Ann Arbor Academy Family Handbook 2025-2026

The mission of Ann Arbor Academy is to allow students with divergent learning styles to flourish in an environment that promotes social and academic confidence and growth.

We believe that:

- children want to learn
- some brains work differently than others
- there are no lazy students, just barriers to learning
- students thrive on success
- success in learning is its own reward
- our students are wonderful, unique, and gifted with the opportunity to see the world a little differently than their peers

Equity and Inclusion Statement

Ann Arbor Academy is committed to providing a diverse, inclusive, and equitable learning experience for our students. A commitment to equity and inclusion is an integral component of academic excellence and social development. We celebrate and explore differences in experience based on, but not limited to, racial, socioeconomic, gender, sexuality, physical ability, and religious diversity. We promote acceptance of learning differences and disabilities, and celebrate the many positive experiences and viewpoints that diversity in all its forms brings to our school community.

Community Standards and Norms

Members of the Ann Arbor Academy school community, led by the faculty and including administrators, students, parents, volunteers, and members of the Board of Trustees, are expected to model and uphold the standards and norms listed here.

- Uphold the mission of the school in the interactions you have with other members of the school community.
- Place the safety and well-being of students foremost in policy and action.
- Promote a culture of dignity, equity, and respect for all members of the school community.
- Remember that a culture of dignity, equity, and respect is one that does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, threats, or bullying, and which seeks to protect and magnify the needs of community members who may need additional support due to disability, race, religion, gender expression, sexuality, or other minority status.
- Remember that each member of the school community has their own unique, lived experience. Listen to understand, and to learn.

Schedule and Hours

Lower School Daily Schedule

8:25 - 2:55

Activity schedule will be shared with families yearly

Upper School Daily Schedule

Middle School, High School, & 13th Year Program
8:35 - 8:45 - Morning Advisory
8:50 - 9:35 - 1st hour
9:40 - 10:25 - 2nd hour
10:25 - 10:35 - Ten minute break
10:35 - 11:20 - 3rd hour
11:25 - 12:10 - 4th hour
12:10 - 1:00 - Lunch
1:00 - 1:45 - 5th hour
1:50 - 2:50 - 6th hour
2:55 - 3:05 - Afternoon advisory
3:05 - Dismissal

Office Hours

The office is open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday (except for holidays and school breaks), with reduced hours during the summer months. Our phone number is 734-747-6641, and the best email address to use is office@annarboracademy.org.

Building Hours/Aftercare Schedule

The building is open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday (except for holidays and school breaks). Students may arrive at school beginning at 8:00 am and may stay until 5:00 pm in aftercare. Please notify us in advance if a student will stay for aftercare.

School Pride

School Colors

Ann Arbor Academy's school colors are silver and navy blue.

School Mascot

Ann Arbor Academy's school mascot is the blue heron.



Payment

Methods and Schedule of Payment

Tuition payments are made through the FACTS Financial system. Families can determine their own schedule of payments during enrollment; options include one annual payment, biannual payments, or monthly payments. All families must have an account set up with FACTS Financial.

Tax Deductions/Flex Account Options for Paying Tuition

Because the Academy is a school designed for students in special education, the cost of tuition may be able to be taken from a Medical Flex Spending Account or other pretax dollars, or may be able to be deducted from taxes. Ask your accountant or financial planner for details to help you decide if any of these options would work for you.

529 Savings Plans are able to be used for paying tuition at an independent school.

Student and Family Policies and Procedures

Communications

The faculty and administration endeavor to maintain positive, proactive communication with families on a regular basis. We like to hear from you, so please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions!

Communications about school operations or post-secondary educational and work options should go to the Executive Director, Meredith Schindler, at merediths@annarboracademy.org. Questions about enrollment, FACTS financial setup, and related concerns will go to Janet Gocay at admissions@annarboracademy.org. Questions about student schedules, an overview of student progress, or other general issues concerning a specific student should go to the student's advisor. Questions or concerns about a class should go to the teacher of that class. Email is usually the preferred method of communication for the school and individual faculty members, unless a specific request has been made otherwise.



The faculty directory will be emailed home to families and also can be found on the Ann Arbor Academy website. Faculty members can generally be expected to reply to communications within 24 hours, except for over a weekend.

Family Conferences and Report Cards

Family Conferences are held in November and April of each school year, during a weekday which is a day off for students. Conferences will be held via Google Meet during the daytime and in the evening. Parents and guardians sign up for time slots in advance. Core Skills Curriculum (CSC) goals progress is discussed during Family Conferences, as well as overall student progress in a subject area. Report cards are emailed to parents/guardians twice a year, at the end of each semester.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Please be sure to follow the traffic signs through the one way driveway. Be courteous and thoughtful of other drivers behind you who may need to get through if you are waiting in line. If you need to enter the building, please pull your car into a parking spot - do not leave it in the driveway.

Sign In and Check Out Procedures

All visitors to the school need to sign in at the front desk, and sign out when they leave the building. Students who arrive after 9 am or leave before 2:30 pm will need to sign in and/or out. Aftercare students must sign out when they leave - aftercare students who are in the Lower School must be signed out by a parent, guardian, or authorized pickup adult.

Absences and Tardies

Students are expected to arrive no by the scheduled start time each day, and to stay through the end of the school day. Please try to schedule doctor or other health care visits after school hours whenever possible. Students arriving late must sign in, and those leaving early must sign out.

If a student is ill, or will need to miss school for a family event, parents are expected to call or e-mail the office to report the absence as excused by 8:30 am. Students out for more than three consecutive days will need a doctor's note.

Visitors

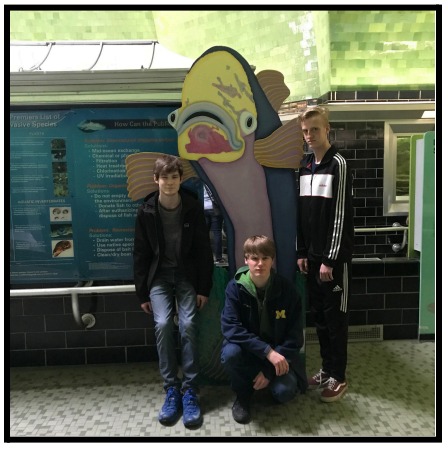
Visitors are allowed at any time, although alumni and family members who are coming to socialize with students need to confine their visits to the lunch hour. Teachers are available for meetings by prior appointment. All visitors must sign in at the main office. The office may request a visitor to produce identification at any time.

Volunteering

All families are encouraged to volunteer and become involved at the school. Families receiving financial aid are required to put in twenty hours of volunteer time each year. Volunteer opportunities arise throughout the school year, and there are many sorts of things to do.

Lunch

Students should plan to bring their lunch daily unless they will buy from the Snack Shack or taco truck (details below). Refrigerators are available, as well as microwaves for students old enough to safely use them.



The Snack Shack is student run and sells pizza, sandwiches, chips, and juice drinks on Mondays and Wednesdays. We will bill your FACTS account monthly for purchases made at the Snack Shack. Tacos El Mariachi Loco (aka “the Taco Truck”) is at school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students planning to buy lunch from the Taco Truck should bring cash, including enough for a tip (around $15-$20).

Please do not send in foods containing any type of nuts or nut products. This policy is in place to ensure the safety of our students with nut allergies. If your child has a highly restricted diet and needs an exception to this policy, please contact us.

Aftercare Policy

Aftercare is available on school days, beginning after classes end and continuing until 5:00 pm. During aftercare, students may work on homework, participate in after school clubs and activities, or play on electronic devices brought from home (games must be school appropriate).

There is no extra cost to participate in aftercare, but we do need to know which students will be here each day. Please notify us in advance if your student will stay for aftercare.

Attendance at aftercare is dependent on good behavior. Parents that have not picked their student up by 5 pm and have not communicated a plan for them after that time (i.e. walking up to the library) to the office in advance will be charged $10 per minute for extra time spent by the staff. If a parent is late for pickup (past 5 pm) more than twice, the child may become ineligible to attend aftercare.

Inclement Weather School Closing Policy

If classes must be canceled due to inclement weather or any other reason, parents will be notified via email and text message as soon as a decision has been reached. An email will also be sent out to the general email list we use for all communications. Additionally, a notice will be placed on the Google school calendar, which can be viewed directly on the main page of the school's website (www.annarboracademy.org). School closing notifications will also be posted to www.clickondetroit.com, and Channel 4 news, and usually WEMU as well.

Notification will be made prior to 6:00 am of the canceled school day, unless there is a problem of which we have no advance notice.

When deciding to close school due to weather, we primarily take into account the condition of the school districts from which our students travel. If roughly half of those districts cancel school, even if Ann Arbor Public Schools does not, we may close. If AAPS closes for snow, we will automatically close too. If they close due to the cold, we may remain open, and you will be notified in a timely manner.

Emergency Information and Vaccination Records

Emergency information is provided online through the FACTS Family Portal and must be completely filled out upon enrollment. Vaccination records must also be provided, in accordance with county health rules. If we do not have completed emergency information and vaccination forms or a waiver for a student, we reserve the right to deny the student admission to the school building until they are completed.

Contagious Illness Policy

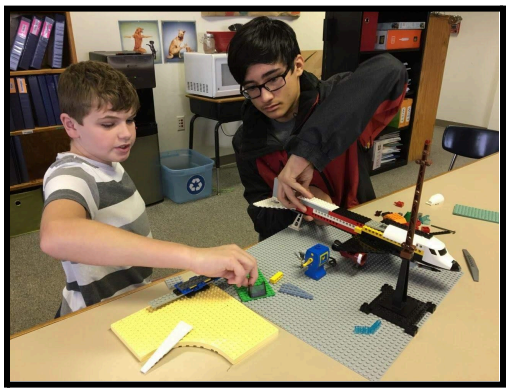
The policy of Ann Arbor Academy is that if a student or faculty member has run a fever or vomited within the 24 hours prior to the start of the school day, they may not attend school. If a student presents at the office with any of these symptoms, a parent will be called to take them home. The administration reserves the right to waive this policy in the case of vomiting, due to the large number of anxiety related stomach issues present in our school population.

Students, faculty, and visitors with coughs or who are sneezing will be required to wear a mask during the school day during the duration of the illness.

Medication Policy

All prescription medication kept at the Academy must be in an original bottle with the doctor's name and dosage information on it. Medication will be kept in the safe unless it is necessary to keep it refrigerated or near the student, in which case alternative plans will be worked out with the family. Medication usage, both prescription and over-the-counter, will be logged by the office staff.

Over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and antacids are kept in the office to be distributed upon student or parent request in the recommended dosage if the parent has given permission.



Parents or guardians are expected to inform the school administrator and teachers if there is a chronic medical issue or known potential for a medical emergency. At the time that the information is given, a plan will be put into place with the parents and staff in order to help keep the student safe and to give them access to medications when needed. All medications will be stored in the school safe unless they need to be refrigerated or, as in the case of insulin or an epinephrine pen, they need to remain near the student at all times. If that is the case, the school will work with the student and parents in order to determine the best place to store and maintain access to the student's medication.

Parents are expected to provide the school with an up to date list of student medications. This can be via the enrollment portal or by email or letter to the school.

Special Education Procedures



IEP Administration and Tracking

IEPs are transferred over to Non-Public School Service Plans by Ann Arbor Public Schools and are administered and serviced by them. Records of the Service Plans are kept at the Academy, but the official recordkeeping agency is AAPS.

504 Plans

All Academy students who are not on Service Plans and who need accommodations in order to effectively access their education will be put on a 504 Plan as specified under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. 504 Plans are developed and administered by the school, and are updated yearly.

Transferring Over an IEP

Upon acceptance to the Academy and as soon as the most recent IEP and Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team Report (MET) are released to us, we will turn those documents over to the case workers at Ann Arbor Public Schools, who are responsible for development and implementation of the IEP. The IEP will be transferred to a non-public school service plan, and the records and reporting duties are the responsibility of AAPS. A representative from AAPS will contact the family when the records are turned over, typically within a week.

Families of students who are new to Ann Arbor Academy can help the IEP transfer process by turning in a copy of the student's most recent IEP and 3 year re-evaluation paperwork to the office as soon as possible. Those documents tend to not be sent over by school districts when the other student records are.

Transferring Over a 504 Plan

Students who are on a 504 plan will remain on one, but Ann Arbor Academy will assume responsibility for maintaining and implementing it. The 504 plan will be reviewed and revised annually, or more often if requested by the family or needed by the school.

Student Policies

Student Safety

In order to provide a school environment that is safe, nurturing, and which teaches and maintains healthy boundaries, teachers and volunteers are required to observe the following protocols with regard to student interactions:

- When in a classroom alone with a student, keep a door open and let other adults know that you are in the room with the student. When it is not feasible to keep the door open (i.e. a testing situation or recording music, etc.), student and teacher must be within the line of sight of the window in the door. Shades must not be blocking the window, and any signage must not block the line of sight.
- Faculty members should not transport students alone in their cars. If this is unavoidable, the student needs to sit in the back seat of the vehicle and the parents/guardians must be informed. An open telephone line with a parent or guardian during the trip must be at least offered, and is strongly recommended.



All faculty members are required to complete the Praesidium student safety training to prevent and recognize child sexual abuse. Faculty members are mandatory reporters to the State of Michigan with regard to suspected child abuse or neglect. Faculty members and volunteers are subject to background checks and fingerprinting through the State of Michigan law enforcement system.

Gender, Names, and Pronouns

Students, faculty, and all members of the Ann Arbor Academy school community are addressed by the name and pronoun(s) they communicate to the school as being correct for them, and participate in activities based on the gender they identify as. School records are kept in the name the student uses, as communicated by them to the school.

Student Cell Phone and Personal Electronics Policy

Students in the Lower School should not have cell phones or personal electronic devices at school. If there is a need for this due to a medical condition, please communicate with the office, and we will sort out a plan that will work.

Students in the Middle School may bring cell phones and personal electronics to school, but must leave them in their backpacks during the day. Middle School students with cell phones out during the school day will not be able to continue to bring them in. An exception may be made for lunchtime - that will be determined after the start of the school year.



Students in the Upper School may bring cell phones and personal electronics to school, and may use them during lunchtime and the ten minute break. They may also use them during class if directed by the teacher for learning purposes (taking notes, recording discussions or lecture material, photographing the board, scanning books or documents, etc). Students who do not use their cell phones appropriately will not be allowed to continue to bring them in.

If your child does not have a cell phone at school and you need to get a message to them, you can email office@annarboracademy.org, email them at their Ann Arbor Academy email address, or text the school phone at 734-747-6641. Even if your child does have a cell phone at school, please refrain from texting them during class time. Lunch is from 12:10-1:00 pm and is a sufficient amount of time for text or phone conversations with home.

There is a student internet connection available for devices brought from home. School based devices such as our Chromebooks or iPads are connected to the school internet already.

Student Email

All students are issued an Ann Arbor Academy email address upon enrollment. This address is a Google based address via Google Apps for Education. This means that students also have access to a Google Drive account through their email sign in. Security on student email accounts is taken very seriously, and is restricted according to the age of the student.

Student email addresses are used for communication within the school, as well as for Google Classroom and Google Drive.

Social Media Policy

Students are expected to refrain from internet browsing, including social media sites, while in class. Failure to respect this boundary may result in the loss of electronics privileges.

Threats and other interactions that occur between Ann Arbor Academy students on social media may be considered to be part of a school based interaction and therefore subject to school based consequences. Cyberbullying is treated in the same way that bullying at school is.

It is impossible to realistically forbid all social media interaction between faculty members and students, due to the evolving nature of the platforms. Faculty are expected to maintain healthy boundaries, and to act at all times in congruence with the mission of the school when on social media. Students are not adults, and should not be treated as such.

If a family has a concern about social media use regarding a student or students, they should contact their student's advisor. If there are concerns regarding inappropriate communication between a student and a faculty member, the Executive Director should be contacted immediately.

Student Discipline Policy

The purpose of the student discipline policy is to give students a framework of expected and acceptable actions that will help them learn and grow to reach their potential. Students engaging in inappropriate or dangerous behaviors will be redirected, given choices, and allowed to experience natural consequences for their actions. Students learning positive behaviors need support, firm boundaries, and helpful feedback.



Students are expected to remain in class, with feedback and support, if they are exhibiting challenging or unexpected behaviors. Sometimes a student may request a break - this is up to the discretion of the teacher, but is generally encouraged. Students should be able to self-select when they can return to class, but will need to take responsibility for their actions and present a plan to change them in the future.

If a student's behavior is dangerous or is disruptive to the point that other students cannot learn, that student may need to leave class. In this case, the student will often need to spend some time in Meredith's office, or a similar room that will allow them some time to calm down and reflect on their actions. Students need to take responsibility for their choices, and to engage in planning for how to avoid the issue in the future, for them to be able to return to class. The school counselor may also be called in to help with this process, and the family will be notified of what has occurred and what the plan of action is.

Students who leave campus repeatedly without permission, engage in physical violence against another student or a teacher, are routinely disruptive and not responding to correction, or who bring weapons or other banned materials to school may be required to leave the school community.

Drug, Weapon, Smoke Free Zone Policy

Ann Arbor Academy does not allow drugs, firearms, knives whose primary purpose is to injure or intimidate, or smoking of any substance on campus. Vaping, juuling, and other forms of nicotine or drug inhalation are also prohibited on campus.

Safe transportation of students by caregivers

Ann Arbor Academy is a drug and smoke free campus. Tobacco, marijuana, alcohol, and other psychoactive substance use is banned on campus.

Anyone using or suspected of using drugs or being under the influence of alcohol while transporting a student to campus will be reported to the police or other relevant authority. We will not release children to a parent, guardian, or other individual who we suspect to be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs. Students will be kept at school and the police will be called if an alternative, sober ride cannot be arranged.

Harassment Policy

No member of the school community may engage in harassing, bullying, or threatening behavior toward another member of the school community. This includes sexual, physical, and/or cyber harassment. Failure to abide by this policy will be addressed by the Executive Director and may result in removal from the school community.

Immunization Policy

Students must have received the appropriate vaccinations required by the Michigan school code for their age. Students unable to receive these vaccinations for medical reasons must present a waiver obtained through their local health department. In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, unvaccinated students may be excluded from school grounds for the duration of the outbreak, per the guidelines established by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Campus Safety Policies and Procedures

Safety Philosophy



Ann Arbor Academy endeavors to provide a safe, secure learning environment for its students. Due to the unique nature of our school, our procedures to establish and maintain a secure campus environment are tailored to meet the needs of our student body. Safety drills have been developed with input from the Pittsfield Township Police and Fire Departments.

Outside Doors

The front doors to the school are open during school hours. There are adults and students in and out of the doors regularly, and the front

desk in the main building is staffed. All other doors to the school need to be kept closed and locked unless there is a teacher providing direct supervision to students or outdoor activities near the door. Students are not allowed to socialize behind the building.

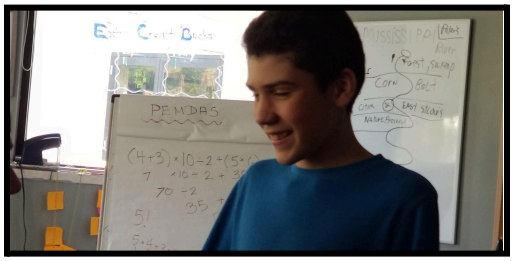
Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted four to five times per year. The fire alarm is not pulled for a drill; students and teachers are notified that the drill is commencing by a prearranged signal.

Students and faculty must exit the building by the nearest door as quickly as possible. Faculty members who are teaching need to exit with their class. Faculty members who are not teaching a class at the time of the drill or fire emergency are assigned to check the school bathrooms and nearby empty classrooms for students before exiting the building. In the event of an actual fire emergency, classrooms with egress windows may also be used for escape.

Teachers will line up on the grass across the parking lot from the main door with the class they were teaching when the drill or fire emergency occurred and wait for the all clear signal before re-entering the building.

Tornado Drills



Tornado drills are generally conducted once per year by a prearranged signal. In the event of a drill or an actual tornado, teachers need to lead their classes to the closest interior room without windows - this is generally a bathroom or small classroom. Students and teachers need to crouch down and cover their heads until the all clear is received.

Violent Intruder Drills

In the event of a violent intruder, the first response is for teachers to shepherd students out the nearest door or window exit to a safe outside location, preferably one of the office buildings nearby, and call 911. Classes that are outside should proceed directly to safety.

If in a room with no exit, barricade the door and stay away from the line of sight of any windows. If you are adjacent to a room with a safe exit, remember that punching through the drywall to access the next room may be a viable plan to reach safety. Only if there is no other choice should a faculty member attempt to confront and disarm a violent intruder. The primary duty of the faculty is to remove students from harm's way.

All classrooms have an orange safety whistle in the desk or hanging on the wall to be used to alert others of danger in the event of an emergency.

When we conduct these drills with students, which is usually once per year, we stress how unlikely it is that someone would want to hurt any of them, and we calmly and slowly walk through the steps and

possible scenarios for escape or hiding. The focus is on problem solving and empowerment - to ease fears, not to increase them. Violent intruder drills, like the other drills at the school, are conducted by prearranged signal. They are preceded by a talk with students about why we practice these things, and to help them work through some of their fears from reports of violent incidents at other schools.

General Policies and Information

Non-Discrimination Policy

Ann Arbor Academy is committed to equal opportunities for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.

Statement of Compliance with ISACS Standards of Membership

Ann Arbor Academy is proud to be fully accredited by ISACS and has made a commitment to adhere to the ISACS Standards of Membership in its policies and procedures as a school. Review and confirmation of the school's adherence to the Membership Standards shall be conducted by the Board of Trustees in January of each calendar year.



Accreditation and Professional Organizations

Ann Arbor Academy is fully accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). We belong to the International Dyslexia Association, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the Autism Society of Michigan, and Children and Adults with ADD (CHADD). Additionally, we are members of the Association of Independent Michigan Schools and the National Association of Independent Schools.

Non-Profit Status

Ann Arbor Academy is a non-profit, 501 (c) 3 school as defined by the United States Internal Revenue Service. All donations are tax-deductible to the greatest extent allowed by law. As a non-profit organization, Ann Arbor Academy is governed by a Board of Trustees.