March 17 – May 23, 2025

Report cards will be available on FACTS the Wednesday following the end of each grading period.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The closing of school due to inclement weather will be announced as soon as possible. Sometimes the announcement can be made the evening before the closing of school, but most days the announcement cannot be made until the morning of the closing of school. When school is closed for inclement weather, all events for that day, including practices or evening activities, will be canceled. You will receive notification of dismissal by text messages and emails. The following station will officially report the closing or delay of American Christian Academy: ABC 33/40

PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

American Christian Academy's philosophy of education stems from the belief that Christian education is concerned with teaching attitudes and values as well as academic instruction. We believe that all teaching should come out of a Biblical worldview and woven into the fabric of everyday life. Rules and requirements are drafted for the smooth running of the school, but more importantly to help in the character development of the students. In Luke 2:25, we read that as a young man "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." We believe this gives us the ideal balance in a child's development. We stress education in each of these four areas: **spiritual, academic, physical and social**. Our goal is to partner with parents in this endeavor by providing consistency in the child's instruction at home, church and school.

PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' STATEMENT OF COOPERATION

1. We understand and acknowledge that to have an orderly environment for learning to take place and discipline to be most effective, it must be administered immediately. We hereby invest authority in ACA to discipline our child as deemed necessary by the school including conduct points with their accumulating consequences, detention, suspension, request to withdraw and expulsion. We agree to abide by such discipline. (Proverbs 29:15, 17; Hebrews 12:11)
2. We understand and acknowledge that failure to meet all financial obligations **when due** may be grounds for expulsion.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

There are in today's world lifestyles and choices that do not reflect or adhere to biblical standards and necessitate our affirming those biblical standards in our school policies concerning admission and dismissal. These policies are listed below:

Family Structure: American Christian Academy holds to the Biblical and traditional definition of marriage as one man and one woman joined under God into the holy state of matrimony. Any family unit that violates the biblical definition of marriage would not be able to partner with us to instill Christian character into the children. ACA reserves the right to deny admission to any non-biblical family unit. (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 15-23; 1 Corinthians 7:2-40; 1 Timothy 3:2-4; 1 Timothy 5:14)

In our current culture, the physical aspects of relationships are emphasized. The physical nature of the relationships should not be obviously emphasized. Public displays of affection are unacceptable. Lasting commitments must incorporate an appreciation for a spiritual foundation, as well as physical attraction. We want to help prepare our students for marital relationships and homes that have a Godly, spiritual foundation.

Sexual Orientation: God created men and women as a reflection of His image and likeness. In His holy desire for a family, God placed one man and one woman in a marriage relationship that they might produce godly offspring. For a man or woman to deny their God-given sexuality is rebellion against God and His design. Each person is uniquely created from conception as male or female. Any student or parent who would actively hold a position that validates homosexuality or transgenderism is resisting the Christian character we desire to instill as a part of our mission. Students actively engaged in non-biblical sexual behavior or identity other than biological sexual identification will not be considered for admission. Any current student that openly demonstrates or advocates non-biblical sexuality in behavior or on social media will be asked to leave. (Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 19:5; Leviticus 18:22; 1 Kings 14:24; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Jude 7)

Slander and offensive language about sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

CORE VALUES

- To provide an enriched educational experience by application of biblical principles through intentional development of Christian character.
- To encourage thoughtful, logical and analytically sound decisions that have a foundation in scripture.
- To provide an environment conducive to gaining knowledge and skills needed to be a responsible citizen.
- To provide opportunities for growth in social skills through a variety of activities.
- To promote understanding of cultural differences and worth of others.
- To provide opportunities for growth in physical strength and stamina necessary to engage in an active lifestyle

Expected Student Outcomes

A. Spiritual:

- Understands who God is and His provision for eternal life through Jesus Christ
- Successfully integrates Christian morals and values into their total lives
- Applies biblical knowledge in developing and defending a biblical worldview
- Understands global missions from personal experience and demonstrates a willingness to share the message of the Gospel to the world
- Purposefully use God-given talents and abilities to enhance their lives and the lives of others

B. Intellectual:

- Interaction in society as an adult capable of sharing knowledge in responsible and meaningful ways
- Pursues lifelong learning as it relates to interests, career, lifestyle choices and spiritual development
- Development of critical thinking skills that are developmentally appropriate

C. Social:

- Understands and respects the role of government in society
- Values himself and others as being created in God's image
- Demonstrates respect and kindness for others; including their opinions or abilities

D. Cultural:

- Accepts and appreciates creativity in the arts, realizing that God's truth inspires artistic expression
- Appreciates cultures different from their own, while interpreting them through a biblical lens

E. Physical:

- Demonstrates a physically active lifestyle and values healthy nutrition
- Understands the value of maintaining the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of their human body
- Demonstrates an understanding and acceptance of a biblical standard for sexuality

ADMISSIONS POLICY

American Christian Academy admits students without regard to their race, color, religion, or national origin. However, academics are taught from a Christian worldview and students and parents should seek admittance with a full knowledge and acceptance of this policy. It is also required that students take Bible class each year they attend ACA and participate in weekly chapel programs. Students attending American Christian Academy are further expected to be obedient to and respectful of those in authority.

In general, students who have been expelled or asked to leave other schools because of poor disciplinary records will not be admitted to American Christian Academy. Such students must wait at least one year and compile a good disciplinary record before their application will be considered. Entering students will also be asked to take an entrance exam which will help us determine whether or not ACA will be able to meet the needs of the student. **All students admitted to American Christian Academy are placed under both academic and disciplinary probation for a period of one semester.** Students who fail to maintain academic and/or disciplinary standards will be asked to leave American Christian Academy at the end of the probation period or earlier if deemed necessary by the faculty and/or Head of School. Even after the initial probationary period has expired, students may be asked to leave ACA if their behavior is disruptive or detrimental to our environment.

It is desired that students admitted to American Christian Academy possess the following characteristics:

1. A respect for God's Word, The Holy Bible
2. An attitude of submission and respect for those in authority
3. Agree to adhere to the school policy of identification with birthed biological gender
4. An ability to admit and accept responsibility for wrongs committed
5. Courteous and polite behavior
6. A record of good behavior from their previous school
7. A desire to be taught in a manner that acknowledges the Lordship of Christ over creation
8. Not reported to engage in bullying
9. A well-rounded interest in activities beyond the classroom

Students who thrive in this kind of environment will do well at ACA.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

Students who wish to enroll in American Christian Academy must complete an online application. In addition to the online application, new students are required to submit the following information:

1. Teacher Referral for grades K4 - 12
2. Transcript or report card and most recent standardized test scores
3. School discipline report for grades entering 6 - 12
4. Medical information
5. Release of financial information if the student is currently attending a private daycare or school.
6. Updated blue immunization and a copy of birth certificate.
7. An entrance exam will be required for all students entering 2nd grade through high school. K4, K5 and 1st graders will be required to have an assessment by one of our teachers.

All the above information must be on file before a student can begin school. When all are received, the Director of Admissions reviews this information and determines the student's eligibility. If there are questions about eligibility, they convene a meeting of the Admissions Committee for a final decision.

Statement of Accomodation Resources

It is our belief that all children are created in the image of God and that He has a plan and purpose for each person. While it is our desire to be able to help all students, American Christian Academy operates as a private Christian school, and does not have the funds or resource personnel to provide the accommodations that may be needed for your child. If your child is to receive a regular diploma from American Christian Academy it will be necessary for him or her to do the same level of work and complete the same course requirements as completed by all other students of their graduating class. Our teachers seek to employ 'best practices' in teaching, which may include some accommodations including but not necessarily limited to the following: seating in the front of the class, additional and intentional cues to help keep the student focused, and extra time for tests (this is not always possible).

Again, we love all children and desire to provide a Christian education for students in our area. **However, we are not able to accommodate all special needs.**

Your decision to place your child at ACA necessitates that you understand our limitations. It is possible that you will have to seek resources such as tutoring or speech therapy, etc. outside of the school. In some cases, it may be necessary to choose a school which provides the special accommodations your child needs.

SECURITY CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

Security measures have been established to provide a safe environment for our students and parents. We appreciate the cooperation of our parents and students in the following measures. The building will be kept locked at all times. All parents and other visitors must come to **the front office or the elementary desk** in order to gain admittance. Students and teachers have been instructed NOT to open the doors but allow the office workers to make that determination. Visitors, including parents, must log in to our system and create a visitor's badge which must be worn in a visible place at all times while on campus. Visitors must return to the elementary desk to check out. If there are special limitations regarding who may pick up a child, ACA must have legal documentation on file in the main office. Elementary parents should also provide copies of the documentation to the classroom teacher. **Students from other schools are not permitted to visit unless requesting admission and a visit has been arranged through the admissions office.**

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Rationale: Students are learning much more from their school experience than textbook information. Habits of consistent attendance carry over to the work or career world. The administration has designed the following attendance policies to reinforce Christian values such as self-discipline, punctuality, consistency and consideration for others. When students are out of class for any reason, they are missing information and material that could be difficult to make up. Makeup work creates difficulty not only for the student, but the teachers as well. Parents are strongly encouraged to allow students to be out of school only when absolutely necessary. Each absence is designed EXCUSED or UNEXCUSED depending on the cause. Both have an impact on the overall learning experience of the student and will impact the grades earned as well. PLEASE READ AND CONSIDER THIS CAREFULLY. Excessive absences are considered truancy. We are legally responsible to report excessive absences to the authorities at DHR.

Excused Absences or Checkouts

Absences or checkouts due to personal illness, death in the immediate family, medical or dental appointments, and absences approved in advance by the administration are considered excused. Students should bring in a note explaining the absence when they return. If the absences were due to a medical appointment, a notification should be brought to school from the doctor's office. If the student experiences a catastrophic circumstance that causes excessive absences, a letter from the attending physician describing the condition or written verification of the circumstance should be submitted for the student's records. The length of time given to make-up missed assignments will be determined by the child's teacher. **Students will not be excused for trips during the Achievement Testing week in the spring.**

Unexcused Absences or Checkouts

Absences for reasons other than those stated above are considered unexcused absences. Students who are absent or check out early without appropriate cause will not be allowed to make up missed assignments.

Excessive Absences

For a student to receive grade level credit, yearly absences may not exceed twenty (20). Whether the absences are excused or unexcused does not change the credit ruling. Exceptions may be granted under unusual circumstances after parental consultation with the administration. After a total of 10 absences in a school year, the parent/guardian of the student will be required to provide medical or legal documentation for absences to be excused.

NOTE: If a student has a chronic medical condition, a letter from the attending physician describing the condition should be submitted for the student's records.

Tardiness

Students who arrive after the announcements have started (8:05 am), are considered tardy. These students must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian to the elementary desk where they will receive an admit slip. Students who are late for unexcused reasons, will not be allowed to make up the work that has occurred in the classroom before their arrival. If a student reaches 10 tardies within a grading period, a meeting with the elementary administrator must occur before the student is admitted back to class the following day.

Checking Out and Checking In

If an elementary student "checks out" during the day for an appointment, the parent or guardian should come to the elementary desk to sign the check out register. (For the safety of our children, our desk worker may ask for a picture I.D., if they do not recognize you.) A note should be given to the teacher the morning of the planned "check out" so the teacher will have time to gather homework, notes, books, etc. Check-outs should be done before 2:30 p.m., so as not to interfere with dismissal preparations.

ELEMENTARY EARLY MORNING/AFTERSCHOOL CARE

If you drop off your child before 7:30 a.m. or pick them up after 3:30 p.m. a charge of \$7 per day is incurred. If your child is picked up later than 5:30 p.m. there will be an additional \$6.00 charge from 5:30 - 5:35 p.m. Each additional minute after 5:35, will result in an additional charge of \$1 per minute. There is an additional charge for student care during Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break.

DISMISSAL GUIDELINES

Our dismissal system was developed to provide safety and order for each student's arrival and departure. Parents are asked to observe the following traffic flow patterns.

MORNING ARRIVAL - Students who arrive between 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 should be walked into the cafeteria and signed in to morning care. After 7:30, parents may drop students off in the elementary drive where a teacher is on duty to direct them into the cafeteria. The elementary drive through is a NO PARKING area between 7:30 – 8:00 a.m.

Parents who wish to walk their children to the elementary doors may do so. You are asked to say your goodbyes at the door and allow your child to walk to class independently.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL (3:00 – 3:30 p.m.) Each family will be issued a dismissal number printed on two official ACA carpool I.D. cards at the beginning of the school year. Dismissal time is a hectic time for our teachers and students. In order to keep our dismissal organized and efficient, parents will not be allowed to enter the building until 3:15 each day. Please remember that all check-outs should occur before 2:30.

All elementary students (K4 - 5th grade) will be picked up in the elementary drive through. All traffic should enter 14th street via Claymont Drive and turn left onto Patriot Drive. You will show your dismissal card to the on duty staff member who is entering numbers. Please keep your card on display until your child is in the car.

Students will be placed in the vehicle by a teacher or safety patrol member. Vehicles should adhere to the directions of the staff member in regards to moving through the carline. **Remember:** In order to pick up both middle schoolers and elementary students together you should **not** enter the line before 3:15 p.m.

Parents who wish to park and walk up to pick up their children must stand on the sidewalk with their official dismissal number.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE AN OFFICIAL ID CARD DISPLAYED, YOU WILL NEED TO SHOW IDENTIFICATION FOR VERIFICATION OF PICKUP RIGHTS. Students who are not picked up by 3:30 will be sent to after school care.

POLICIES FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Rationale

Our entire elementary program reflects the following principle: "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Our program incorporates these very important concepts:

1. Elementary school provides the foundation on which future learning and academic success depends.
2. Elementary school provides the foundation on which attitudes, study habits, and student behavior are developed.

DISCIPLINE SYSTEM:

Our elementary school uses a point system to maintain a code of conduct. Students are given points (similar to demerits) for various offenses:

1 point offenses: talking without permission, lack of responsibility, disruptive behavior, disobedience, not listening/following directions, misbehavior outside the classroom

3 point offenses: Rudeness or disrespect of others, cheating, theft, lying, inappropriate physical contact, verbal or physical abuse of others, fighting, disrespect to the teacher

Consequences for accumulation of points:

3 points = one day loss of PE/recess

6 points = teacher/parent conference & 3 day loss of PE/recess

9 points = office referral, call to parents & 3 day loss of PE/recess

12 points = possible suspension, administrative parent conference

Over 12 points = Head of School involvement

Behaviors worthy of suspension/expulsion:

1. Fighting on school property
2. Flagrantly abusive language, bullying, racial disrespect
3. Possession of weapons, including knives
4. Leaving school without permission
5. Failure of parents to cooperate with the school in discipline measures
6. Harassment, threats related to the school environment and/or people, assault or battery of a teacher
7. Moral misconduct: inappropriate contact or conversations of a sexual nature
8. Other serious infractions or behaviors deemed by the administration

NUISANCE BEHAVIOR

We believe that every person is of eternal value. We believe that God has uniquely gifted and is equipping each of us for the things He has for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10) We are going to diligently work to provide an environment that seeks to limit **nuisance behavior** (harassment or bullying) and work toward a Biblical resolution. Nuisance behavior includes any activity (verbal or physical) directed at someone by an individual or group of individuals.

Parents are encouraged to help their children deal with the normal but unacceptable unkind behavior and realize that nearly all have at one time or another been guilty of being unkind or unthoughtful. However.....bullying is not tolerated. It is **repeated** behavior that is annoying or pestering. Nuisance behavior would include unwelcome, **unrelenting** teasing and name-calling. Words are powerful in their impact on others. (Proverbs 18:21 “The tongue has the power of life and death.”) Mean-spirited or profane, words are totally unacceptable in any form of communication. This could include spoken words, text messages, written forms or the internet. Examples of bullying include:

- Sending repeated hurtful messages
- Spreading rumors
- Making fun of others on social media
- Exclusion - groups that willfully seek to isolate an individual
- Intentional physical actions such as hitting, kicking, pushing, etc.

Students who engage in mean spirited or unkind messages to other students by text or social media will be subject to school disciplinary measures.

Periodically, lessons on bullying are used to both educate students and deter inappropriate behavior. Surveys are conducted following the presentation and results are used to identify areas of concern.

It is recommended by ACA that parents be vigilant and proactive about cell phone and internet usage.

DRESS CODE

Rationale

1 Corinthians 10:31 instructs us to do all for the glory of God. We are called to live lives that glorify God in our behavior and appearance.

- The appearance of our students communicates many things about our school to the community.
- There is an appropriate way to dress for school. Well-groomed students generally perform better in academics and have an effect on the overall decorum of the classroom.
- Our appearance should display modesty (I Tim 2:9) and respect for others. Because modesty is a subjective standard, the board has endeavored to establish a dress code that is modest, while still allowing individual expression.
- The school reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of a student’s dress.
- As the need arises due to changing styles directives may be adjusted – EVEN MID-YEAR.
- If in doubt about some articles of clothing don’t wear them.

Applicable to Boys:

- Wear collared shirts with no writing or pictures.
- Wear ACA Tshirts that have been approved by the school and say ACA on the shirt.
- Wear shorts that are no shorter than 3" above the knee with belt loops. No athletic shorts!!
- Wear jeans that are not frayed, worn thin or have holes. They must not be sagging!
- May wear a variety of hair styles but must be off the ears, off the collar and off the eyebrows.
- Hair styles must not cause distraction because of style or color (only natural shades acceptable)
- Hats or head coverings must not be worn in the building.
- No sweat pants, athletic shorts, or wind suits may be worn to school.
- No facial piercings.

Applicable to Girls:

- Modest shirts with high necklines front and back which stay in place and have NO writing.
- All shirts worn under jackets or sweatshirts must meet dress code standards.
- Wear ACA Tshirts that have been approved by the school and say ACA on the shirt.
- Undergarments may not be visible in the back, at the neck, or at the arms.
- Skirts, dresses and shorts must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee.
- NO sweatpants, wind suits, leggings, or gym shorts.
- Pants/ jeans may not be frayed, have holes (even with patches), worn thin, ragged or excessively tight.
- Hair must not cause distraction because of style or color (only natural shades acceptable.)
- Girls are not permitted to wear nose jewelry or other facial piercings other than earrings.
- No hats or head coverings may be worn in the building.
- Sweatshirts with NO questionable or offensive writing or pictures may be worn.

STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO WEAR THE CURRENT CHAPEL THEMED T-SHIRT ON WEDNESDAYS

BOY-GIRL RELATIONSHIPS

In an effort to encourage our students in Elementary school to be allowed to be children and not pressured to grow up too fast, the following guidelines are a reflection of our philosophy concerning boy-girl relationships.

1. We encourage girls to wear clothes appropriate to their age, hairstyles that are not elaborate or "adult-looking," jewelry that is simple and no make-up.
2. Girls and boys are encouraged to avoid calling or texting each other for the purpose of furthering a boy-girl dating relationship.
3. Elementary boys and girls are discouraged from "going with" each other and we encourage parents to discourage this behavior at home as well.

It is our desire that our students develop and maintain wholesome, Biblical attitudes toward the opposite gender. Starting premature relationships on the Elementary level hinders this goal and adds stress and pressure to our children.

ELECTRONICS/CELL PHONES

Cell phone usage in the elementary school is prohibited. Students who bring cellphones to school must have them powered off and in their backpacks during the entire school day. Students who need to call home should (with teacher permission) use the school phone at the elementary desk. This also applies to before and after school. Cell phones that are made visible during the school day will be confiscated and must be picked up by a parent.

Electronic readers such as Nook and Kindle are allowed in the classroom strictly for A.R. reading. Students who bring these devices to school are responsible for keeping up with them. Students using these devices for other purposes, will lose the privilege of having them at school.

Other electronics such as Ipods, Nintendos, mp3 players, smart watches, watches with games or photo features, etc. are not permitted.

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

Our goal in providing internet service is to promote academic excellence in our school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. This access brings with it the availability of material counter-productive to our mission to instill academic excellence and Christian character in the students of our Christian school. ACA has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. The privilege of internet access by students and teachers brings with it the responsibilities of moral, ethical, and legal utilization of network resources.

Internet--Terms and Conditions of Use

- 1) **Acceptable Use** - The use of your account must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational and Christian objectives of ACA.
- 2) **Privileges** - The use of the Internet is a privilege and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. There could also be disciplinary actions taken.
- 3) **Network Etiquette** - You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - Be polite and use appropriate language.
 - Do not reveal your personal address or phone numbers or those of other students or colleagues.
 - Note that email is not guaranteed to be private.
 - Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
- 4) American Christian Academy makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing.
- 5) **Security** - Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If you feel you can identify a security problem on the Internet, you must notify Mrs. Hudson. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Internet.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

During the school day, communication between parent and teacher should be done through email or by leaving messages at the elementary desk for a call back. Teachers are not allowed to take calls or receive text messages from parents during instructional time.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Substitute teachers have the same authority as regular members of the faculty and should be accorded the same respect given to a regular teacher. They are to make assignments, award grades, indicate their judgment of each student's success in completing assignments and carry out proper classroom discipline. Substitute teachers may fill out discipline forms and the classroom teacher will turn them in to the elementary administrator. It is understandable that substitute teachers face an out-of-the-ordinary situation in taking up the responsibility of leading a class on relatively short notice.

CARE OF FURNITURE, FIXTURES, FACILITIES AND GROUNDS

Students at American Christian Academy are expected to share the responsibility of caring for and preserving the schools' furniture, fixtures, facilities and grounds. As a private organization on a very limited budget, ACA cannot allow students to destroy desks, deface walls, etc. Students who choose to destroy the property of the school or of other students will be given conduct points and required to pay for the items destroyed or defaced. Students who attend ACA are also expected to share in keeping the cafeteria, restrooms, gym, classrooms and outside grounds litter-free.

PERMANENT RECORD FOLDER

Each student has a permanent record folder in the office. In it are placed the records of all standardized tests, report cards and custody verification, if necessary. Students are encouraged to do their best in classes and on standardized tests as these records will follow them in case of transfer.

Recorded in the permanent folder are attendance records, report card grades and scores from national standardized testing such as Terra Nova or Iowa.

Any legal documentation concerning a child including custody issues must be included in this folder.

MARKING SYSTEM (1st – 5th Grade)

Our school uses a five letter grading system: A, B, C, D, and F.

A 90-100 Superior work

B 80-89 Above average work

C 70-79 Average work

D 60-69 Below average work

F 0-59 Failure to meet minimum requirements

ACCELERATED READING

The development of reading skills functions as a crucial component in the success of all students. Reading, like playing the piano, karate or tumbling, is a skill that can only be improved through practice. The wonderful thing is that it can also be an enjoyable and lifelong pastime. While there is no magic number of points that is “enough”, we have adopted the following requirement for our elementary students.

1st Grade: 12 points per year

2nd Grade: 32 points per year

3rd Grade: 65 points per year

4th Grade: 92 points per year

5th Grade: 120 points per year

Guidelines:

- Elementary students must earn these points while school is in session and therefore are not allowed to bank points during the summer.
- Students are not allowed to take tests before or after school unless given permission from the elementary principal.
- Students may test on books falling within their reading range (as determined by the STAR test).
- In order to protect our students from mature subject matters, the library has developed appropriate sections for lower elementary, upper elementary, middle school and high school. Elementary students are NOT allowed to check out nor test on middle school and high school leveled books.

LIBRARY PROCEDURES

The purpose of the school library service is to widen, deepen and intensify learning. The library contains a collection of instructional materials, including audio-visual and reference materials, selected to meet curricular and recreational needs of students and teachers. Parents should be actively involved in the oversight of the books their children select. All reading material is not appropriate for all grade levels. All library books must be returned by the end of the school year. Library fees will be assessed for lost or damaged books.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANS

In addition to the day to day events on our campus, there can be unusual emergency situations that occur. As student safety is our top priority, it is the responsibility of all ACA employees to take steps to identify, notify and then act as soon as possible to provide for a student’s safety.

Faculty and staff are trained each year to ensure that each employee knows how to provide safety for the students in emergency situations such as fires, tornadoes and intruders.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. **Medication at school** – The nurse must have an authorization form for each student who takes prescription or over-the-counter medication at school. Once completed, the over-the-counter form will be active for the entire school year. For prescription medication, the completed form must accompany the prescribed medication. Students should never be sent to school with medication without first consulting with the nurse and having the appropriate form completed. Students should not carry any medications (prescribed or over-the-counter) on their person while at school. ALL medication should be dispensed by the school nurse.
2. **Student Illness** – Sick students who are contagious must not be sent to school. When a student becomes ill at school, the parent must arrange for the student to be taken home. Students must be fever free (without the aid of fever medication) and/or have no vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school. Students who have more than three loose stools (diarrhea) must also be sent home and must have no diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. For more serious illnesses (i.e. influenza or other pandemic viruses), students should stay out of school until released by the doctor. In light of the most recent pandemic of 2020, ACA will make decisions based on the CDC recommendations for any school closings.
3. **Head Lice** – Students discovered to contain head lice or nits are required to remain at home during treatment and must be cleared by the school nurse or elementary administrator before returning to class. We exercise a “no nit” policy at ACA.
4. **Pink Eye (conjunctivitis)** – Students may return to school after 24 hours of prescribed medication.
5. **Strep Throat** – Students may return to school after prescription medication has been taken for 48 hours and the student is fever free (without the aid of fever medication) for 24 hours.
6. **Current Medical Problems** – If your child has asthma, food allergies, seizures, or any other medical problem, please fill out the applicable form and turn it in to the front office. This will ensure that your child gets the proper treatment in case of an emergency.
7. **Accidents** - Students who are injured while at school should report the injury to the nearest teacher or staff member. The school nurse will be consulted as needed.

Forms are available in the front office or on our webpage at www.acacademy.com under the Current Families tab -> Nurse's Corner.

LUNCH

Lunch is served every full day of school. Students K4 – 3rd grade will have a choice between milk or water with their lunch. Pre-made salads and sandwich boxes consisting of bread, cheese, ham or turkey, chips and a cookie will be available each day.

Payments may be made in the form of cash, check or credit card. Checks should be made payable to ACA. **Your child's name should be on the check in the memo section. Cash should be sealed in an envelope with the child's name on the outside.** Credit card charges must be made with Sherry Ballard by calling 205 553-5963 Ext 16.

Menus are posted on FACTS and the ACA website.

You are welcome to come and eat with your child during lunch. Visitors are required to check in at the main office or elementary desk to receive a name badge before going to the cafeteria. Please be aware that our cafeteria is crowded which could necessitate moving to a different table to eat lunch with your child.

BIRTHDAYS

We are happy to have your child observe his birthday at school by sharing a small treat such as cupcakes or cookies. Please notify the teacher in advance if you are sending or bringing treats to school. The treats will be served in the lunchroom or in the classroom at a convenient time. Party favors and balloons are not allowed. Birthday invitations may only be distributed if everyone in the class has been invited.

FIELD TRIPS

From time to time a class will schedule an appropriate field trip to enhance the learning experience at school. Parents are allowed and even encouraged to participate in these trips. The parents assisting with the trips should work closely with the teacher to ensure that the experience provides the best opportunity for reaching the objectives set for each trip. Students should always wear their designated field trip shirt to these events. Students who elect not to participate in a field trip should not come to school that day and will be considered “absent” for the day.

HALLOWEEN

Our elementary school does not celebrate Halloween. Clothing worn to school should not reflect this holiday and treats should not be sent to the classroom.

CHAPEL

A new chapel theme is announced at the beginning of each school year. Interactive Bible lessons relating to the theme are presented each week using songs, games, stories, object lessons and Bible verses. Chapel themed t-shirts are available for purchase and may be worn on Wednesday's to celebrate the day. Parents are welcomed to join us each week.

SAFETY PATROL

Fifth grade students may make application at the beginning of the school year to be considered for membership on our Safety Patrol Team. These responsible members serve our students and teachers by assisting in both morning arrival and afternoon dismissal of our students. All members must pledge to:

- Report for Safety Patrol duty on time
- Perform duties faithfully.
- Strive to always set a good example to peers and younger students.
- Be a model student and show respect for teachers and ACA staff.
- Report dangerous practices of students.
- Maintain an academic grade average not lower than a "70".

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Snack Friday
- Grandparents Day
- Homecoming Dress up Days
- Winterfest
- Field Day
- K5 Graduation
- 5th Grade Graduation
- Honors Day (1st – 4th Grades)
- Spelling Bee
- Math Olympics
- Art Show

LOST AND FOUND

Items that are found left around the elementary school are stored at the elementary desk. Students and parents should check and reclaim articles as necessary. The school assumes no responsibility for articles left lying about the building or improperly stored. Articles which are not claimed periodically will be donated to charity. Suggestion: Put your child's name in the tags of sweatshirts and jackets, label lunch boxes, backpacks and other personal items.

FUNDRAISING

Rationale

All efforts to raise funds for our non-profit organization are greatly appreciated. Student clubs, parents, teachers, and staff contribute significantly to programs that are not supported by student tuition. Even though fundraising activities are greatly appreciated and needed, the Board recognizes that they may offer opportunities for misunderstandings and division unless they are conducted under specific guidelines. The following policies are offered not to control, squelch, or hinder fundraising activities, but to protect these efforts so they may continue to contribute to our many needs.

Policies

1. Any fundraising activity that involves the students representing ACA or its school programs must be approved by the Head of School.
2. All funds generated to be used in the school's programs or by its students are under the control of the Headmaster and Board of Directors.
3. All funds collected must be handled according to procedures outlined in the School Board's Policies and Procedures Manual.
4. The disbursement of all funds should be handled according to procedures in the School Board's Policies and Procedures Manual.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

When students and parents realize that they are leaving ACA, they should follow these outlined procedures:

- See the registrar for withdrawal papers
- Get financial clearance from the business office
- Leave forwarding addresses for residences and future schools with the school secretary.

NO RECORDS WILL BE RELEASED UNTIL A STUDENT HAS PROPERLY TAKEN CARE OF ALL THE DETAILS OF WITHDRAWAL