



Achievement Charter Academy

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Parent and Student Handbook 2025-2026

Parent and Student Handbook

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Board of Directors

Raymond Strain, President
Ryan Denney, Vice President
Kira Royal, Treasurer
Nancy Herrick, Director
Steven Norris, Director

Board meetings are open to the public and meeting dates and times are posted at the school and on the school website.

Administrative Staff

Leaja Horne, Director of Education
Gina Newell, Associate Director of Education
Tracy Dent, Office Manager
Heather Ratteree, Administrative Assistant

School Mission

ACA's mission is to foster individual achievement by teaching students to be self-directed learners and community contributors in a respectful, diverse, and inclusive learning environment.



The ACA Story

The concept to open ACA was created by Brenda Harnack and her daughter, Leaja Horne in 2012. This mother and daughter team has been serving this community since 1998 through the family business, LearningTime. LearningTime has provided hundreds of children with the foundational skills to be successful in elementary school through structured preschool programs designed to prepare students academically and socially for the educational journey. In 2009, Brenda and Leaja expanded the business and opened a private Kindergarten; over the years this school grew to serve K-12 students in the private school setting. Leaja served as DOE at the private school 2016 through 2020. In 2012, the first members of the board of directors rallied alongside Brenda and Leaja to pursue the goal of providing a school of choice for the community. The program would offer individualized, student-centered instruction with a focus on building strong relationships based on trust and respect. They desired to open a school option that was accessible to all students not simply available to families who could afford private school.

The dream to open a public charter school was not actualized in 2012; the application was denied at that time. They were encouraged by many supporters to return and try again. Brenda and Leaja continued to cultivate the vision of opening ACA and after 2017, Leaja became the leader of the project and stepped up to serve as Board President and future school leader. They went back to the original application, built on the concept, and made improvements based on the feedback from the Charter School Advisory Board (ACAB) for submission in October 2018. This time around, the ACAB rewarded their efforts with an approval of the application and recommendation to the State Board of Education (SBE) for ACA to open in fall 2020. In June 2019, the SBE voted in favor of ACA opening in August 2020!

We could not be more excited to be on this journey with YOU!!



ACA Vision and Philosophy

Vision

ACA will use the Glasser Quality School (GQS) model as a guide to create a school culture that teaches and uses Choice Theory to support relationships based on trust and respect. The GQS model emphasizes Total Learning Competency and producing Quality Work to encourage self-directed learning and individual achievement. The model emphasizes the value of respect, diversity, inclusion, and community and promotes a school environment that is viewed by stakeholders as a joyful place.


Philosophy

ACAs instructional program is based on the GQS model, in which the environment of autonomy, purpose and mastery leads students to become actively engaged and internally motivated to seek relevance and joy in learning.

Research shows external "control leads to compliance; autonomy leads to engagement" (Pink, 2009). The GQS model aligns with research on productivity, creativity, and motivation. Studies on achievement and engagement highlight the importance of providing freedom and support for students to choose interesting, challenging and absorbing learning goals. ACAs program is designed to present the standard curriculum through relevant learning activities to entice students to set their own goals. Daniel Pink says, "Science shows that the secret to high performance is the desire to direct our own lives, to extend and expand our abilities and to live a life of purpose" (Pink, 2009).

The GQS model is based on Choice Theory (CT) psychology. A GQS has the following characteristics:

- 1) An environment without coercion, built on respect and strong relationships;
- 2) A curriculum of useful knowledge and skills where students seek competency (80%);
- 3) Stakeholders have an understanding of CT, a psychology of needs satisfaction, self-awareness and evaluation for continuous improvement;

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- 4) Students personally challenge themselves to learn collaboratively, use higher order thinking, and use self-regulation; and
 - 5) Parents, students and staff all find the GQS a joyful place.

CT is a positive, strength-based psychology which contends 4 concepts:

- 1) All behavior is purposeful and total (consisting of 4 components) and within one's own control;
- 2) All we get from outside ourselves is information. How we perceive this information forms our values and beliefs;
- 3) Humans have at least 5 basic needs (love/belonging, power, freedom, fun and security) and are internally motivated to develop behaviors to satisfy these needs; and
- 4) Our choices are based on our continuous evaluation of the difference between what we want and what we perceive we are getting.

Academic Excellence Standards

ACA is very proud of its **excellent academic standards** and aims to provide each student with the essential skills, knowledge and resilience to thrive within their local, national and global community. The school culture is one of nurture and caring based on the positive psychology, Choice Theory. Choice Theory is the explanation of human behavior with the emphasis on personal responsibility for the continuous improvement of our choices and relationships in our daily lives. Our philosophy creates self-efficacy in students throughout their educational journey and inspires them to reach heights they alone can imagine.


The academic performance of the school is benchmarked against best practice. Teachers provide dynamic, purposeful, and engaging learning environments for students. By inviting differentiated learning, choice and appropriate challenge, students find the motivation to become involved in their learning process. Achievement Charter Academy focuses on the practical application of knowledge through creative problem solving to build a growth mindset that will enhance our students' outcomes.

ACA classrooms embrace critical questioning, innovation, quality relationships, application of knowledge, and personal awareness leading every student to continuous academic, social, and emotional growth.

Classroom Design

Small multi-age or learning communities provide appropriate social and academic challenges for all students. Assignment to the same teacher when for multiple years also creates stronger relationships and security. This structure addresses the uniqueness of each student, allowing for special needs (at-risk, disabilities, gifted/talented, ELL) in an inclusive environment. Curriculum can be designed to meet standards for each level. Parents and community members will be invited to be involved in student learning, thus establishing a collaborative, supportive environment.

On a typical school day, the morning hours include core subject content in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Small group instruction and independent activities will be alternated to provide direct instruction and student-directed learning opportunities in all



subjects, integrated within and across subjects. Activities will also focus on connecting the material to community and societal issues, thus teaching students about their role as citizens and community contributors.

Curriculum

ACA's curriculum will meet the NC Standards and will be developed using multiple sources to meet the needs of the students. The model allows for fluidity and curriculum will evolve depending on students' needs. Instructional methods are in alignment with the research on brain-based best practices. Methods include cooperative learning, multi-age groups, centers for investigation, community inquiry, thematic projects, and use of technology.

The Get Happier School Project, USA (GHS), The Amazing Adventures of Doug Dragster, by Ivan Honey is the GQS curriculum that will be used to teach the students CT, self-regulation, mindfulness, and resilience through literacy. This curriculum addresses the NC Health and Wellness standards of mental and emotional wellness and interpersonal communication and relationships.

Assessments include rubrics, self-evaluation, and teachers will con-currently evaluate with students. Formative assessment using an online tracking system will be chosen by staff. Portfolios will be kept by students for presentation to parents, grade reporting, and demonstration of learning. GQS expectations are for students to achieve overall competency (80%). If a student has not achieved at least 80% competency, he/she will be given opportunities to improve work with assistance as needed. Data from the assessments is used to reflect on teaching practices and drive instruction and design to meet students' individual learning needs.

Choice Time

Choice Time activities, such as art, music, cooking, gardening, auto mechanics, and carpentry, are offered by teachers, parents, retired teachers, and community members. These activities are offered weekly and students can choose from a variety of options.

Physical Education

ACA students will participate in PE 2-3 times per week. Physical education teaches students to improve the quality of their lives. Sports reveal character as they teach students to strategize, cooperate, and work together under stressful and competitive moments to achieve a common goal. "Exercise is as effective as certain medications for treating anxiety and depression." We sometimes lose sight of the fact that the mind, brain, and body all influence one another. In addition to feeling good when you exercise, you feel good about yourself" (John J. Ratey, Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain).

Technology

Technology is important for our program and will be available to students and teachers. Students having access to technology allows for independent research and optimize time for small group instruction. In the first year, there will be 3 classroom sets of Chromebooks for students and each year, the budget provides for purchasing additional devices and upgrades.

Student Grade Placement, Promotion, and Retention Policy

The DOE is authorized to make initial grade placement of a student and to promote or retain students after initial grade placement. After initial grade placement, a student is expected to progress through the grades one year in each grade receiving the benefits of academic, social and physical growth usually accompanied with a full year of development. On occasion, it may be in the best interest of the student to have a new grade placement, be accelerated more than one grade, or be retained in the current grade. In this event, supporting documentation with interventions already offered to the student will be provided by the school. If a student's parent or teacher believes one of these grade changes should be considered, a written request for consideration should be provided to the DOE, including the reasons for such consideration. The final decision regarding placement, acceleration, promotion, or retention of a student rests solely with the DOE.

The DOE shall consider the following, when making such decisions:

1. The education record of the student, including but not limited to a student's grades, standardized test scores, attendance, discipline, reading, speaking & math skills, the curriculum of each grade, the available teacher(s) skill(s) delivering the instruction and available programs
2. The physical, social, and emotional readiness of the student for the curriculum of each grade
3. The current research on grade placement, promotion, acceleration, and retention
4. The recommendation of the student's parents and teachers
5. The completed Student Placement Form including, but not limited to, a) an initial request by the school for a parent meeting before winter break, b) a request by the school for a progress meeting with the parent prior to March 1, and c) a request by the school for a final parent meeting prior to the last day of the school year.
6. The applicable laws governing these decisions.

The goal of placing, accelerating, promoting or retaining a student is to enhance the opportunity for the student to achieve learning goals, meet state and school performance expectations, and to be prepared for high school, college, and career plans.

Special Education Students

The decision to retain a special education student is determined by the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team. Special education students may not be retained based solely on their disability, but may be retained, as determined by the IEP team, with consideration given to factors such as their ability, or lack thereof, to fit in socially and emotionally with their present grade level. If the IEP team cannot come to an agreement on retention, the DOE will make the decision. The parent of the special education student may choose to have the student leave the school, appeal the decision to the school board of directors, or request mediation/due process. If a parent either appeals the IEP team decision to the school board or requests mediation/due process, the school's special education supervisor must be contacted for consultation.

Student Support Services and Special Education

It is the goal of ACA to provide appropriate educational opportunities for all students. It is the school's obligation to provide appropriate educational opportunities to all students with suspected disabilities or disabilities, as defined under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and state special education rules and regulations. For additional specifics regarding a student's special education rights, parents are encouraged to review the *Procedural Safeguards* that are available from a school administrator or special education provider.

Child Find

The IDEA includes a Child Find Mandate. Child Find requires all school districts to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities regardless of the severity of their disability. This obligation encompasses all children who are suspected of having a disability, including children receiving passing grades and "advancing from grade to grade..." A parent who suspects that their child may have a disability and is in need of special education and related services may initiate a free evaluation of their child by contacting the school DOE and providing a written request for an evaluation under IDEA and/or Section 504. The school must take the parents request into consideration and provide a response consistent with State and Federal special education requirements.


Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - Section 504 (General Education)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 794, (sometimes referred to as "Section 504") prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities solely on the basis of their disability. If you have Section 504 questions, please contact the school's DOE who has been designated as the Section 504 Coordinator. The Section 504 Coordinator is responsible for investigating and resolving complaints. In addition, any individual who desires information related to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act, may contact the school's DOE or the ACA Special Education Department at (616) 222-1700.

The school does not discriminate against individuals seeking to access a program or service of the school based on disability. Where an individual desires to participate in a program or service and needs reasonable accommodation in order to do so, they should contact the school's DOE to request an accommodation. In addition, if you suspect that your child has a disability which may qualify him/her for support under Section 504, you should contact the school's DOE to begin the referral process. Upon initiation of the Section 504 referral process, parents will be provided with a copy of the Section 504 Procedural Safeguards and Parent/Student Rights which contains complaint and due process procedures.

The School Intervention Team

The School Intervention Team (SIT) is a committee of school personnel set up by the DOE to ensure ongoing and effective support for students and classroom teachers. Parents are



informed if their child is being considered for referral to the SIT for behavioral and/or academic support. The SIT oversees the general education intervention process and team membership will generally include: a building administrator, a general education teacher, and a staff member knowledgeable in accommodations and interventions. Parents may also be invited to participate in this meeting. The team provides a forum to discuss the student's academic and behavioral data and needs. In addition, the team generates, initiates, and monitors implementation of interventions designed to address the individual needs of the student. This includes use of the resources of the school, family, and the community. This process creates awareness and understanding of the issues affecting the student and their academic and behavioral performance. The SIT may serve as the pre-referral intervention-planning team for those "unidentified" students whose difficulties may suggest the presence of a disability. As appropriate, the SIT may refer a student to the Special Education team for formal assessment. Parents should be informed if the SIT is considering a referral of their student to the Special Education team. Prior to initiating a special education evaluation, written parental consent/permission must be obtained. Information gathered through implementation of interventions identified by the SIT will be taken into consideration as a part of the special education evaluation along with progress monitoring and other data sources provided by the parent, educational staff, and others as deemed appropriate. The SIT's review of documentation of intervention strategies, the student's response (progress monitoring data), in addition to a referral for special education testing for a suspected disability, fulfills the Child Find requirement under IDEA and State special education requirements.

The Individual Education Program

ACA will comply with the IDEA and state regulations and every student identified as having a disability will be provided an Individual Educational Program (IEP) designed to address their unique needs. All required components of the IEP will be addressed including but not limited to: a description of the student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance including disability related needs, goals and objectives, supplementary aids and services, program services, ancillary services, extended school year, etc. All students with disabilities are considered general education students first. Each IEP is designed to assure that eligible students receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and specialized instruction delivered by highly qualified special education staff within the least restrictive environment (LRE). Prior to the opening of school, registration forms are reviewed to identify students with current IEPs from previous schools attended. The parents are informed of their rights, procedures, and responsibilities under special education law. Decisions regarding an IEP are made by the IEP Team. This team has required participant's which minimally includes general and special education providers, administrators, and the parent(s).

The IDEA includes specific rights for parents of children with disabilities. This information is contained in the document commonly referred to as the *Procedural Safeguards*. We encourage parents to review this document carefully, so they are fully informed of their

rights. Copies of this document can be obtained from your school office or by contacting the state's Department of Education.

Educational Placement of Students with Disabilities

ACA is committed to educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to meet their educational needs as determined by the student's IEP Team. This means that to the maximum extent appropriate, children who are disabled are educated with children who are nondisabled and special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

In an effort to meet with the LRE requirements, ACA must ensure that a continuum of placement options is available to students with disabilities, including: services provided within the general education classroom; pull-out services; special classes; home instruction; instruction in hospitals and institutions; and in unique circumstances, access to programs and services located in settings outside the school. Placement decisions are the determination of the Individualized Education Program Team (IEPT).

Transfer Students:

In-State transfer: If a child with a disability (who had an IEP in effect in a previous public agency) transfers to a new school in the same state and enrolls in the new school within the same academic year, the public agency (in consultation with the child's parents) shall provide such a child with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the prior IEP, until the public agency adopts the prior IEP or develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP that is consistent with federal and state laws.

Out of State Transfer: If a child with a disability (who had an IEP in effect in a previous public agency) transfers to a new school in a different state and enrolls in the new school within the same academic year, the public agency (in consultation with the child's parents) shall provide such a child with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the prior IEP's until the public agency conducts an evaluation, if determined to be necessary by such agency, and develops a new IEP, if appropriate, that is consistent with federal and state laws. The evaluation conducted is considered an initial evaluation.

To comply with these transfer requirements, under certain circumstances the ACA may need to contract with another school/entity for the provision of educational services.

Parent Participation

Parents are an important member of the school community and have the right to participate in all meetings involving the evaluation, identification, and educational placement of their student. Parents will be invited to participate and share information about their student prior to and during the IEP meeting. Parents are encouraged to review the *Procedural*

Safeguards so that they are fully informed of their rights.

Crisis Management: De-escalation, Isolation, and Restraint of Student

The school is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. It is the policy of our school to only utilize approved physical restraint in response to emergency or crisis situations. Use of restraint procedures should: (a) not be viewed as a behavior change or intervention strategy, (b) be implemented only under extreme situations and as a matter of last resort, (c) be implemented only by trained personnel, and (d) be accompanied by school wide proactive positive behavior supports to prevent the need for their use. When such activities are utilized, documentation procedures are required in addition to timely communication with parents and other key members of the educational system.

Homework Policy

Philosophy:

Homework is a means of extending the learning at home and providing extra practice in developing aspects of the essential skills of reading, spelling, and number facts.

Objectives:

- To provide consolidation time for learners to devote to the development of the essential skills of reading, spelling, and number facts.
- To enable parents/caregivers to support and monitor the progress of their child and to be actively involved in supporting his/her learning.
- To encourage learners to be responsible independent learners who can organize their personal home learning.

Guidelines:

- Any homework is appropriate to the needs and capabilities of each individual student.
- Any homework is consistently monitored and assessed by teachers to offer constructive feedback and additional learning opportunities.
- Homework is not “busy work.”
- When teachers set homework, it is restricted to the time limits below:
 - o Kindergarten and 1st grade: up to 20 minutes plus time for reading
 - o 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade: up to 30 minutes plus time for reading
 - o 5th grade: up to 40 minutes plus time for reading
- Homework includes practice reading nightly. Spelling and number facts should be set on a weekly basis. Alternative homework may sometimes be set provided time limits are not exceeded.

- Homework should not be a source of tension or stress. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to communicate with teachers regarding any homework concerns. Homework schedules may need to be adjusted to suit the individual needs of the students. Teachers are flexible and address individual needs of students.
- Parents/caregivers are asked to communicate with teachers when circumstances prevent the student from completing set homework.
- Teachers will inform parents/caregivers if a student is consistently not completing their set homework.
- Parents/caregivers are encouraged also to read to their children nightly as a means of developing positive attitudes to reading and enhancing vocabulary development.
- Teachers at ACA accommodate the individual needs of their students. Through pre-assessment, teachers allocate individual levels for spelling, reading, and number facts that are meeting the individual needs of each student. Levels may be reassigned to ensure retention of information.

Make-up Work

Students have an obligation to complete assignments missed during illness or unexpected absence from school. In keeping with our belief that students should develop a sense of responsibility, we expect them, with their parents' help, to contact their teachers to secure missed assignments. Students are guaranteed one school day for each day absent from school to make up their work. Additional time may be given at the teachers' discretion.

In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the student's teachers should be called, so necessary arrangements can be made to have assignments picked up. At the request of the parents, the teachers will provide assignments for a student who is absent two or more days. Parents must call before 12:00 p.m. on the day the homework is needed to allow the teachers adequate time to assemble the assignments. Parents may pick up the assignments after 3:30 p.m. on the date requested.

Suspended students' homework may be picked up in the main office after 12:00 p.m. on the first day of suspension. Suspended students are required to turn in their late work the day they return to school.

All students are encouraged to improve assignments they believe do not reflect "quality work." Quality work is considered a student's best effort, and this is determined through student self-evaluation and typically refers to A or A+ work. Until the end of the quarter students can choose to resubmit improved assignments for re-assessment and grading. Students are expected to complete several quality work assignments to display in their portfolio each school year. These portfolio assignments can continue to be improved throughout the school year.


Technology Use, Internet Safety Practices, & Procedures

Students are offered access to the ACA's computer network for creativity, communication, research, and other tasks related to the ACA academic program. All use of computers, furnished or created data, software, and other technology resources as granted by ACA are the property of ACA and are intended for school business and educational use. Students are to use the computer network responsibly. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and using the ACA computer network and the school's technological resources.

The school educates students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response.

General Rules

1. **Privacy:** ACA reserves the right to monitor Internet traffic and to retrieve and review any data composed, sent, received, or stored using the ACA network or Internet connections, including e-mail. Users do not enjoy any expectation of privacy when using any ACA technology or transmissions originating within or around school property.
2. **Bullying:** The school prohibits cyber-bullying, an act involving the use of information and communication technologies, including but not limited to email, text messages, blogs, instant messages, personal Websites, on-line social directories and communities, video-posting sites, and online personal polling Websites, to support deliberate or repeated hostile behavior, by an individual or group, that is intended to defame, harm, threaten, intimidate, or harass students, staff members, or the school during or outside school hours and on or off school premises.
3. **Materials and Language:** Use of or accessing profane, abusive, pornographic, obscene, and/or impolite materials or language is not permitted. Accidental access should be reported to the instructor immediately. Intentional circumvention of web-filtering is prohibited.
4. **Installing/Copying:** Students are not to install or download any hardware, software, shareware, or freeware onto any media or network drives. Software installed by anyone other than the network administrator will be removed. Downloading of non-work related files is permitted only with an instructor's permission. Students may not copy other people's work or intrude into other people's files. All copyright laws must be respected. Use of any other organization's network or technology resources via the ACA network requires the instructor's permission and must comply with the rules appropriate for that network.

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5. **Access:** Users may not access the computer network without proper authorization. Users are to use their own username and password when using a computer. Users must log off the computer when they are finished with their work and are not to log on to a computer for someone else or tell others their password. Students are to notify the instructor if someone else is thought to know his/her password.
 6. **Data Protection:** Users must not attempt to damage or destroy equipment or files. Though efforts are made by ACA to ensure the safety and integrity of data, ACA makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the service it provides. ACA will not be responsible for any damage to data.
 7. **Storage:** Users are to delete their files and materials they no longer need.
 8. **Printing Resources:** Paper and toner are costly, and excessive use is wasteful. Documents must be proofread before printing. Users are to print only the needed part(s) of documents. Students must obtain permission from an instructor before printing documents.

Internet Use

The World Wide Web is a vast collection of resources readily available to any user on any computer connected to the Internet. ACA integrates the use of these resources into student instruction. Student Internet usage is permitted only in the presence and supervision of a teacher, the child's parent, or other designated adult school personnel. ACA is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet or the ACA computer network.

Some material accessible via the Internet contains illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive language or images. While the school uses Internet resources to achieve educational goals, there is always a risk of students accessing other materials. However, we believe that the benefits of using technology outweigh the disadvantages. Teachers are trained in the appropriate use of technology with students, but ultimately, parents of students are responsible for setting and conveying the expectations regarding the use of media and information sources at home and at school.

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is a federal law enacted by Congress to address concerns about access to the Internet and other information. Under CIPA, schools must certify that they have certain Internet safety measures in place. These include measures to block or filter pictures that (a) are obscene, (b) contain child pornography, or (c) when computers with Internet access are used by minors, are harmful to minors. Schools subject to CIPA must adopt a policy such as this to monitor online activities of minors and to address (a) access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web, (b) the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of

direct electronic communications, (c) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online, (d) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors, and (e) restricting minors' access to harmful materials.

ACA complies with CIPA by deploying a Web content filtering product called OpenDNS, which categorizes Internet sites and sends updates to ACA site-based hardware. A process is in place for changing the categorization of Web sites. The following categorizations are currently in place:

- Obscenity and Pornography Filtering: Zscaler allows schools and libraries to manage Internet access to over 90 URL categories pertinent to CIPA.
- Accurate Web Filtering: OpenDNS offers the best-of-breed filtering database.
- Filtering of Search Engine Images: OpenDNS filters inappropriate images that can be found in search engine query results.
- Monitoring: OpenDNS reporting tools Explorer, Reporter and Real-Time Analyzer offer many different ways to monitor and report online activities of minors.
- Policy Management: OpenDNS allows customization of Internet policies, based on a user or group, with the ability to set appropriate policies based on age or need.

Search and Seizure Practices & Procedure

Lockers/Cubbies

All lockers/cubbies assigned to students are the property of the school. At no time does the school relinquish its exclusive control of its lockers/cubbies. The school DOE or his/her designee shall have custody of all combinations to all lockers or locks. Students are prohibited from placing locks on any locker without the advanced approval of the school DOE or his/her designee.

Legitimate Use of School Lockers/Cubbies

The school assigns lockers/cubbies to its students for their convenience and temporary use. Students are to use lockers/cubbies exclusively to store school-related materials and authorized personal items such as footwear, grooming aids, lunches, or outer garments. Students shall not use lockers for any other purpose, unless specifically authorized by school board policy, the school DOE, or his/her designee prior to students bringing the items to school. Students solely are responsible for the contents of their lockers/cubbies.

Search of Locker/Cubby Contents

Searches of school lockers/cubbies and their contents deter violations of school rules and regulations, ensure proper maintenance of school property, and provide greater safety and security for students and personnel. Accordingly, the Board of Directors authorizes the DOE or his/her designee, upon reasonable cause under the circumstances, to search

lockers/cubbies and locker/cubby contents at any time, without notice, and without parental or student consent.

The DOE or his/her designee shall not be obligated but may request the assistance of a law enforcement officer in conducting a locker/cubby search. The DOE or his/her designee shall supervise the search. During a locker/cubby search, the school DOE or his/her designee shall respect the privacy rights of the student regarding any items discovered that are not illegal or in violation of school policies and rules.

Seizure

When conducting locker/cubby searches, the DOE or his/her designee may seize any illegal or unauthorized items, items in violation of board policy and/or school policies or rules, or any other items reasonably determined by the DOE or his/her designee to be a potential threat to the safety or security of others. Such items include but are not limited to the following: contraband, controlled substance analogues or other intoxicants, dangerous weapons, explosives, firearms, flammable materials, illegal controlled substances, poisons, and stolen property. Law enforcement officials shall be notified immediately upon seizure of such dangerous items or items that schools are required to report to law enforcement agencies. Any items seized by the school DOE or his/her designee shall be removed from the locker/cubby and held by school officials for evidence in disciplinary proceedings and/or turned over to law enforcement officials. The parent of a student shall be notified by the DOE or his/her designee of items removed from the locker/cubby.

Search and Seizure of Electronic Devices

Cell phones, PDAs, iPods, MP3 players, video equipment, cameras, gaming devices, and any other electronic devices are not permitted on school grounds or at school-related events. An electronic device can be approved for use by the DOE for purposes such as health reasons or other crucial purposes, but shall not be used in a manner that disrupts the educational process or purpose, including but not limited to posing a threat to academic integrity, violating confidentiality or privacy rights of another individual, disrupting communication between school and parents, or violating the Student Code of Conduct. If the DOE or his/her designee has a reasonable suspicion that a violation has occurred, he/she shall have the right to confiscate and search the electronic device.

Search and Seizure of Person and/or Personal Property

The school will conduct a search if the DOE (or DOE designee) has a reasonable suspicion that a violation of the Student Code of Conduct has occurred. When determining the nature and scope of the search, the DOE (or the DOE designee) will consider the age and sex of the student as well as the nature of the act of misconduct. The search may include the student's person, backpack, purse, pockets, shoes, and/or other personal property. A physical search of a student's person will only be conducted when there is a reasonable suspicion that the student has an illegal weapon, drug and/or alcohol on his/her person.

Student Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

The ACA code of conduct is established for the board, staff, students, volunteers, and the community. It is always created to guide all members of the School community to demonstrate respect and model ACA values. We believe we all share the responsibility to behave responsibly with the agreements of the school community.

At ACA we are united in our goal to support our students to become self-managed, self-directed learners. Our focus on quality relationships by establishing shared values and connecting habits correlates to enhanced student achievement.

ACA Responsible Behavior Guide establishes our system for facilitating effective learning behaviors, minimizing inappropriate behaviors, and responding to unacceptable behaviors. When created by our school community, the behaviors we will use will enhance relationships and maintain a safe, productive learning and teaching environment. The quality standard for all learners is to achieve self-management by making socially responsible behavior choices. Clear guidelines for expected behaviors and for addressing inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors are identified on a continuum of procedures.

While our goal is for all learners to become self-managed, responsible and independent, we recognize that this is part of the daily curriculum and conversation, while continued support is provided for helping all learners attain the goal of self-management. Support from staff and students varies according to the degree of a student's self-management at any time. Our school takes a proactive approach to create a learning environment where fear and coercion are eliminated, and all disciplinary measures of suspension and expulsion follow North Carolina state laws.

Disciplinary Procedures

RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR GUIDE

Creating the least intrusive to greatest intrusive approach-

SELF-MANAGED  CO-MANAGED  SUPPORT LEVEL 3  SUPPORT LEVEL 4  LEVEL 5

Self-managed Behavior Level 1: consistent, effective, and independent

Co-managed Behavior Level 2: student with student or staff conversation and agreement

Support Level 3: consists of student conversation with staff or administrator, discussion, and resolution.

Support Level 4: consists of student conversation with staff, parent/or other support personnel; mediation or peer mediation with resolution to follow within 1-3 days.

Level 5: Mandated out-of-school suspension or exclusion: up to 10 days

Level 6: Long Term out-of-school suspension or exclusion more than 10 days

What this looks like:

Self-Managed Behavior Plan Level 1

Most interruptions in the classroom are incidents that students are able to recognize and personally take responsible action for resolving the issue and restoring self-directed behavior within the Quality Standards agreement.

Sometimes a reminder from another student or teacher can help the learner re-focus.

Co-managed Behavior Plan Level 2:


Interruptions or disagreements sometimes happen. These behavior issues can easily be resolved, especially with think-time and processing with a staff member. In this phase, the student will enter into a conversation with an adult or staff member, where they explore the purpose of the behavior, and the student can plan how they want to correct the incident and perhaps provide a learning moment for themselves or others. In this procedure, the staff will help the student make amends, make it right, or share responsibility for fixing the situation with another student who was involved. All incidents will be resolved through collaboration/ consultation without anyone being hurt.

Support Level 3 Process:

Level 3 support is provided if the student has had continued difficulties with self-management. Conversation or counseling with a teacher, counselor or administrator are options available to the student. Resolution is encouraged with the student being responsible for solutions and actions to create the solution, and the staff member involved in the counseling will be available for support if needed. If the student is not able to reasonably decide how to resolve the situation, the student may be asked to take some time to think about their choices and return to consultation or mediation when they are ready to arrive at a plan for self-management within the quality standards and agreement.

Support Level 4 Process:

Level 4 support is undertaken if the student requires more time to consider his/her actions. ACA believes that students should be given all possible opportunities to resolve conflict and create their plan for living up to the quality standards of the school community. Level 4 support will include their parent, or a supportive community member chosen by the student (or family) to provide extra support, counseling, or a specific intervention the student requests. This level of support is usually when there are difficulties in the student's life that are not school related (i.e. drugs, family conflict etc.) Out-of-school placement is not believed to be in the best interest of our learners. When they are not in school, ACA is not able to create the environment for students to learn from their mistakes. We believe that



the relationships within the school community are the best environment for our students to learn respect and responsibility for their behavior. Therefore, school and community support are sought to help the student manage daily life and school behavior.

If the student's difficulties or the incident is an endangerment to themselves or others, a parent will be included in the discussion to facilitate continued support beyond the school staff. If the incident involved endangerment, a 1-3-day suspension from school may be necessary for the student to get outside support and time to think through what they are willing to do to resolve the difficulty. When they are ready to work out the amends, they are encouraged to return to school with their parent or supportive adult to discuss their plans for remediation. Out-of-school suspensions are only pursued if State Law requires this option.

Level 5 Process:

When the act of misconduct disrupts the school environment and previous levels of intervention have been exhausted, the resulting consequence issued by the school administration may include suspension of up to 10 school days or other disciplinary interventions such as exclusion from school activities.

Level 6 Process:

When the act of misconduct is considered a crime under state law, constitutes extreme non-compliance with school rules resulting in aggravating circumstances, or is so extreme that it threatens the safety of others, the student may serve a long term suspension or, if age fourteen (14) or older, be expelled from the school. The student will be granted a right to a due process hearing. A 365-day suspension is a denial to a student of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function for a full 365 days. The Board must suspend a student for 365 days for possession of a firearm or destructive device on school property or a school sponsored event. If a teacher is assaulted or injured by a student and as a result the student is long-term suspended or reassigned to alternative education services, the student shall not be returned to that teacher's classroom unless the teacher consents. No student shall be long-term suspended or expelled from school solely for truancy or tardiness offenses.

Students who are served under IDEA (Special Education) or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are entitled to certain additional rights in the area of discipline based upon their qualification for services under these federal laws.

Minimum to Maximum Co-management Approach to helping learners move towards responsible self-management.

Prerequisites for ACA behavior support:

- Learners will negotiate and agree upon code of conduct
- Quality teaching responsive to student learning styles
- Mutually respectful school and class culture

- Trusting and supportive class environment

Examples of co-managing inappropriate behavior incidents through least-intrusive actions:

1. Teacher redirects the learner with a respectful question. (Option: Another classmate may also ask the learner to consider the agreements they have made.) This is usually done privately when possible. With the learner redirecting his behavior, the teacher politely says thank you, and resumes the class process.
2. At any time at the request of the learner, or If considered helpful, at an appropriate time, privately, the teacher or another staff member may consult with the learner to discuss their choices and help the learner understand their frustration, thought processes or actions. At this time, the student is assisted in self-evaluation and processing his behavior choices. Often a plan is created to assist the learner further.
3. If repeated difficulties arise with the learner, another staff (counselor, administrator, special program consultant) may be included as well as the parent for the situation to be understood in more depth. Plans to alleviate problem behaviors are created. Support is assigned if requested.
4. Further referral to the Student Support Committee or special program administrator may be requested for follow up on assessment and appropriate interventions that may be available. Support will be provided to the level the learner needs to assist in achieving self-management.

Intensive Behavior Support

If extreme or unsafe behavior is exhibited on school grounds, intensive intervention will be provided. ACA is ultimately responsible for the safety of all students and staff, parents, or guests on campus. Endangerment to any of the school community, cyber bullying, slander, or other personal assaults will be addressed with the level of intervention appropriate. Removing students from dangerous situations may include the use of restraint by staff trained in safe physical restraint techniques. This is considered the most intrusive intervention and will be avoided if possible.

Any physical intervention made must:

1. Be reasonable in the particular circumstance,
2. Be in proportion to the circumstance of the incident,
3. Always be the minimum force needed to achieve safety for all,
4. Take into consideration the age, stature, disability, gender and understanding of the student.

ACA believes that with the quality of the relationships built within the school, most unsafe behavior can be minimized and de-escalated before anyone is injured. The quality of the relationships within our school is always our priority. Formal documentation is required by NC law for any endangerment incidents.

Emergency responses or critical incidents:

Staff are trained in emergency responses to critical situations. The Emergency Response plan is available in the school's office. An emergency or critical incident is defined as an occurrence that is sudden, urgent, and usually unexpected, or an occasion requiring immediate action.

Acts of misconduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to cooperate or comply with directions of school personnel and volunteers
- False allegations against staff, volunteers, or students
- Falsification of records or scholastic dishonesty (including cheating and plagiarism)
- Misuse of copyrighted materials
- Improper or disrespectful communications to staff, volunteers, or students
- Use of profane and/or inappropriate language
- Disruption of school
- Bullying and harassment
- Cyber-bullying pursuant to state law
- Criminal Sexual Conduct as defined by state law
- Improper dress in violation of the Dress Code
- Indecency (either with clothing/exposure, pictures or public display of affection)
- Any public display of affection having sexual connotations
- Violations of building rules and regulations
- Violations of rules or policies as set forth in the Parent and Student Handbook
- Smoking, tobacco possession or use
- Trespassing, loitering
- Suspended or expelled student on school property or attending school activities
- False alarms
- Possession of electronic device(s) defined by school policy
- Defacement/Damage of property or theft/possession of stolen property
- Coercion, extortion or blackmail
- Arson
- Possession of firework(s), explosive(s) and/or chemical substance(s)
- Possession and/or sale of alcohol and/or drugs (narcotic drugs, look-a-like substances and illegal chemical substances)
- Possession of look-a-like weapons
- Possession of dangerous weapons as defined by state law and dangerous weapons or instruments not otherwise enumerated herein
- Possession of personal protection devices (such as tasers, mace, pepper-spray, etc.)
- Fighting, assault and/or battery on another person
- Gangs and gang related activity
- Violation of Technology Use and Internet Safety Practices and Procedures
- Verbal assault
- Malicious or willful types of behavior that endanger the safety of others
- Extreme acts of defiance and/or threats toward teachers/other adults/fellow students
- Criminal acts other than as enumerated herein
- Excessive tardiness or absences as defined in the Attendance Policy

Parents or students who are unsure of what conduct is prohibited by each act should consult with the DOE.

Bullying Policy:

Bullying Definition

Because bullying has become a common inappropriate behavior in many schools, ACA will regard it as an unsafe practice. “Bullying is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. It may be defined as: repeatedly dominating or hurting someone; repeated unfair actions by the perpetrator and an imbalance of power; a repeated feeling of a lack of adequate defense and feelings of oppression, humiliation, loss of dignity by the targeted individual.”

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Bullying can take many forms:

1. **Physical bullying:** A person or group using physical actions to bully, hit, poke, trip or push. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging or destroying someone’s belongings.
2. **Verbal bullying:** Repeated or systematic name calling, insults, racist or homophobic remarks.
3. **Covet bullying:** Spreading rumors, lying about someone, perpetrating nasty jokes, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone, offensive graffiti.
4. **Psychological bullying:** threatening, manipulating, stalking
5. **Cyber bullying:** using technology to bully another; email, phones, chat rooms, social media, Instagram, or texting messages that are hurtful or untrue. **Flaming:** where electronic messages are sent with angry or vulgar content; **Harassment:** repeated insulting or untrue messages; **Denigration:** posting or messaging gossip or rumors that are damaging to reputation; **Outing:** sharing secrets or confidential embarrassing information or images; **Exclusion:** intentionally or cruelly excluding someone from an online group; **Cyber stalking:** repeated, intense, threatening harassment or denigration.

Behaviors not considered bullying: mutual agreements and disagreements where there is no power imbalance or denigration, not liking someone, a single act of social rejection, isolated aggression, or intimidation. While these are not considered bullying, they will be addressed as inappropriate behaviors at Achievement Charter Academy. A proactive approach to

bullying issues is part of the Quality School practices. The Connecting Habits are visible and taught in all classrooms.

Research indicates that both students who are bullying and students who are being targeted as a victim are at-risk of behavioral, emotional, and academic problems. These outcomes are in direct contradiction to our school community's goal for quality learning environment and outcomes. Bullying will not be tolerated and will be addressed.

Procedures:

1. Any school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the DOE. A student, volunteer, or visitor who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should, and are strongly encouraged to, report the incident to a teacher, other staff member or the DOE.
2. A report of bullying or harassing behavior should be done in written form, providing as much information as possible. The report may be done anonymously.
3. Any staff member who receives a report of bullying or harassing behavior shall immediately forward the report to the DOE who will ensure that a prompt investigation is completed. The investigation is to be complete within three (3) school days after a report or complaint is made.
4. Within two (2) school days of receiving a report of a prohibited act of bullying, the DOE or his/her designee shall notify the parent of the alleged victim of bullying and the parent of the alleged perpetrator of bullying.
5. Upon completion of the investigation report, the DOE or his/her designee shall notify the parent of both the victim and perpetrator of the result of the investigation.
6. There will be no reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying or harassment. Such reprisal or retaliation by a student is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and will result in disciplinary action pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct.
7. Any student who is found to have falsely accused another of bullying or harassment is subject to remedial action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Bullying or harassing behavior is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and will result in disciplinary action pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct.

Due Process Procedures

The following due process procedures only govern the suspension or the expulsion of a student from the school's regular educational program. If a student charged with violation of this Student Code of Conduct has been returned to the regular school program pending a decision, then such action of reinstatement shall not limit or prejudice the school's right to suspend or expel the student following that decision.

A. Suspension of Ten (10) School Days or Less

As a general rule, prior to any suspension of the student, the DOE shall provide the student with the following due process:

1. The student will be informed of the charges against him/her, and, if the student denies the charges, the DOE shall provide the student with an explanation of the evidence.
2. The student shall be provided an opportunity to explain his/her version of the facts.


If a student's presence in school poses an immediate danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process, the DOE may immediately suspend the student, and as soon thereafter as reasonable, provide the student with his/her due process rights as set forth in this section.

If, after providing the student with his/her due process rights, the DOE determines that the student has engaged in a prohibited act under this Student Code of Conduct, then he/she may impose a disciplinary penalty of a suspension not to exceed ten (10) school days. The DOE and/or dean, or his/her designee, shall inform (in person or by phone) the student's parent (in English and in the parent's primary language when readily available) of the suspension and of the reasons and conditions of the suspension. The student shall be provided the right to take home textbooks, complete homework assignments and an opportunity to make-up assessments. A decision to suspend a student for ten (10) or fewer school days is final and not subject to further review or appeal.

B. Suspension for Eleven (11) or More School Days and Expulsion

The Board of Directors will hear all long-term suspensions and expulsions.

1. The DOE may recommend to the Board of Directors the long-term suspension of any student who willfully engages in conduct that violates a provision of the Student Code of Conduct that authorizes long-term suspension or expulsion.
2. The Board of Directors shall provide the student an opportunity for a hearing before imposing a long-term suspension. If the student declines a hearing or if no hearing is timely requested, the Board of Directors shall review the circumstances of the recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion and may:

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- a. Impose and/or decline to impose the recommended suspension or expulsion; or
 - b. Modify and impose the recommended suspension or expulsion.
3. A parent shall be notified by the DOE in writing (in English and in the parent's primary language when readily available) of the DOE's recommendation to suspend or expel. The written notice shall:
- a. State the nature of the violation with reference to the provision of the Code of Conduct the student is alleged to have violated and the proposed consequence.
 - b. If a hearing is desired, the student or parent must notify the DOE in writing within four (4) days of receiving the notice. If a hearing is timely requested, it will be held, and a decision issued before a long-term suspension is imposed. If the student or parent requests a postponement of the hearing or if the hearing is requested beyond the time set for such request, the hearing shall be scheduled, but the student shall not have the right to return to school pending the hearing. If neither the student nor the parent appears for the hearing, the parent and student are deemed to have waived the right to a hearing and the Board of Directors shall conduct the review set out in Section B2 above.

Should a hearing be timely requested, the hearing will be conducted by the Board of Directors. For the hearing, the student will be provided procedural due process pursuant to state law including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. The right to be represented at the hearing by counsel or, at the discretion of the local board, a non-attorney advocate.
- b. The right to be present at the hearing, accompanied by his or her parents.
- c. The right of the student, parent, and the student's representative to review before the hearing any audio or video recordings of the incident and, consistent with federal and State student records laws and regulations, the information supporting the suspension that may be presented as evidence at the hearing, including statements made by witnesses related to the charges.
- d. The right of the student, parent, or the student's representative to question witnesses appearing at the hearing.

- e. The right to present evidence on his or her own behalf, which may include written statements or oral testimony, relating to the incident leading to the suspension.
- f. The right to have a record made of the hearing.
- g. The right to make his or her own audio recording of the hearing.
- h. The right to a written decision, based on substantial evidence presented at the hearing, either upholding, modifying, or rejecting the DOE's recommendation of suspension and containing at least the following information:
 - i. The basis for the decision, including a reference to any policy or rule that the student is determined to have violated.
 - ii. Notice of what information will be included in the student's official record.
 - iii. The student's right to appeal the decision and notice of the procedures for such appeal.
- c. Advise of the right to retain an attorney or an advocate of their choice and at their expense to represent the student in the hearing, right to review and obtain copies of the student's educational records prior to the hearing.
- d. Include what information will be included in the student's official record and the procedure for expungement of this information.

Students who receive a long-term suspension may be offered alternative education services during the long-term suspension period. All discipline decisions made by the Board of Directors are final.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

A. Request for Readmission

All students suspended for 365 days or expelled may, after 180 calendar days from the date of the beginning of the student's suspension or expulsion, request in writing readmission to the school.

B. Voluntary Agreements

At any time, the DOE or his/her designee may enter into a written contract with the student and his/her parent(s) setting forth the parties' agreement in settlement of disciplinary charges or restitution related to damage to or loss of school property. In such cases, the written agreement shall be final and binding

and may not be later challenged by the DOE or his/her designee or the student or his/her parent(s).

C. Suspended/Expelled Students on School Property or Attending School Activities

A suspended or expelled student who enters onto school property or appears at a school activity, event, or function without the permission of a building administrator shall be deemed to be trespassing.

D. Maintaining Class Progress

When practical in the judgment of the DOE, a student may be permitted to maintain progress during the disciplinary period.

Definition of Terms

Behavior Referral Report is a specific written record of the student's act of misconduct. It documents the date, nature of the offense, and the disciplinary action taken by the teacher and/or DOE.

Attendance Corrective Action Plan (A-CAP) is a written document that identifies the causes for excessive tardies and/or absences and what steps will be taken to minimize the number of occurrences. It is signed by the parents, student, and staff member.

Behavior Corrective Action Plan (B-CAP) is a written document that identifies the cause of repeated misconduct and what steps will be taken to help a student overcome inappropriate behavior. It is signed by the parents, student, and staff member.

Behavior Contract is a written document that outlines the expected behavior and disciplinary action for a student. It is signed by the parents, student, and staff member.

In-School Suspension refers to a decision to temporarily remove a student from the mainstream classroom and to place the student in a segregated environment within the school building that allows the student to continue to progress in their coursework but denies them access to regular classroom instruction and social interaction with their peers. The In-School Suspension room must always be supervised by an adult employee of the building.

Out-Of-School Suspension refers to a decision to temporarily remove a student's right to attend school or any school-related activity not to exceed ten (10) school days. A meeting with the parents may be convened to discuss the incident that led to the suspension and to develop a Behavior Contract for the future.

Long-Term Suspension refers to a decision to temporarily remove a student's right to attend school or any school-related activity for a specified period of time, which exceeds ten (10) school days. Once a student accumulates more than ten (10) school days of suspension in a semester, the next act of misconduct may result in a long-term suspension. If the act of misconduct leading to the long-term suspension occurs before the final quarter of the school year, the suspension shall be no longer than the remainder of the school year in which the offense was committed. If the act of misconduct leading to the long-term suspension occurs during the final quarter of the school year, the suspension may include a period up to the remainder of the school year in which the offense was committed and the first semester of the following school year. A meeting with the parents is convened to discuss the incident that led to the suspension and to implement or modify a B-CAP for the future.

Expulsion is defined as a decision to remove a student fourteen (14) years of age or older from school whose continued presence in school constitutes a clear threat to the safety of other students or school staff.

Non-Title IX Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Complaint Process

No student or school employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students. Bullying or harassing behavior is a pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, that places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to their person or damage to their property or creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Achievement Charter Academy takes seriously all complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The process provided in this policy is designed for those individuals who believe that they may have been discriminated against unlawfully, bullied, or harassed in violation of Achievement Charter Academy's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy. Individuals who have witnessed or have reliable information that another person has been subject to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying also should report such violations in the manner provided in this policy. Reports may be made anonymously. This policy does not apply where an individual seeks to assert allegations regarding or related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or free appropriate public education of a student under Section 504 or the IDEA, such allegations may be raised through the procedures governing such matter. This Policy also

does not apply to Title IX complaints, behavior falling within Title IX or Title VII complaints. Please refer to the corresponding School's policies for Title IX and VII matters.

A. Reporting by Employees or Other Third Parties

1. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees

Any employee who witnessed or who has reliable information or reason to believe that an individual may have been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied in violation of School Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy must report the offense immediately to an appropriate individual designated in subsection B.1., below. An employee who does not promptly report possible discrimination, harassment, or bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

2. Reporting by Other Third Parties

All members of Achievement Charter Academy community including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors are also strongly encouraged to report any act that may constitute an incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

3. Anonymous Reporting

Reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

4. Investigation of Reports

Reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying under this policy will be investigated sufficiently to determine whether further action under this policy or otherwise is necessary, and school officials shall take such action as appropriate under the circumstances. At the option of the alleged victim, the report may be treated as a complaint by the alleged victim under this policy.

B. Complaints Brought by Alleged Victims of Discrimination, Harassment, or Bullying

1. Filing a Complaint

Any individual who believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied in violation of Achievement Charter Academy's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy is strongly encouraged to file a complaint orally or in writing to the following individuals as applicable:

- a. The school counselor, teacher, Director of Education, Associate Director of Education, of Achievement Charter Academy for any claim of discrimination, harassment or bullying, including Title VI complaints;
- d. the Title IX coordinator for claims of sex discrimination or sexual harassment;
- c. the Section 504 coordinator or the ADA coordinator for claims of discrimination on the basis of a disability; or
- d. any member of the Board if the alleged perpetrator is the Director of Education.

2. Time Period for Filing a Complaint

A complaint should be filed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30-day period may be investigated at the discretion of school officials and outside the formal process described in Section C of this policy; however, individuals should recognize that delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

3. Informal Resolution

Achievement Charter Academy acknowledges that many complaints may be addressed informally through such methods as conferences or mediation. Achievement Charter Academy encourages the use of informal procedures such as mediation to the extent possible; however, mediation or other informal procedures will not be used to resolve complaints alleging sexual assault or sexual violence or complaints by a student of sexual harassment perpetrated by an employee. Informal procedures may be used only if the parties involved voluntarily agree. Any informal process should be completed within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 30 days unless special circumstances necessitate more time.

C. Process for Addressing Complaints of Alleged Incidents of Discrimination, Harassment, or Bullying

1. Initiating the Investigation

- a. Whoever receives a complaint of discrimination, harassment, or bullying pursuant to subsection B.1. shall immediately notify the Director of Education, who shall investigate or designate an individual to conduct an investigation and respond to the complaint. An investigator may be a school employee or outside consultant.
- b. As applicable, the investigator shall immediately notify the Title IX , or other relevant coordinator of the complaint, and, as appropriate, may designate the coordinator to conduct the investigation.
- c. The investigator shall explain the process of the investigation to the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
- d. Written documentation of all formal reports and complaints, as well as Achievement Charter Academy system's response, must be maintained in accordance with Achievement Charter Academy's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy.
- e. Failure to report, investigate, and/or address claims of discrimination, harassment, or bullying may result in disciplinary action.

2. Conducting the Investigation

- a. The investigator is responsible for determining whether the alleged act(s) constitutes a violation of the Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination,

Harassment, and Bullying Policy. In so doing, the investigator shall impartially, promptly, and thoroughly investigate the complaint. The investigator shall interview (1) the complainant; (2) the alleged perpetrator(s); (3) individuals identified as witnesses by the complainant or alleged perpetrator(s); and (4) any other individuals, including other possible victims, deemed likely to have relevant information. The alleged perpetrator shall be notified of the general nature of the allegations. The investigation will include a review of all evidence presented by the complainant or alleged perpetrator.

If the investigator, after receipt of the complaint, an interview with the complainant, and consultation with the board attorney, determines that the allegations submitted, even if factual, do not constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying as defined in School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy, the matter will be treated outside the scope of this policy. Information regarding the investigator's determination and the process for addressing the complaint will be provided to the complainant.

b. The complaint and investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Information may be shared only with individuals who need the information in order to investigate and address the complaint appropriately and those with a legal right to access the information. Any requests by the complainant for further confidentiality will be evaluated within the context of the legal responsibilities of Achievement Charter Academy.

c. The investigator shall review the factual information gathered through the investigation to determine whether, based on a preponderance of the evidence, the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying, giving consideration to all factual information, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, the age, and maturity of the complainant and alleged perpetrator(s), and any other relevant circumstances.

3. Notice to Complainant and Alleged Perpetrator

a. The investigator shall provide written notification to the complainant of the results of the investigation within 15 days of receiving the complaint, unless additional time is necessary to conduct an impartial, thorough investigation. The investigator shall specify whether the complaint was substantiated and, if so, shall also specify:

1) reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, corrective action intended to end the discrimination, harassment, or bullying, and prevent it from recurring;

2) as needed, reasonable steps to address the effects of the discrimination, harassment, or bullying on the complainant; and

3) as needed, reasonable steps to protect the complainant from retaliation as a result of communicating the complaint.

- b. Information regarding specific disciplinary action imposed on the alleged perpetrator(s) will not be given to the complainant unless the information relates directly to the complainant (e.g., an order requiring the perpetrator not to have contact with the complainant).
- c. If the investigator determines that the complaint was substantiated, in whole or in part, the perpetrator(s) shall be subject to consequences and appropriate remedial action for such bullying and/or harassment, as set forth in School's code of conduct. If the corrective steps involve actions outside the scope of the investigator's authority, the Director of Education or designee will be notified so that responsibility for taking the corrective steps may be delegated to the appropriate individual.
- d. The alleged perpetrator will be provided with a written summary of the results of the investigation in regard to whether the complaint was substantiated, whether the alleged perpetrator violated relevant law or School policies by his or her actions, and what, if any, disciplinary actions or consequences may be imposed upon the perpetrator in accordance with School policy. The perpetrator may appeal any disciplinary action or consequence in accordance with School policy and law. However, an appeal by the perpetrator of disciplinary action does not preclude school officials from taking appropriate action to address the discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

4. Appeal

- a. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, he or she may appeal the decision to the Director of Education. The appeal must be submitted in writing within ten (10) days of receiving the notice of the results of the investigation. The appeal must state with particularity whether the complainant is appealing (1) the investigator's determination of whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying in violation of Achievement Charter Academy's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy, or (2) Achievement Charter Academy's response to any violation, including the appropriateness of any remedial measures taken by Achievement Charter Academy. If the complainant is appealing pursuant to option (2), he or she must state what additional measures the complainant believes should have been taken by the district. The Director of Education or designee may review the documents, conduct any further investigation necessary, or take any other steps the Director of Education or designee determines to be appropriate in order to respond to the complaint. The Director of Education or designee shall provide a written response within 10 days after receiving the appeal, unless further investigation is needed. The Director of Education's decision is final and there is no appeal to the Board of Directors.
- b. If the alleged perpetrator is the Director of Education or the Director of Education declines to hear the appeal and refers it to the Board of Directors, the complainant


may appeal the decision in writing within ten days of receipt directly to the Board of Directors. The appeal must state with particularity whether the complainant is appealing the Director of Education's decision with regard to (1) the investigator's determination of whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying in violation of School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy, or (2) Achievement Charter Academy's response to any violation, including the appropriateness of any remedial measures taken by Achievement Charter Academy. If the complainant is appealing pursuant to option (2), he or she must state what additional measures the complainant believes Achievement Charter Academy should have taken. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Board Chair shall appoint a panel of not less than two members of the Board to decide the appeal. The panel shall make reasonable efforts to meet and consider the appeal within twenty (20) days after the chairperson refers the grievance to the panel. The panel shall review the complaint on the record unless it determines that additional information may be presented. No new evidence, written or verbal, may be presented without the prior knowledge and consent of both parties. At the Board Panel's discretion, they may hold a hearing and ask each party may make a brief oral presentation of no more than twenty minutes to summarize his or her position. The panel has the authority to ask questions, extend time limits, exclude extraneous or duplicative information, and otherwise maintain an efficient and fair appeal hearing. If a hearing is held, it will be recorded and shall be held in closed session. The Board panel may affirm, reverse or modify the decision. The Board panel shall use the preponderance of the evidence standard in reaching its decision. The Board panel will provide a final written decision within twenty (20) days after the Board hearing unless the panel determines that additional time is needed for further review. The decision of the Board panel shall be final.

D. Timeliness of Process

If any school official charged with investigating the complaint or reviewing the investigation fails at any step in the process to communicate a decision within the specified time limit, the complainant will be entitled to appeal the complaint to the next step unless the official has notified the complainant of the delay and the reason for the delay. Achievement Charter Academy official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the complainant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays that interfere with the exercise of any legal rights are not permitted.

Failure by the complainant at any step in the process to appeal to the next step within the specified time or to attend a scheduled meeting or hearing under this policy will be considered acceptance of the results of the investigation and Achievement Charter Academy's response to the complaint, unless the complainant provided notice of the delay and the reason for the delay and the district consented in writing to the delay.

E. General Requirements

- 
1. No person shall engage in any act of reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior. Any student who engages in such conduct will be disciplined in accordance with Achievement Charter Academy's Code of Conduct. Any employee who engages in such conduct will be disciplined up to and including termination. Any parent/guardian who engages in such conduct may be permanently banned from Achievement Charter Academy's campus and events.
 2. Disciplinary or other action may be taken against the complainant or other individual if the person knew or had reason to believe that the complaint or report was false or knowingly provided false information.
 3. All meetings and hearings conducted pursuant to this policy will be private.
 4. The complainant may be represented by an advocate, such as an attorney, at any meeting with Achievement Charter Academy under this policy. Should the complainant choose to be represented by an attorney, an attorney for Achievement Charter Academy may also be present.
 5. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the Director of Education or Board from suspending the alleged perpetrator without pay during the course of the investigation or taking any other action deemed appropriate.
 6. Nothing in this policy prevents the Director of Education from taking steps to protect students and/or Achievement Charter Academy community, as well as providing supportive measures to the complainant or other students.

F. Records

Records will be maintained as required by School's Non-Title IX Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Policy.

Adopted: September 14, 2023

Parent Communication Policy

Effective communication between the school and home is vital to the successful academic, emotional, and social well-being of students. To keep parents informed of school events and student growth, the school communicates often with parents through newsletters, telephone calls, and individual and group meetings.

School Website

ACA's website is a great resource for many parent questions. Information on lunch, uniforms and transportation can be found here.

Student Led Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are conducted face to face twice each school year. In addition, parents are encouraged to inquire about their child's performance any time during the school year. We believe that by continually monitoring students' progress, the parent-teacher conferences will serve as a review with very few surprises. The student will identify interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Teachers and parents provide input and feedback as the student reflects on progress and sets goals for the future.

Individual Achievement Plan (IAP)- currently in development

During each conference, students develop an IAP alongside the teacher and parent(s). Students identify learning opportunities they plan to pursue and the plan to accomplish these goals. Parents are encouraged to ask questions to learn as much as possible about their child's performance and goals. We aim to make parent-teacher conferences a student-centered experience designed to increase responsibility, confidence, and engagement in the learning process.

Attendance

Regular attendance establishes good work habits and self-discipline. Our school records attendance every morning.

Arrival

Students should arrive at school beginning at 7:40 a.m. After exiting their vehicle, students should proceed directly into the building. They should walk and behave in an orderly manner. All students wearing hats should remove them upon entering the building unless headwear is worn for religious reasons. Prompt arrival is essential for an orderly morning meeting.

Dismissal

School dismisses at 3:00 p.m. M-F and 12:00 on Fridays. Carpool begins at 3:05 M-F and 12:05 on Friday. If you are signing your child out early, this must be done prior to 2:40 pm so as not to interfere with carpool.

Tardiness and Early Dismissal

Students are considered tardy if they arrive at their classroom after the start of the morning meeting at 8:05 a.m. Parents who dismiss their child early from school, for any reason, must sign the child out.

The tardy/early dismissal is considered unexcused unless a note is provided by the parent the day of the tardy and the tardy is excused under the reasons below. The note must contain the following information:

- Student's name
- Teacher's name
- Date of tardy
- Reason for tardy
- Phone number
- Signature of parent

If a tardy/early dismissal is due to a doctor or dental appointment, a note from a physician is also required. Tardies are excused for only the following reasons:

- Personal illness or injury
- Funerals
- Doctor or dental appointments (which could not be arranged outside school hours)
- Religious observances
- Late arrivals due to weather conditions (which do not require a parent note)
- Authorized tardy (approved by the DOE)

Abuse of excused tardies and/or early dismissals will be addressed by the DOE and may result in disciplinary action taken under the Student Code of Conduct at the sole discretion of the DOE.

Absences

The attendance office should be notified of an absence preferably by email (attendance@achievementcharteracademy.org). If email is not possible then a phone call is acceptable. Voicemail is available before and after school hours.

If an absence is not verified by a call from the parent, the absence is considered unexcused. An absence is excused if a note is provided by the parent within two days following the absence and meets the guidelines below for an excused absence. The note must contain the following information:

- Student's name
- Teacher's name
- Date of absence
- Reason for absence
- Phone number
- Signature of parent

If an absence is due to illness and lasts five days or more, a note from a physician is also required. Absences are excused only for the following reasons:

- Personal illness or injury
- Funerals
- Doctor or dental appointments (which could not be arranged outside school hours)
- Religious observances
- Authorized absence (approved by the DOE)

- Educational opportunities

Abuse of excused absences will be investigated by the DOE or designee and may result in a referral to the District Attorney, Director of Social Services, and/or the County Juvenile Court or other disciplinary action.

Unexcused tardies and absences are handled in the following manner:


Range of Unexcused Tardies	Range of Unexcused Absences	Progressive Intervention
1 - 3	3	Early Intervention - Written notice sent home reminding family of attendance law.
4 - 6	6	Parent Notification (Email or note) - Parent/guardian must attend an Attendance Intervention Meeting to create an Attendance Contract. -
7 - 9	10	Review of absences. Referral to the District Attorney and/or Social Services as required by NC law.
10 - 12	7 - 9	<i>Completion of Attendance Corrective Action Plan (A-CAP)</i>

*Potential referral to District Attorney, Director of Social Services, and/or the County Juvenile Court with certified return receipt to parent. Factor considered in grade promotion.

Note: Any student who accumulates 15 consecutive school days of unexcused absences will be subject to potential withdrawal from the school.

Attendance Policy - Achievement Charter Academy Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance is a key factor in your child's academic success. Missing school—whether excused or unexcused—can lead to gaps in learning, lower grades, and loss of school privileges. As a North Carolina charter school, we follow NC Compulsory Attendance Law (G.S. 115C-378) and our charter guidelines,
Excused Absences:

- 
- Student illness or injury
 - Medical or dental appointments
 - Death in the immediate family
 - Court appearances
 - Religious observances
 - Quarantine
 - Other approved educational opportunities (pre-approval required)

Unexcused Absences:

- Any absence without acceptable documentation
- Vacations or trips not approved in advance
- Missing school without a valid reason

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Notify the school on the day of the absence.
- Submit documentation (doctor's note, court summons, etc.) within 3 school days of returning to school.
- Work with school staff to address barriers to attendance.

Attendance Contract

The contract will:

- Set specific attendance goals
- List supports the school will provide
- Explain consequences for not meeting goals, including possible loss of enrollment
- Require signatures from student, parent/guardian, and school administrator

Possible Academic Consequences

- Loss of course credit (grades 6-8)
- Ineligibility for extracurricular activities

Important Note


Students will not be expelled or suspended solely for truancy.

Truancy

A student is truant if unexcused absences total ten (10) or more school days in a school year. If truant, the student is referred to the District Attorney, Director of Social Services, and/or the County Juvenile Court.

The DOE may act as the school's attendance officer or delegate that duty. The school's attendance officer investigates possible school attendance violations and takes other necessary actions to enforce the compulsory education laws.

Family Vacations



Parents planning to take their child on a trip must notify the DOE or secretary at least two weeks before departure. The student's absence will be an excused absence if approved by the DOE. Lengthy trips are discouraged and may be cause for withdrawal. It becomes the student's responsibility, with the help of the parents, to plan with each teacher for missed assignments and to complete assigned work upon his/her return to school. The student is to complete all assignments within the same number of days as the length of the vacation. Incomplete assignments will not receive credit. Students who miss an announced test during their absence will take the test when all missed work is completed and within the same number of days missed due to the vacation.

Family Death or Terminal Illness

If there is a death, terminal illness, or similar traumatic situation in a student's family that may affect his/her attendance, emotional well-being, and/or level of concentration, the office staff members should be notified.

Illness During the School Day

If a student becomes ill during the school day, appropriate arrangements will be made for the student's care while waiting for parent pick-up. Students with vomiting or fever must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Educational Opportunity

In order for an educational opportunity to be approved, the attendance office must receive a written request from the parent no later than one week prior to departure. ACA Travel Journals are available for the student to document their experience. These are to be turned in upon the students return to school.

Voluntary Withdrawal

To withdraw a student, a parent must complete a Student Withdrawal form available in the office.

Remote Learning Plan

Achievement Charter Academy will utilize Remote Learning in the event of inclement weather/teacher workdays. Additional information is linked [here](#). Please note the guidelines for determining attendance.

Dress Code

Students are required to wear the ACA school uniform daily, starting with the first day of school. Students' uniforms should be clean, neat, and worn in the correct size. ACA uniforms should be well kept, with no holes, marks, or tears. Every Friday is a dress down day at ACA.

Students are not required to wear uniforms. Spirit weeks and special occasions will be announced throughout the year when uniforms are not required.

ACA Uniform Policy:

Approved uniform bottoms: Students may wear weather appropriate shorts, pants, skirts, or jumper dresses, in the following colors: navy, black, gray or khaki. Jeans are not considered part of the approved ACA dress code.

Students can wear comfortable, less formal styles of bottoms. K-1 students can wear a more comfortable, less fitted style of bottoms, as they are still learning to use the buttons and zippers on more structured pants and shorts. Examples of this include leggings or relaxed pants. No sweatpants, please.

Approved uniform tops: All students will wear the ACA logo polo to school daily. The ACA polo will be offered in navy blue, white, black and gray.

ACA knows that children learn and grow in different ways, and we want to reflect that in our uniform policy. Polos may be worn tucked, or untucked, to provide comfort to the student. Belts are optional as well, if pants and shorts are well fitting, comfortable, and a good representation of the ACA community.

Cold Weather:

Sweaters and long sleeves worn under/over the ACA polo should be **solid** navy, white, black or gray, to keep a consistent and identifiable look to the student body. **Solid** sweatshirts and hoodies worn over the polo to stay warm indoors do not require the ACA logo, **free from graphics and must be school approved colors**. The polo must be worn underneath every day the uniform is required.

There is no restriction on coats to be worn outdoors. Please always send your child to school in weather appropriate clothing, as we go outside daily, weather permitting. Gloves, scarves, and hats for colder weather will be kept in backpacks or lockers/cubbies.

Boots may be worn in colder months, as necessary.


Hats:

Hats and head coverings are to be worn outdoors only, unless worn for a religious purpose.

Shoes:

Children at ACA are active learners and need shoes that support activity!

ACA students should wear athletic shoes that encourage movement, provide adequate tread for playground equipment, and allow for comfort and functionality for PE, outside learning, and choice time activities.



ACA students should wear closed toe shoes, no sandals, crocs, or flip flops.

As stated in the cold weather section of our policy, winter boots may be worn in the colder months, as deemed necessary by school administration.

Our uniform policy is designed to help families and students. We always encourage you to reach out with questions and suggestions.

Thank you for being part of the Achievement Charter Academy family!

The school administration reserves the right to the final approval of dress code attire.

Title I Parent Involvement Policy

The school has adopted a policy addressing the importance of parent involvement. In addition to existing policies and guidelines, the school also recognizes the need for a policy that meets the requirements under Section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110).

Parents of students are vital contributors in the education of their children. Accordingly, they are encouraged to participate in the development and structure of Title I activities and to be kept informed about programs in which their children belong. Moreover, they are to be kept informed of the academic progress their children make as a result of participation in these programs, for it is through mutual understanding and close cooperation between the school and home that a student's academic success improves. Two-way communication between the school and home, both verbal and written, provides a sound base for a good partnership to provide an effective educational program for all students. Full realization of the partnership will be achieved through the on-going commitment and active participation by both home and school.

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents, and the community that will improve student academic achievement, the school shall:

- Provide assistance to parents in understanding such topics as the state's academic content and achievement standards, state and local academic assessments, and monitoring students' progress and work with educators;
- Educate DOE, teachers, student services personnel, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, regarding the value and utility of parental contribution, ways to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, ways to implement and coordinate parent programs, and ways to build ties between parents and the school;
- Coordinate and integrate, to a feasible and appropriate extent, parental involvement programs and activities with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool and other programs;

- Conduct activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children; and
- Ensure that curriculum, textbooks, and teaching materials of the school are available for review by the parent.

This Parent Involvement Policy is fulfilled as follows:

1. Parents are notified in writing regarding their child's participation in Title I programs. The written materials include a copy of this Parent Involvement Policy and a summary overview of Title I programs that are offered during the school year.
2. Early in the school year, parents are invited to meet the staff, learn more about available Title I programs, ask questions, and give suggestions. They learn how progress is measured and how they receive feedback about their child's progress. Parents are also invited to attend parent-teacher conferences.
3. Efforts are made to assist parents in understanding federal and state academic expectations, state content standards, student performance standards, the school curriculum, and school expectations and assessment results. This is accomplished by scheduling regular parent meetings throughout the school year.
4. Parents are encouraged to visit the school for volunteer training and information, visit their child's classes, actively volunteer in the life of the school, and attend other meetings and events. In addition, the school encourages parents to offer their ideas and suggestions to the school staff.
5. The school seeks ideas and suggestions from community-based organizations and coordinates parent involvement opportunities with such programs.
6. A school newsletter or similar communication is sent to all families. This communication provides for home reinforcement of skills and concepts taught at the school.
7. Efforts are made to accommodate parents with disabilities and with varying work schedules. Efforts are also made to provide information to parents in the language used at home (i.e. home language).
8. Parent involvement activities are fully integrated into the School Improvement Plan process for academic accountability. At least one parent representative participates on the School Improvement Planning Committee and is included in the school's comprehensive needs assessment and annual Title I program planning. Also, it is through this committee that the school plans the coordination and integration of Title I parent involvement strategies with other programs, e.g., Even Start, Headstart, Reading First. Elements of this plan include:
 - A. **Regular Communication with Parents:** To build consistent and effective communication between the home and the school, communication includes:
 - i. The Parent and Student Handbook
 - ii. Regular school and classroom newsletters

- iii. The annual school calendar
- iv. Special event and reminder notices
- v. Report cards
- vi. Parent-teacher conferences
- vii. Parent Nights
- viii. School assemblies/ceremonies (parents invited)

B. Parent Trainings: These are opportunities to help parents develop and use at-home skills that support their children's academic efforts and social development. Parents are given techniques and strategies that they may use to improve their children's academic success and to assist their children in learning at home. A Parent Needs Assessment survey is conducted at the first Parent Night. Some of these activities may include:

- i. Choice Theory training
- ii. Math games
- iii. Reading skills games
- iv. Kindergarten orientation
- v. Writing skills
- vi. District standards and assessment
- vii. Community resources
- viii. Helping with homework

C. Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation of Parent Involvement Initiatives: At least annually, the school and parents convene to evaluate the Parent Involvement Policy. This assessment includes metrics so the school can evaluate the effectiveness of parent involvement initiatives and the level of responsiveness to parent concerns. This assessment initiative helps the school identify barriers to greater parent participation. The school uses the findings of this assessment initiative to design strategies for more effective parent involvement and to revise, if necessary, this Parental Involvement Policy. Further, these metrics may be used as a measure in the performance evaluations of the school DOE and staff. Examples of metrics include, but are not limited to:

- i. Responses to and the results of the annual Parent Satisfaction Survey
- ii. Increase or decrease in the number of parents involved in school activities
- iii. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- iv. Workshops and learning experiences offered for parents
- v. Professional development for staff regarding how to work with parents and how to develop parent involvement strategies

Campus Visitor Policy & Volunteer Guidelines

Visitors and volunteers are expected to review and honor the following guidelines while visiting or volunteering for the school. Violation of these guidelines endangers the safety of students and their right to an education. Those not abiding by these guidelines may be barred from the building and/or prevented from participating in future volunteer opportunities. Please contact the school's office for information on becoming a volunteer.

General

1. Potential volunteers are required to complete the appropriate level of background check before a volunteer assignment begins. Parents and guardians may complete the Volunteer Authorization and Release form to begin the background check process.
2. All visitors and volunteers must be processed through the electronic visitor management system, using their driver's license and must wear a form of identification provided by the school. They may also be required to submit to a criminal background check.
3. All visitors and volunteers must sign both in and out in the school office. They may not walk directly to any classroom unless given permission by the office staff.
4. All visitors and volunteers must reinforce and demonstrate the school's behavioral philosophy.
5. The distribution of literature, without prior approval from the classroom teacher or the DOE, is prohibited.
6. Visitors and volunteers must abide by staff instructions, asking for clarification if necessary.
7. Corporal punishment is prohibited. As an alternative, the Student Code of Conduct disciplinary procedures are to be followed by school personnel or the classroom teacher.
8. The school is a public school with a Board policy of neutrality regarding religion. Visitors and volunteers may neither show preference for any one religion over any other religion nor share their personal religious views with students.
9. Appropriate dress is required at all times.
10. Smoking, tobacco, and alcohol use are prohibited anywhere on school property, in all indoor facilities, and in the presence of students.
11. All volunteers must attend a school led volunteer training session.
12. Classroom visitors must provide 48 hours notice prior to their requested date.

Classrooms

1. The teacher is ultimately responsible for the students and activities in his/her classroom.
2. Volunteers should enter classrooms quietly and wait for a break in the activity before communicating with the teacher and students.
3. Student behaviors must be addressed by the classroom teacher.
4. Classroom issues regarding students are confidential. Visitors and volunteers may not talk with others about the learning or disciplinary needs of any child other than their own.
5. Classroom visitors are allowed for a limited time and must have the DOE's permission.



Field Trips

1. Volunteer drivers must provide a valid driver's license, proof of insurance, and a sufficient number of seat belts to transport their assigned students. Volunteer drivers, overnight chaperones, and anyone in attendance of a field trip may be required to submit to a criminal background check.
2. Volunteers should follow all instructions provided by the teacher or school.
3. Smoking is prohibited in the presence of students.
4. Volunteer drivers must drive directly to the event and return directly to school (or pre-approved location) immediately after the activity. "Side trips" are prohibited.
5. Volunteer drivers should leave radios off and avoid playing music.
6. Volunteers should behave appropriately when participating on field trips.

Field trips are a privilege, not a right, and participation is determined at the teachers' and administrators' discretion.

General School Procedures

Transportation

Although transportation is not required to be provided by the school, the school has two buses that seat 60-70 students as well as a small activity bus that can accommodate 14 students. There will be 5-6 pick-up and drop-off locations in the community where parents can meet the bus. These locations will be communicated in late summer before the school year begins. Parents who note the need for transportation on the enrollment paperwork will be offered spaces on the bus. Students who qualify for free and reduced lunch will have priority should the number of students needing transportation exceed the number of spaces available on the bus. ACA will also provide information to parents regarding carpooling, private carriers, and public transportation possibilities.

Drivers and Carpools

Many parents form carpools. A list of parents interested in carpooling may be available in the school office.

With so many parents driving to school, significant traffic congestion can occur on a daily basis. Parents are asked to be patient and to plan on some delays, particularly during inclement weather.

Bicycles

Riding bicycles to and from school is strongly discouraged due to safety reasons. The student should register his/her bike with the police department and must wear a bicycle helmet.

Walkers

Students who walk to and from school should go directly home or to their other regular after-school care location following dismissal for their own safety and security. Failing to do so may cause undue worry for parents and staff members. Written permission from a parent must be on file in the office for all walkers.

School Lunch Policy & Program

Free & Reduced Lunch Program

For students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL), ACA will purchase \$60 gift cards from Food Lion **OR** ACA will purchase meals for students catered by MyHotLunchbox or provided by other local vendors. All other students will have the option of purchasing the catered lunch or bringing their lunch. FRL meals and regularly priced meals will consist of the same food choices. To provide parents autonomy in food choice, ACA will purchase \$60 gift cards from Food Lion.

Parents should complete a Free/Reduced Application available from the school office or on the website.

All parents have the option to pack lunch and order catered meals.

Snacks/Lunch

A snack period will be offered daily. Students must bring their own snacks from home as they are not provided by the school. Snacks should be nutritional (e.g., fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers). Candy, pop/soda, and sweets are not acceptable.

Nut Free Policy

Amended: October 21, 2024


Achievement Charter Academy has a NUT FREE policy throughout the entire school. This includes school camps and all other school-related activities, field trips, etc. When we say “NUT FREE” or “NUTS”, we are referring to peanuts (even though they aren’t technically a nut) and tree nuts (Almond, Beech nut, Brazil nut, Butternut, Cashew, Chestnut, Chinquapin, Coconut, Filbert/hazelnut (like in NUTELLA), Ginkgo nut, Hickory nut, Lichee nut, Macadamia nut, Pecan, Pine nut, Pili nut, Pistachio, Shea Nut, Walnut). Parents and children need to be mindful of any products containing peanuts and nuts when preparing lunches or snacks. **THE SCHOOL DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT IS NUT**

FREE AS MANY PRODUCTS CONTAIN NUTS AND THE SCHOOL CANNOT ENSURE THAT ALL FOOD AND CONSUMABLE PRODUCTS ON OUR CAMPUS ARE NUT FREE.

Parents of children who have suffered any anaphylactic reaction to ANY foods or insect bites, need to provide the school with an up-to-date medical action plan, signed by their doctor. Our school community has made a commitment to follow nut-free guidelines for the safety and health of all our students. We need each student, teacher, and parent to help us make ACA a safer place for kids who have food allergies. However, the School does not guarantee that students or staff will not be exposed to nuts.

Guidelines for students and their families:

1. Do not bring nuts (peanuts or tree nuts) to school. This means no sandwiches, granola bars, treats or any food that contains peanuts or tree nuts. This policy covers bringing any food with nuts for lunches, school events or class parties.
2. There should be no sharing of food at snack or lunch time. This is meant to keep all kids safe. A snack that was packed for you, may not be safe for your friend.
3. After eating snack and lunch, every student and staff member should wash their hands. Tables will also be wiped down with a cleaning solution after eating.
4. Be a label detective! Food labels have super-tiny print and have lots of unpronounceable words, so you will have to become skilled at scanning the side of all packages. Ask an adult if you need help until you can check and report nuts in the foods you have for lunches.
5. If a friend shares that they have a food allergy, take note. Listen carefully and ask how you can help to support them.
6. If you have a food allergy, tell your friends why ACA's nut-free policy is important to you.
7. There will be no teasing, rude comments or making fun of food allergies. Allergies are not funny. Many kids with food allergies are bullied. None of us want that to happen at ACA. Your teachers will help the classroom come up with ideas for staying supportive and positive, and putting an end to the negativity quickly.
8. What if I accidentally bring nuts to school? You will have the option of storing the item(s) in the office to bring home after school or tossing the item in the trash and eating a no-cost school lunch.
9. ACA will have FOOD-FREE birthday celebrations. On your birthday, if you'd like to bring in something to share with your class, it needs to be non-food item(s), so that all students can enjoy it. Some ideas for you- stickers, pencils, party hats, or other individual items for your classmates. You can also bring in something for the class as a whole, like a new book for the library.

- 
10. Children and staff should wash their hands/face before coming to school if they have consumed any nuts or nut products for breakfast.
 11. What Nut-Free Means at ACA • NO outside food with peanuts or tree nuts • NO peanut butter, almond butter, Nutella, or any nut butters • NO granola bars, snacks, candy or treats with peanuts or tree nuts • NO packaged foods with labels that read “contains peanuts or tree nuts” or “may contain peanuts or tree nuts.”
 12. ACA does not provide any food and does not guarantee that any meals provided by the School’s third party vendor are allergy or nut free. Any student allergic to nuts should not consume such meals.

Recess

Students need and want a time during the day to engage in outdoor activity. Recess is provided for a breath of fresh air, a moment of solitude, a private conversation, or a game. As in the classroom, a supervising adult is available during recess. When playing games, students are encouraged to include anyone interested in participating. Games that are abusive or demeaning are not permitted. All students are to remain in the designated recess area. Students may not use playground equipment while waiting for school to begin, waiting for rides, or following dismissal.

Holiday Celebrations

Birthdays

Parents can not bring food items or candy to share with the class for a student’s birthday. Student birthdays are acknowledged and celebrated in the classroom at the teacher’s discretion.

Fall Festival

Plans for a fall festival held during non-school hours will occur in either October or November to celebrate the fall season.

Christmas/Winter Holiday

Classes may have a small party at the end of the last day before the Christmas/winter holiday.

St. Valentine's Day

Students are encouraged to celebrate by making homemade valentines for their classmates. A class list will be supplied by the teacher for parents’ convenience. Students who bring valentines must give one to each of their classmates.

Field Trips

When students travel away from school, they are subject to the same rules, regulations, and appropriate behaviors observed at the school. Misbehavior or disregard of school policies can result in denial of field trip privileges. Signed permission slips must be on file with the teacher for each student on each field trip.

Lost and Found

The school does have a lost and found bin in the front office. Unclaimed items are donated to charity at the end of the school year.

Personal Items

The school will not accept responsibility for the personal items of students. We expect students to leave belongings that are not necessary for their education at home. Any personal items that staff members judge to be unsafe, inappropriate for school, or interfering with students' educational focus will be confiscated and held in the office or remain in the possession of a staff member until the parents retrieve them. Such items may be subject to search. The school shall not be responsible for any items lost or damaged while in its possession.

Students shall not possess cell phones, PDAs, iPods, MP3 players, video equipment, cameras, gaming devices, and electronic devices during the instructional day at school or school-related events. Subject to the Search and Seizure Practices and Procedures, the possession of such electronic devices during those restricted times constitutes the consent to search for and confiscate the device(s) by school personnel. Confiscated devices may be returned at the end of the school day.

Any exceptions to this general rule sought by parents for specific health or safety concerns should be brought to the attention of the DOE. The DOE's determination is final.

Emergency School Procedures

In the case of severe weather (e.g., major snowstorm, ice storm, dangerous wind chills, heavy fog), the DOE will notify WRAL regarding the decision to close school or delay its opening. A message will also be sent out to each family through our communication platform.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch or Warning

If school is already in session when the watch or warning is issued, the school stays open. The staff takes safety precautions.

Tornado Watch

Students remain in school, and the staff takes safety precautions. Students are released to parents or other designated adults upon request.

Tornado Warning

All students and staff members remain in the building and take shelter in designated areas. Students may be detained beyond the usual dismissal time. Students are released to parents or other designated adults upon request.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are held throughout the year. Safe areas inside and outside the building are designated for each classroom.

Tobacco Use

The school is a non-smoking facility. Smoking and tobacco use are prohibited anywhere on school property, in all indoor facilities, and in the presence of students.

Medical Information

To maintain a healthy learning environment, students are required to provide evidence of required immunizations.

Health Screenings

Every student entering NC public school for the first time (including kindergarteners, students who just moved to NC and students who were previously homeschooled or attending private schools) must provide the NC Health Assessment form completed by their doctor. This should include a medical history and physical examination that includes vision and hearing screenings and, if appropriate, testing for anemia and tuberculosis.

Immunization Requirements

No student shall be permitted to remain in school for more than thirty (30) days unless the student presents written evidence that he/she has been immunized by a method of immunization approved by the Department of Health or is in the process of being immunized. Parents may request in writing a medical or religious exemption from immunization requirements (form available in the office). The minimum complete immunizations are:

Dose	Vaccine	Important Notes
5 (possibly 6)	DTP, DTaP	Three (3) doses by seven (7) months and two (2) boosters—one (1) by nineteen (19) months and one (1) on or after fourth (4 th) birthday

		A booster dose is required for students entering sixth (6 th) grade if five (5) or more years have passed since the last dose.
4	Polio (IPV) (OPV)	Two (2) doses by five (5) months, third (3 rd) dose by nineteen (19) months, and booster dose before entering school
2	Measles	One (1) dose on or after twelve (12) months and before sixteen (16) months and the second (2 nd) dose before enrolling in school for the first time
2	Mumps	One (1) dose on or after twelve (12) months and before sixteen (16) months and the second (2 nd) dose before enrolling in school for the first time
1	Rubella	One (1) dose on or after twelve (12) months and before sixteen (16) months
3	Hib	Three (3) doses of HbOC or two (2) doses of PRP-OMP by seven (7) months
3	Hepatitis B	One (1) dose by three (3) months, second (2 nd) dose by five (5) months, and third (3 rd) dose by nineteen (19) months
1	Varicella (Chicken Pox)	One (1) dose on or after twelve (12) months and before nineteen (19) months If a documented laboratory report shows immunity or history of disease, the vaccine is not required.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the name of a group of viruses that includes more than 100 different strains or types. More than 30 of these viruses are sexually transmitted. Most people who become infected with HPV will not have any symptoms and will clear the infection on their own. Some of these viruses are called "high-risk" types and may lead to cancer. The virus lives in the skin or mucous membranes and usually causes no symptoms. There is no cure for HPV infection, although in many cases, the infection goes away on its own. The HPV vaccine is recommended for 11-12 year-olds and can be given to children as young as nine. The vaccine is also recommended for 13-26 year-olds who have not yet received or completed the vaccine series. The vaccine is given through a series of three shots over a six month period. Parents are encouraged to talk with their child's health care provider or local health department about HPV and immunization. More information is also available at the Center for Disease Control's website: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv>.

Medication Administration

Only necessary medications that must be given during regular school hours will be administered.

All medications, whether prescribed or over-the-counter, require written permission from the custodial parent. They must complete the Medication Administration Permission form (one form per medication). The form must be renewed each school year or upon any change in medication or dosage.

Though we encourage a physician's written permission in all cases, a physician signature is required under the following conditions:

- Any possession or use of an inhaler or epinephrine injector
- Any self-possession or self-administration of any medication

Parents must include any prescribed treatment or care plan. An emergency care plan from the physician is required for asthma and epinephrine medications.

Prescribed medication must be delivered to the school in the original container prepared and labeled by a pharmacy. The label must include the dosage and frequency of administration. Over-the-counter medication must be in the original package and have the student's name affixed to the package.

The medication supplied to the school must be in the exact dosage prescribed, so the individual administering medications is not responsible for dividing or splitting pills. All medication must be picked up by the parent at the end of the school year or upon a student's withdrawal. Any medication not picked up will be discarded.

If a parent is accompanying his/her child on a field trip, the parent will be required to administer the child's medication.

Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease is a dangerous disease that can strike children and youth and is caused by bacteria. The bacteria are spread from person to person by direct contact with an infected person's nose or throat secretions. Illness often starts with a sudden fever, headache, stiff neck, a rash, and possibly nausea and vomiting. An infected person may become very sick within a few hours of the first symptoms and should seek medical care immediately. The disease could result in death or permanent disability.

There are two immunizations available: one for people who are 11-55 years old and another for people who are 2-10 or 55+ years old if certain medical conditions exist that put them at higher risk of contracting the disease.

Parents should talk with their child's health care provider or local health department about meningococcal disease and immunization.

Lice Policy (Adopted May 10, 2022)

ACA does not have a "no nit" policy. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that "no nit" policies in schools are detrimental, causing lost time in the classroom, inappropriate allocation of the health service team's time for lice screening, and a response to infestations that is out of proportion to the medical significance. Children should not be allowed to miss valuable school time because of head lice.

Parents/guardians must notify the ATTENDANCE OFFICE immediately upon discovery of lice.

If live head lice have been observed, suspected or diagnosed by parent/guardian/doctor the student must be treated before returning to school. If a student is suspected to have adult lice and it is observed and verified by school staff, the student will discretely be sent to the office and parents will be notified. The student must be picked up and treatment should begin immediately using FDA approved products. Inspection/treatment should include the entire household to prevent further infestation of lice. The student may return to school once all live lice are removed. Continued inspection/treatment is necessary to avoid a reinfestation over approximately the next 30 days.

Procedures (updated as needed):

1. Office is notified of a diagnosed or suspected infestation.

2. Student is treated:

****Lice treatment kits are available in the office if you are not able to obtain a treatment kit on your own for any reason. Please inform office staff if you need a kit.****

-if diagnosed off campus student treated before returning to school

-if live lice observed on campus, parents notified, student sent home and treated before returning to school

3. Communication: A case of lice is communicated to parents/guardians of students in the same class as the diagnosed case. Communication of additional cases are communicated as they are received by the ATTENDANCE OFFICE and/or at least on a weekly basis.

4. Head coverings: Hats are typically not allowed to be worn in the school building, however children may wear a baseball cap during the 3 weeks after a case of lice is reported. If you choose to have them wear a hat, they **must wear it all day** (they cannot take it off and on throughout the day - this could cause even more spread!). If you do not think your child would keep the hat on all day, do not send them with one.

Transportation

Pick-up and drop-off

- In the mornings, students should be ready for the bus at least 10 minutes before the bus is expected to arrive.
- In the afternoon, drivers will discharge students only when a responsible person is present to pick them up. Drop-off times in the afternoon could vary depending on whether or not other students assigned to ride that vehicle may be absent that day.

So be at the bus stop at least 10 minutes before the bus is expected to arrive. If no one is present, the child will be returned to the school or district office.

- Items carried on the bus should fit on the student's lap. Projects, or other objects cannot take up seating space or block the aisle.
- Students may get on and off only at their assigned stops. They cannot ride home with friends.
- For students needing assistance, it is your responsibility to help your child from your residence to the vehicle, or from the vehicle to your residence.

Bus Stops

Parent provides transportation to/from centrally located stop; District provides transportation from centrally located stop to school, then back to the centrally located stop in the afternoon. Parents accept responsibility for driving their student to a central location such as a school or a shopping center for pick up by the school bus. The school bus will travel to several stops before it delivers students to their school. In the afternoon, students are returned to the same stop for pick up by parents. Parents should anticipate that it will take the bus driver longer to safely travel the bus route during peak traffic times than for the parent to drive from their home to the school.

Bus Conduct

The driver has complete authority and responsibility for operating the bus and maintaining good conduct. The driver shall report to the school administrator any misconduct or violation of the driver's instructions. Principals may discipline any bus misconduct as if the violation had occurred on school grounds. Penalties for violating board policy or the Student Code of Conduct apply to bus behavior. In addition, students are expected to:


- Enter the bus in an orderly and quiet manner.
- Sit in assigned seats without being reminded.
- Remain seated and facing front at all times.
- Keep hands, arms, heads or any other objects in the bus at all times.
- Sit with feet on the floor and bookbag and hands in lap.
- Abide by the request of the driver and follow all school and county rules and regulations.
- Food and drink are not allowed on the bus at any time.
- Be respectful to the driver and other students at all times.

Notifications

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents certain rights with respect to their child's education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents should submit a written request to the school DOE clearly identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. A school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parents of the time and place the records may be inspected.
- The right to seek an amendment of the student's education records that the parent believes are inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's rights of privacy. Parents should submit a written request to the school DOE, clearly identifying the part of the record they want amended and specifying its inaccuracy. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, it will notify the parents of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing to challenge the content of the student's education records. Hearing procedures will be provided to the parents when a hearing is requested.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. The school does not need written consent to disclose a student's education records if the disclosure meets one or more of the following conditions and the disclosure is to or for: (see 20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99.31):
 1. School administrators, teachers, support staff, ACA personnel and other school officials which have a legitimate educational interest
 2. Persons or organizations with whom the school or ACA has outsourced services or functions and which have a legitimate educational interest (e.g., attorneys, auditors, medical consultants, special and supplemental education providers, therapists)
 3. Officials of another school where the student seeks or intends to enroll or where the student is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment, and as long as a proper records release request is received by the sending school
 4. Certain federal and state officials and educational authorities (for audit, evaluation, reporting, or compliance purposes) or state and local authorities concerning the juvenile justice system in accordance with state statute
 5. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
 6. Organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school or ACA to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests, administer student aid programs, or improve instruction

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- 7. Accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions
 - 8. Compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena after the school makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent of the order or subpoena
 - 9. Appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001


Parents of students have the right to know the professional qualifications of the school's classroom teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 governs elementary and secondary education, allows parents to ask for certain information about their child's classroom teachers, and requires the school to give this information to parents in a timely manner if they ask for it. Specifically, parents have the right to ask for the following information about each of their child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the State Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he/she teaches
- Whether the State Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances
- The teacher's college major
- Whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject of the degrees
- Whether any teachers' aides or similar paraprofessionals provide services to their child and, if they do, their qualifications

Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights concerning student privacy, parental access to information, and administration of physical examinations to minors. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey, which is funded in part or in whole by a program of the U.S. Department of Education, that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey"):
 - 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent


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- 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family
 - 3. Sexual behavior or attitudes
 - 4. Anti-social, demeaning, illegal, or self-incriminating behavior
 - 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close familial relationships
 - 6. Legally-recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
 - 7. Religious affiliations, beliefs, or practices of the student or parent
 - 8. Income, other than as required by law, to determine program eligibility
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following:
 - 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
 - 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student (except for hearing, vision, scoliosis, or any other physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law)
 - 3. Any activity involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information or the marketing, selling, or distributing of such information to others
 - Inspect the following, upon request and before administration or use:
 - 1. Surveys created by a third party before their distribution by a school to its students
 - 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
 - 3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

The school protects student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The school will also both directly notify parents through U.S. Mail, e-mail, parent meetings, or the Parent and Student Handbook of the specific or approximate dates (if such events are planned and/or scheduled) of the above activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in them. *Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Gender Equity Policy (Title IX)

The school certifies compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C 1681 et seq. (Title IX), and its implementing regulation, at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, which prohibits discrimination based on sex. The school, as a recipient of federal



financial assistance from the United States Department of Education, is subject to Title IX and does not discriminate based on gender in employment or any educational program or activity it operates.

Complaints or grievances regarding discrimination based on gender should be delivered in writing to the DOE of the school and should provide specific details regarding the event, the date of the event, and the parties involved. The complaint will be considered confidential and will be expeditiously investigated by the DOE with the assistance of ACA legal counsel as necessary and appropriate. Title IX policy and grievance process is linked [here](#).

Unsafe School Choice Option

Title IX, Section 9532 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provides that a student attending a “persistently dangerous school” or a student who is a “victim of a violent criminal offense” on school property, as defined by law, has the right to transfer to another safe school in the district, if his/her parent requests a transfer. If there is not another safe school in the district providing instruction at the student’s grade level, the school shall contact neighboring districts to request that the student be permitted to transfer to a school in one of those districts.

Pesticide Notification

The school aims to control pest populations and to reduce the use of active pesticides throughout the school by implementing an integrated pest management program. The health and safety of all persons within the school’s facilities are of primary concern. The school will notify parents in advance of pesticide applications. Notice will be posted on the front door of the school and in the school newsletter. A parent can also request to be notified by letter 48 hours before the application is to take place. Please contact the school office if you wish to be notified by letter or wish to review the school’s integrated pest management program or records.

School-Wide Volunteer Opportunities

The ACA Board and staff members support the school's commitment to parental involvement, believing strongly that it is a main ingredient for student success. On the back of this page is a listing of the volunteer opportunities available to parents at the school. The committees are listed first, followed by committee support and other opportunities. Please check all opportunities in which you are interested. As you participate in these opportunities, you will be helping to provide an exemplary educational experience for our students. Thank you in advance for helping make our school exemplary for our children.

Volunteer opportunities specific to your child's classroom are on a separate form.

Volunteers may be required to submit to a criminal background check.

Parent name(s):

Address:

Phone number:

Best time to be reached:

Children's names and grades:

Name:

Grade:

Name:

Grade:

Name:

Grade:

Name:

Grade:

Name:

Grade:

Please check all opportunities in which you are interested.

Committee Membership

- ☐ **Fundraising**
Organize fund-raising projects throughout the year
- ☐ **Events**
Plan special events for all the school's families
- ☐ **Choice Theory Focus**
Plan ongoing activities and projects related to choice theory training
- ☐ **Staff Appreciation**
Plan and coordinate Teacher Appreciation Day and other events to recognize staff
- ☐ **Ambassadors**
Plan and conduct events to attract families to enroll in the school

Other Opportunities

- ☐ **Lunch/Playground Supervision**
Supervise classes during lunch or recess on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis
- ☐ **Choice Time Activities**
Lead _____ AND/OR Assist _____
What Choice Time Activity are you interested in leading? _____
- ☐ **Office Help**
Assist office staff as needed
- ☐ **Physical Education**
Assist with Field Day
- ☐ **Field Trips**
- ☐ **Classroom**

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM.

Students and their families are urged to review these policies and procedures, which include information about your rights and responsibilities. By signing and returning this page, you acknowledge that you have received the ACA Student/Parent Handbook.

The undersigned parent or guardian acknowledges receipt of the ACA Student/Parent Handbook

Parent or Guardian's Signature

Date

Student's Name

Date

This form will be kept at your child's school.

ACA Parent & Family Engagement Policy

ACA uses the Glasser Quality School (GQS) model as a guide to create a school culture that teaches and uses Choice Theory to support relationships based on trust and respect. The GQS model emphasizes Total Learning Competency and producing Quality Work to encourage self-directed learning and individual achievement. The model emphasizes the value of respect, diversity, inclusion, and community and promotes a school environment that is viewed by stakeholders as a joyful place.

The ACA Board of Directors (BOD) understands the value of family engagement in the success of students and the value of parents and other family members in continued support of students. ACA officials and personnel strive to support parents and provide opportunities to be involved in the programs offered by the Title I program in the building. The BOD encourages parents to become involved in the design and implementation of the Title I program and activities in order to help students learn the curriculum and meet local and state achievement standards.

A. DEFINITION OF PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

For the purposes of this policy, the term “parent and family engagement” means the participation of parents, guardians, and other family members in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student learning and other school activities, including ensuring the following:

1. that parents and family members play a vital role in supporting their child’s learning;
2. that parents and family members are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school;
3. that parents are full partners in their child’s education and parents and family members are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and
4. that the school uses events to support parent and family engagement in the Title I programs.

B. PURPOSE AND OPERATION OF TITLE I PROGRAM

The Title I program is a federally supported program that offers assistance to educationally and economically disadvantaged children to help ensure they receive an equitable, high-quality, well-rounded education and meet the schools challenging academic standards. The Title I program delivers instructional activities and supportive services to eligible students over and above those provided by the regular school program.

C. ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION Each year, school officials must invite parents to a meeting to explain parental rights, discuss the programs and activities to be provided with Title I funds, and solicit input on the Title I program and this policy. In addition, school officials must provide parents and family members a meaningful opportunity annually to evaluate the content and effectiveness of the Title I programs and the parent and family engagement policies and plans. Information collected from these proceedings will be used to revise Title I programs and parent and family engagement plans. This meeting will be held annually at the regularly scheduled February Parent Committee meeting. The suggested revisions will be presented by the Parent Committee at the regularly scheduled March BOD meeting. Information about the

meeting will be communicated in the Administrative newsletter, teacher newsletter in the 4 weeks prior to the meeting date, and posted on the school's website.

D. PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS The BOD believes that the involvement of parents and family members in the design and implementation of the Title I program will increase the effectiveness of the program and contribute significantly to the success of the children. The Title I school representative and all school personnel shall strive to conduct outreach to parents and family members and involve them in activities throughout the school year. School leadership shall ensure that this parent and family engagement policy and plan is developed with, agreed upon with, and annually distributed to parents and family members of participating students. In addition, school officials and Title I school personnel shall do the following:

1. Involve parents and family members in the joint development of the Title I program and school support and improvement plan and the process of school review and improvement by including parents on the Parent Committee, the School Improvement Team, and any other future committees that review the Title I program.

2. Provide coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities that are designed to improve student academic achievement and school performance.

3. Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies in the Title I program to the extent feasible and appropriate with parental engagement strategies established in other federal, state, and local laws and programs.

4. With the meaningful involvement of parents, conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the school parent and family engagement policy and program in improving the academic quality of the school and assisting students to meet the school's academic standards. This evaluation shall identify the following: a. barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy or are of any racial or ethnic minority background); b. the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers, and; c. strategies to support successful school and family interactions. The school will use these findings to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement, and revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policy.

E. ADOPTION The Achievement Charter Academy Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed and adopted by the ACA BOD and will be revised with, and agreed upon with parents in the February 2020 Parent Committee meeting. The Parent and Family Engagement Policy/Procedures were developed/revised by Achievement Charter Academy on February 9, 2021 and will be in effect through March 31, 2022. Revisions to the initial Policy/Procedures will occur in March of 2020 after the Parent Committee meets and makes suggested revisions to the BOD at the March 2020 BOD meeting. The school will distribute these Parent and Family Engagement Policy/Procedures to all parents and make it available to the community on or before April 1, 2022.