

ASA Parent Orientation Document

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Welcome to ASA!

As a new family, we are excited to have you here and look forward to getting to know you and your family.

In this document, you'll find lots of helpful information that will walk you through the basics of how ASA works.

And if you have any questions, you'll also know how to reach out to someone who can help.

If You Have Questions

If you have questions, there are several resources we have available.

First read through this document and then take a look at the [website](#) where specific dates, policies, and helpful links are all provided.

Please also read through [our official bylaws](#), which govern how ASA is structured and run.

You can also reach out to members of the Board of Directors or committee members with questions. [See a current list of who is serving here](#).

As it relates to new families, here's a quick rundown of the leadership and support structure at ASA:

The Family Support Committee manages the waitlist and helps families get registered. A member of this committee is your first point of contact at ASA and can answer all of your questions as a new family.

The Activities Committee oversees all student activities, including retreats, monthly activities, and lunch activities.

The Mentor Support Committee oversees all the mentors' needs as they teach their classes.

The Tech Committee manages everything techy, including registration, communications, and the website.

The Finance Committee manages all of the finances, including tuition and payment plans.

The Facilities Committee oversees anything related to the building and the supplies used at ASA.

The Board of Directors ensures the vision and mission of ASA is maintained, establishes policies, and coordinates school-wide efforts that involve multiple committees. They also create the schedule of classes each year. A member of each committee serves on the Board.

Inside our Slack workspace, there is a bookmark link to a list of current families and their contact information. Once you've been added to Slack, you'll find it in the #asa-related-general channel. Ask your contact on the Family Support Committee if you need help locating this spreadsheet.

Being a Part of ASA

The ASA Waitlist

The first step to becoming a part of ASA is to [get on the waitlist](#). Our bylaws allow up to 75 students to enroll. The waitlist ensures that families are invited to join in the order that they expressed interest. You may get on the waitlist at any time -- even if your child won't be eligible to join ASA for more than a year ([see our full age policy](#)).

When you join the waitlist, a member of the Family Support Committee will reach out to you and thank you for your interest. At the beginning of the calendar year (January or February), you will receive a request to fill out a survey to confirm your interest in joining ASA in the fall and to indicate your interest in how you wish to serve (see more about volunteering below).

The Family Support Committee will then contact you prior to our Spring Meeting in April, where we usually open registration for the next year. At the Spring Meeting, you can learn more about classes for the upcoming year and find out the registration schedule.

Current and returning families are given priority registration, which usually lasts a week. After their registration window is finished, registration opens for new families in the order they are on the waitlist. To join ASA, you must pay the Family Fee and Per-Student Fee ([see more details HERE](#)) and volunteer for a mentor position at ASA.

We use a system called ASAP for our registration. All details about how to access ASAP and how to register can be found [HERE](#).

Volunteering with ASA

Because ASA is a family-led non-profit, it is completely supported by the families at ASA. A parent from each family is required to [volunteer their time to help ASA function](#). A parent from each family volunteers to mentor a class.

We do our best to accommodate family situations and recognize each family is in a different place in their ability to serve. However, we have found that the most successful ASA families are the ones who are willing to invest their time into contributing to make ASA work. A member of the Board meets and coordinates volunteer options with each family as they join ASA.

After you've paid your Family Fee and Per-Student Fee in the spring and volunteered for a position, you officially become part of the ASA family. At this point, a member of the Tech Committee will invite you to join our communication platforms -- a parents Groups.io email, Slack, and Remind texting. All information about ASA is communicated through these three channels; joining these channels and being informed is a required part of being a member of ASA.

We also have a student groups.io group for emails and a Slack workspace that are specifically geared toward students.

Registering for Classes

The official schedule for the school year is usually published sometime early in the summer, along with class descriptions and tuition amounts. Registration for fall classes takes place usually at the beginning of August, which gives time for mentors to prepare for class numbers and families to finalize their schedules.

Registration for classes takes place on ASAP, our registration system, which is most easily [accessed through our website](#). Each class has a maximum number of students allowed. If more than the maximum number are interested in the class, you can join the waitlist for the class. It is up to the discretion of individual mentors as to whether they raise the number of students in the class -- although mentors do their best to include as many students as possible.

Tuition can be paid with credit card or check. You can use your credit card on ASAP at the time you register, or you can pay later by logging back into ASAP. You can also pay by check, by mailing your tuition amount to the treasurer (the address is in several places in the registration process). For families who need to spread their tuition out over the course of the semester, we do offer payment plans for a small fee.

Tuition for each class covers the cost of supplies, curriculum, activities, and incentives. It also includes a small building fee that helps cover the cost of renting the building and maintaining classroom supplies and equipment that are shared between classes. Mentors do not receive compensation for teaching a class.

Registration closes several weeks before the first week of class. This gives mentors a final count for their class, at which point they can buy supplies. Students can drop or add a class during the first two weeks of each semester, but any costs incurred by the mentor as they prepared for the class won't be refunded to the family.

Registration for winter semester usually takes place the first week of January. All students register for all their classes again -- even those that are considered "full year" classes. Your account must be paid in full before you can register each semester.

The ASA Building

ASA meets in the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Provo (255 S 700 E St in Provo). They generously allow us to use multiple classrooms, the gym and kitchen area, and the outdoor field next to the building. There's ample parking available.

[Here's a map of the building that shows which rooms we use.](#)

Classes at ASA

Classes are held each Thursday. Usually, fall semester begins the first week of September and lasts until Thanksgiving. We take an eight week break in the winter called Winterim. After Winterim, classes start up again and go until the end of April. We also take a week off for Spring Break in April. A full schedule of the current year can be seen at the Classes page of the [website](#).

Our classes are divided into four categories -- Apprentice, Journeyman, Master, and All Ages. Apprentice-level classes are geared toward 12 to 14 year old students (Year 1 & 2). Journeyman classes usually work best for kids who are 14 to 16 (Year 3 & 4). And Master level classes are designed for kids who are 15 and older (Year 5 & 6). We also have classes geared toward all ages. Mentors for specific classes determine if there is an age limit for their specific class.

Most classes at ASA are taught on a two-year rotation, which makes it possible for most students to take classes when they fit best both academically and socially. While your child may academically be ready for a higher-level class, we strongly recommend students consider staying with their peers -- as years of experience has shown that students have a better time learning with kids their own age and socially have a better overall experience at ASA.

Our classes are specifically designed to meet the needs of kids with a wide range of academic skills. Students come to ASA from a variety of homeschool philosophies. Some are just beginning to do bookwork, while others have been doing assignments for several years. We design classes that help every student feel successful regardless of their previous educational experience. Due to the high number of activities and hands-on learning experiences included with every class, students who already know the content of the class often enjoy them as much or more than students who are just being exposed to the material for the first time.

Within the two-year rotation, we have two general tracks -- English/history and science. While ASA has never intended to provide an entire middle or high school curriculum, many families find our classes appropriately rigorous enough to be the main classes in each subject for the year. Other families choose to supplement what students are doing in class with content at home. Many classes also provide “bonus” assignments (extra books, projects, etc.) that students can choose to do if they want to spend more time with a subject.

While we don’t teach math classes at ASA, we do strongly encourage students to do some kind of math program at home. This helps them be prepared for the Master level science classes, which often require knowing Algebra I in order to participate in the class.

You can see a yearly rotation plan on our [website](#) on the Classes page. Currently, we have seven English/history classes in our rotation plan and eight science classes. The downside of this many classes is that students will not be able to take every class offered during their years at ASA. However, the benefit is that there are always classes that meet students at their appropriate social, emotional, and academic level.

Parent Meetings & Activities

During the summer, we hold a day-long mentor training. This training is open to all parents of ASA and we strongly encourage everyone to attend. Mentor trainings cover specific skills -- such as creating class outlines or classroom management -- as well as our mentoring principles like “seeing with spiritual eyes” and “low floor/high ceiling” learning environments.

Each week, in August, the moms (and dads) of ASA are invited to join a discussion group in the park. Park Days are usually held on Thursdays and are an excellent way for parents to get to know each other, while also discussing readings that relate to vision and foundation principles of ASA. Reading assignments are sent in advance, but participating in the discussion is open to everyone whether they have read or not. Many moms bring their kids to play, and often friendships begin to form or are rekindled after the summer break.

We also hold two Parent Meetings -- one in the fall and one in the spring. Our fall parent meeting is where we introduce year-specific information, meet everyone officially for the first time, and answer questions about ASA. The spring meeting (in addition to introducing potential families to ASA and revealing a draft of next-year’s schedule) is also where we handle official non-profit business, including introducing the new Board of Directors. An accounting of the finances is also done at the spring meeting.

Throughout the year, we hold SPARK nights and evening mentor trainings that parents are also encouraged to attend. SPARK stands for “Scholars & Parents Acquiring Righteousness and

Knowledge” and are inspiring, educational events usually geared toward parents. Mentor trainings are a continuation of the day-long mentor training and usually dive deeper into specific topics based on the needs of the mentors.

Student Activities

Each fall before the first week of school, we hold a fall retreat that we strongly encourage each student to attend. This is where students begin to create friendships, learn the theme for the year, and begin to feel like they belong to the ASA family. The first day of ASA classes doesn't seem so scary when you already know several familiar faces!

The retreat usually includes inspiring speakers, activities, food, and games -- and is held in a location somewhere near Utah Valley. Students register for the retreat separately from classes, and the cost for attending is the only activity of the year not covered by the regular fees.

Throughout the year, we hold monthly out-of-school activities for students. The cost of these activities is covered by your school fees and is free for all ASA students to attend. Student Council plans and carries out all activities under the guidance of the Student Council mentors. Kayaking, game nights, talent shows, and ice skating are only a small sampling of the activities that we have done over the years.

During lunch, Student Council also puts on spirit activities, including pajama day, crazy hair day, or “write a happy note to a friend.” All these activities, as well as the classes, are documented in the yearbook, which the Yearbook class puts together each year.

On the Thursday following the last day of class, we have a yearbook party for students where they can sign yearbooks and play games. Also that week we have our annual Celebration and Graduation. All the ASA families gather together to honor the achievements students have made throughout the year. We highlight our graduating seniors and present them with diplomas. Afterwards, there is an activity put on by the Activities Committee.