



ACADEMY FOR
ADVANCED & CREATIVE
LEARNING

FAMILY HANDBOOK

VISION

We will **create** an academic home for advanced and creative learning, **cultivate** personal and standards-based excellence and leadership ability, and **serve** as a resource center for the gifted community of the Pikes Peak Region.

MISSION

Our students and staff will **investigate** ideas and master advanced content, **reflect** upon their own progress, **explore** connections between disciplines, and **lead** others in positive ways to new heights in achievement and service to the community.

2510 N. Chestnut St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
719-434-6566
office@academyacl.org

Dear Families,

We are honored to have you as part of our school community, and we appreciate the time and energy you have invested in your school selection. As a public school of choice, we appreciate and rely upon parents to know if this program is a good fit for their students. We are funded by public tax dollars, and our board meetings are open to the public each month.

The AcademyACL program is unique in the Pikes Peak Region. Every element has been intentionally planned and continues to be refined for its ability to create a highly challenging and highly supportive system for gifted learners who function above grade level, often substantially so, in at least one academic subject. Gifted learners are advanced, and often “asynchronous” learners. These learners require greater depth and complexity of the material with teachers specially trained in gifted educational techniques. We believe that each child deserves to be in an environment that best supports him or her in the learning process. We use the Integrated Curriculum Model approach with advanced content, big ideas, and differentiated instruction. Students are encouraged to provide feedback about units of instruction, allowing teachers to refine them from year to year.

We opened our doors in 2010, and are proud to be in partnership with Colorado Springs School District 11 as part of their portfolio of schools. We serve students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade in multi-age classrooms organized by divisions, allowing students to attend classes in Art of Language and World of Math at the level they demonstrate readiness. Division-wide studies in scientific and historical inquiry rotate on a Year A/Year B schedule, focused on units of instruction that tie to specific concepts that go beyond learning simple facts; our goal is that our students understand the connections between ideas, events, eras in history, and scientific concepts to be able speak to the complexity that exists in the world around them.

One of the specialized aspects of charter public schools is a commitment to a specific, individual vision and mission that guides all decisions. We want every member of our community to be able to explain our vision and mission.

Vision: Create, Cultivate, and Serve

We will **create** an academic home for advanced and creative learning, **cultivate** personal and standards-based excellence and leadership ability, and **serve** as a resource center for the gifted community of the Pikes Peak Region.

Our academic home is founded on a spirit of community and the connections that teachers and staff form with students and their families. Children are encouraged to be unique individuals with a variety of different interests and to develop a strong work ethic and perseverance for assignments and authentic work that are appropriately challenging for each child's strengths. The AcademyACL community exists to identify, discuss, and work to address the specific needs of gifted learners in the Pikes Peak Region and beyond. Gifted learners exist at every age, in every community, and in every culture and they deserve to be seen and supported at every stage of their lives.

Mission: Investigate, Reflect, Explore & Lead

Our students and staff will **investigate** ideas and master advanced content, **reflect** upon their own progress, **explore** connections between disciplines, and **lead** others in positive ways to new heights in achievement and service to the community.

The ideas of inquiry, reflection, and leadership are what guide our work with students. When our graduates leave us, it is our intention that they are able to ask critical questions of the world around them using carefully researched information and data. Our students learn to set goals for themselves and refine their process toward meeting those goals, learning not only how to track their progress, but also what to do when the straightforward plan has to take a detour. We provide opportunities for students to study what it means to be a leader in today's society and develop their own leadership skills both within our own school community and beyond our school walls. A leader is not always the loudest voice in the room, the person taking action and making things happen; rather, a leader is often the quiet one who supports and empowers others to grow into who they are meant to become.

Values and Philosophy

Our values and philosophy are at the heart of AcademyACL's vision and mission statements. We believe that our children, teachers, families, classrooms, curriculum, and community each have unique roles to fill in this school. We believe that all children should have the opportunity to learn at an appropriate pace and depth with flexibility for their individual learning needs. Providing this opportunity is at the core of all of our decisions. We believe in recognizing the

individuality of each child, providing them with an environment where their unique abilities can flourish. As a member of the Child-Centered Gifted Consortium, we helped develop a [document](#) that defines child-centered gifted education which further illustrates our guiding philosophy.

We look forward to continued growth and refinement of our program in service of our students, their families, and the gifted community. We will continue to grow our Robotics program, enabling younger students to develop the technical and collaborative skills they need to compete against more experienced programs. We will continue to grow our arts programs, ensuring that the creativity our students possess is supported and showcased. We will refine our work as a Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase School, developing leadership skills in our students and helping them to create self-managing classroom communities at every level. We will grow the capacity of our staff to meet the needs of our gifted students and their families through targeted and intentional professional learning opportunities. And we will continue to develop and align our curriculum to meet the academic and developmental needs of our students, ensuring that it offers both highly challenging and highly supportive learning opportunities.

We look forward to a wonderful year working together with you.

Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Teresa Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Teresa" is written with a large, elegant 'T' and 'B' for "Brown".

Ms. Teresa Brown, M.A.
Academy Director

1. Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Statement

Academy for Advanced and Creative learning is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, families, and staff. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, marital status, or any other protected class under federal, state, or local law.

We ensure equal access to programs, activities, and employment opportunities, and we actively strive to remove barriers that may prevent full participation in school life.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, AcademyACL provides reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities and addresses all complaints of discrimination or harassment.

To request accommodations or file a concern, please contact:

Jennifer Tarbox, Dean of Students
719-434-6566

Alternative formats of this handbook and school materials are available upon request.

2. Communication

How to Contact the School

Our front office is staffed from 7:30 until 3:30 daily. The phone number to reach our front office is 719-434-6566. The office staff can be reached by email: office@academyacl.org.

Office Administrative Team: Mrs. Tammy Dykstra is our Executive Secretary and Mrs. Krystal Sevey is our Registrar. Working with our Business Manager and Academy Director, they oversee communications with families and the community; streamline processes for student records and volunteer opportunities; coordinate the Academy Director's schedule; and complete other office responsibilities. They are also charged with tracking health records and injury/illness procedures in coordination with our supervising nurse (nurse@academyacl.org).

School-to-Home Communication Methods

While teachers and other staff members can be reached by email (firstname.lastname@academyacl.org) easily, AcademyACL also uses other methods to share information with our families.

Email Guidelines

Teachers and other staff members can be reached by email easily. Email addresses follow the firstname.lastname@academyacl.org convention, and teachers check email when they are not teaching; this is typically before or after school and during their planning period if they do not have a meeting scheduled. We do not expect our staff to check emails in the evenings or on weekends, nor do we ask them to monitor and respond to their email over school breaks. We honor their family and personal time, and it is important to us that they are able to maintain a healthy balance between the high cognitive and emotional demands of their chosen profession and their personal time.

If your questions or concerns can be addressed with a quick response, then email is the best way to contact a teacher or staff member. If your need requires a longer conversation, a phone call or in person conversation would be best. If you are interested in scheduling and in person or phone conference, email is the best way to get that scheduled. Teachers handle their own calendars, so the office cannot schedule those meetings on their behalf. The office can schedule meetings with the Academy Director and Dean of Students or you can reach out to them directly to do so.

In-Person Conferences/Meetings

Teachers can generally meet before school until 7:45, or after school after 3:30. Some days, they may also be able to meet during a planning period, which varies depending on their teaching and team meeting schedule. Wednesday afternoons, teachers have a standing staff workshop that cannot be missed. Contacting the teacher you wish to meet with directly by email is the most efficient way to schedule those meetings. Teachers are more than happy to sit down for a conversation!

Phone

There is a telephone in each classroom. Teachers are unable to take incoming calls during the school day, however you can leave a message with the office to have them get in touch with you, or if needed, to leave a message for your student which will be passed along as soon as possible. Students can make outgoing calls from the classroom phone with permission from the teacher. They are also welcome to make outgoing calls using the phone in the office or nurse's office if needed, but cannot receive calls during the school day.

ParentSquare

ParentSquare is the system we use to send bi-weekly newsletters to our families, to specific groups (e.g. enrichment classes or a particular language arts class), or schoolwide updates or alerts. There is a website (www.parentsquare.com/signin) as well as an app that can be downloaded to your phone. You can opt in to text alerts or choose to receive email notifications of individual updates or in a digest format.

Each Division, as well as Art of Language and World of Math teachers, will send bi-weekly updates about what is being learned in their classes, which will include overarching big ideas and topics, learning objectives, projects, and any assessments or due dates that are coming up. If there are field trips or special events or speakers planned, that information will be included in the update for that class. Teachers may send signups for volunteer opportunities via ParentSquare as well.

A Family Directory is available in ParentSquare to families as a list of contact information for students and their families who have not opted out of providing such information for the student directory. AcademyACL firmly stands behind the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and will only provide information from families who wish to make such information available. The Privacy Act notes that this basic information may be provided if families have not requested the exclusion of such information within the specified deadline. We encourage families to share contact information to help build the spirit of community that AcademyACL seeks to cultivate and to use others' information in a respectful manner. A notice of each family's FERPA rights is provided to all families at the beginning of the school year.

At the beginning of the school year, you will receive instructions on setting up your account with ParentSquare.

Thursday Envelopes

AcademyACL attempts to limit whole-school paperwork and handouts to Thursday nights, so that parents have *one* night to receive additional paperwork. Please make sure to check for this information from your students on Thursday nights. *Please ensure those folders are returned each Friday morning*. Please help them to establish a Thursday envelope routine with you so that they arrive with it in hand, empty to signify that you received the contents. Some of this information is very critical, and we have to have a consistent means of getting it to you. Thursday envelopes apply to ALL Divisions, from Division I to Division V.

Alma

Alma is where families will find information about student attendance, grades, and learning reports. Both families and students have the ability to log in separately to view student progress on assignments, standards, and specific work. It is expected that students in Divisions II-V log in periodically to view their own progress. If you need assistance with login information for yourself, please contact the office at office@academyacl.org or 719-434-6566. If your student needs support logging in, please have them speak with their teacher directly or you can contact their teacher on their behalf if they are DIII or younger. DIV and DV students should be encouraged to advocate for their needs with their teachers.

Teachers update Alma as it makes sense to do so, and do not grade every piece of work students produce. Some work is for practice only and used to inform instruction, while other work (formative assessment) is done for ongoing assessment of progress toward the mastery of skills. Some work is summative (final or end of unit) and will illustrate student learning for a particular unit of study. Individual teachers make the determination as to what assignments are entered into Alma and on what schedule. If you have questions about your student's progress at any time, please contact your child's teacher directly.

At the beginning of the school year, you will receive instructions on setting up your account with Alma.

Website

We encourage our families to use our website as an ongoing source of important school related information and notices. The website is a wealth of information and includes our calendar of events, and information about our programs. Our website address is: www.academyacl.org. If you find information may be missing or would like to see information added, please let us know!

Delay and Closure Notifications

For weather-related school delays or closures, AcademyACL generally aligns with District 11 procedures. You will receive notification via **ParentSquare** as soon as a determination is made, and you can also check local news, the Flashalert.net system, and our website and social media (Facebook and Instagram). If a two-hour delay is posted, and the weather continues to deteriorate, a change to a full closure for the day may be necessary. That decision will be made and posted by District 11, followed by AcademyACL postings to ParentSquare, the flashalert.net system, and our website and social media. Please be aware that the purpose for a school delay is to provide sufficient time to get to school safely by the time school opens.

In the event of a delay, Before Care will begin two hours later than normal, and the school day will begin at 10 a.m. with Lifeskills, and either Art of Language or World of Math at 10:30. The remainder of the day will continue as normal.

In the Colorado Springs area, erratic weather conditions can exist in one part of town while the weather may be benign in another. Since our families live all over the Colorado Springs area, we encourage you to make your own decisions regarding your child's safety during severe weather. A student will not be penalized for late work due to severe weather. Teachers may substitute assignments that students can complete at home.

Sometimes our calendar does not align with District 11, and we have school scheduled while they do not. In those cases, there will be no District 11 alert, but ParentSquare, etc. will be updated with our delay or closure notifications.

In the event that a two-hour delay is posted for an occurrence other than severe weather, *the delay will be followed* regardless of whether the building is cleared to enter at an earlier time than expected (in instances such as a faulty fire alarm, prank phone call, unusual smell in the building, etc., when the incident is deemed safe by emergency personnel). The school day would officially begin at 10:00 a.m. with doors open at 9:50 a.m.

For an Early Dismissal due to Severe Weather or other unusual circumstances, as quickly as possible a ParentSquare post will be sent to families, and the AcademyACL website will be updated.

Communication Expectations

Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a part of life, and it provides an opportunity to model problem solving for children. AcademyACL seeks to instill in its students the ability to approach conflict by identifying the problem and discussing a workable solution with the parties involved, using civil discourse and mutual respect at all times.

Students are taught a technique for discussing problems with each other using the "*Peace Path*" in which they face each other, state and repeat the problem, state and repeat a possible solution, and then discuss whether the solution is agreeable to both parties. This use of a specific technique with "I" messages ("I feel _____ when you _____." "I would like you to _____ next time.") provides a neutral way to discuss and solve conflicts. This process is used for basic conflicts between students rather than situations that require immediate adult intervention to ensure physical and emotional safety; it is also monitored, supported, and reinforced by AcademyACL staff to ensure its effectiveness.

To model this use of civil discourse and mutual respect at all times for students, AcademyACL expects all staff and families to approach conflicts in a calm manner, and to refrain from negative comments about staff, other students, or other parents within the hearing of a student. Children, and gifted students in particular, often are quick to hear and interpret such comments internally without adults realizing that they are doing so. Children lack the maturity to recognize all of the factors involved or nuances of a situation. This makes it difficult for them to "get over a situation" when adults have been in conflict, to accept solutions that have been offered, and/or to reconcile their need to get along positively with the various adults in their lives. We also ask that members of our community seek positive solutions to a concern rather than discuss the concern in negative ways with others who cannot solve it. *We all work together to create a positive and productive community of learners, adults and children included.*

We use the following steps to enhance communication when you have classroom or school concerns Parents/Guardians are expected to attempt to complete each step before proceeding to the next:

- 1. Talk to the staff member involved to discuss the situation and come to an agreement about a course of action or resolution:** If there is a problem in some area, please begin the resolution process by talking first to your core teacher/s or the staff member involved. Email/contact the teacher ahead of time to set up an appointment and describe the issue/s (using short, specific, and positive descriptions of your concerns). This allows the teacher to collect any information that you need, and be fully available to listen to your concerns. At that meeting, teachers will ask you to state your goals (what would you like to see happen?) and to discuss possible ways to resolve the concern. Once a solution has been found, teachers will document that solution by the end of the next school day.

You are encouraged to give the solution at least a three-week trial before meeting again.

- 2. If there has been no resolution to the problem, request a meeting with the Dean of Students and the staff**

member involved to determine whether an alternative course of action is needed: The goal of this meeting will be to determine a documented, measurable plan that is both sensitive to the student's privacy and parents' needs while being considerate of the teacher's time.

This solution also deserves a three-week trial before checking back in with your classroom teacher and Dean of Students.

3. **If further action is needed, request a meeting with the Academy Director to discuss the situation:** The Academy Director and the Dean will review previous documentation, discuss any additional solutions that might be available, and will make a decision concerning the next step. The Academy Director may choose to implement a plan that invites follow-up after a specified period of time, or a more immediate solution as appropriate.

The Academy Director's decision, made in accordance with District 11 procedures and AcademyACL's vision and mission, will be final.

4. **File a specific complaint with the Academy Director to the Board of Directors if needed:** If you are still unsatisfied, you may prepare a formal letter to give to the Academy Director, to submit to the Board. The Board President or designee will confirm its receipt and the Board may choose to discuss the matter with you and the Academy Director in a private Executive Session.

There is also Open Public Comment time available during Board meetings for ***situations that do not include the names of individual students or other information that is subject to confidentiality*** under federal, state, and district requirements. Please note that AcademyACL board meetings are formal, recorded proceedings. There are limitations for time as well as limitations on the types of responses that Board members are allowed to give for items that are not scheduled for formal action at that meeting.

Irreconcilable Differences

AcademyACL is a public charter school of choice and appreciates the actions of students and their families who participate in building a community of professionalism and respect. The school design, philosophy, and the communication process has been carefully crafted through its charter application process, and the charter application has become a contract through District 11 as its authorizer. AcademyACL will extend every effort to objectively facilitate conflict resolution within the integrity of our school philosophy.

Rallying support for your point of view by attempting to organize and target efforts against any one student, family, or faculty member is not productive or within the school's grievance procedures. *AcademyACL is a public school of choice, and is subject to confidentiality requirements regarding both students as well as employees.* Unacceptable, belligerent, or threatening behavior by an adult may result in that adult being barred from school grounds as necessary.

AcademyACL can provide families with information on other schools at any time. There may be one that is more suitable for your needs if irreconcilable differences occur. As a school of choice, you are free to withdraw your student(s) at any time. We have information concerning this process in the office.

Adults as Role Models

As a learning community we are dedicated to providing the highest quality of gifted education, and to that end, supporting the potential of each student. Achieving this ideal learning environment is not only the responsibility of the faculty and staff, but the responsibility of each and every parent, guardian and adult involved with the school. Our ideal is that all faculty, parents and guardians of enrolled students, and any other adult associated with an enrolled student will behave in a manner that fosters a constructive learning environment in the school.

This includes decency, courtesy, and respect at all times. Accordingly, no adult associated with an enrolled student shall engage *on school property and/or at school-sponsored functions* in the use of inappropriate language, threatening behaviors, confrontational interactions, inappropriate physical or verbal punishment of your child/a child in your care or other children; tobacco or alcohol use; or defamation of another's character.

Disciplinary action shall be at the discretion of AcademyACL and may include but is not limited to prohibiting the violator from entering the building and restricting access to AcademyACL property, sponsored activities, or AcademyACL employees or personnel.

A great deal of care has been used to select a highly qualified, caring, and professional teaching staff and to continually develop their skills and abilities. These professionals have been carefully screened for their academic skill, sensitivity, passion, and enthusiasm for the needs of children, and the Academy Director requests the support of parents in developing positive and supportive partnerships with these teachers.

The expectations of AcademyACL teachers for this unique design include more work, effort, and creativity than many other school designs. Teachers have chosen to work here because of their commitment to our vision and mission, and the unique needs of these children. They are not 'perfect'- they are lifelong learners in our community, too, and they appreciate positive, thoughtful feedback and brainstorming processes for solutions to concerns.

Sensitivity to teacher's schedules and comments of appreciation for their work is always very welcome, even when there are issues of concern to be discussed. **Please do not catch them in the hallway or at the back of the classroom to mention a concern;** please send them a short, positive, specific email and schedule a time to meet with them. In return, the Academy Director expects teachers to continually listen and encourage you in your role as parents, with everyone focusing together on meeting the needs of our students.

If an individual chooses to circumvent the Conflict Resolution process, that circumvention may limit options for the resolution of the issue.

For example, formal complaints against a teacher or staff member, for whatever reason, will begin a formal investigation into the issue and a formal response back to the parent. The formal response will not include information on confidential personnel matters, interventions, strategies, or consequences. Additionally, in educational settings a face-to-face meeting after-the-fact between the teacher and parent does not often occur once a formal issue has been addressed and concluded by the Academy Director and/or Board of Directors.

Additionally, formal complaints that a parent or guardian makes on behalf of his/her child, against another student will instigate a formal investigation that will receive a formal response back to the original parent, and will not include any confidential information regarding the other student or any interventions, strategies, or consequences that apply to any other student but the parent/guardian's own child. Please note that there is a full discipline plan available upon request, and that the state of Colorado expects schools to use a range of strategies in discipline situations, that in-school suspensions are used much more frequently than out-of-school suspensions, and that expulsions are extremely rare occurrences. A parent cannot make the request that another child is expelled from school, and will not be granted access to the confidential situation, consequences, or interventions of any child but his/her own.

Restorative Justice conversations may be scheduled by the administration for appropriate situations, including situations where there is good faith that all involved and invited parties are seeking solutions, restoration and a sense of teamwork around a given issue.

Allegations of illegal activities are referred to the Colorado Springs Police Department. Allegations of child abuse or neglect are referred confidentially to the Department of Health & Human Services; parents will not know if a referral has been made. As needed for a given situation, expertise from the District 11 Security Department, the school psychologist, and other District 11 or community experts may be consulted by the AcademyACL staff.

Parents/guardians are asked to consider the nature of their concern, the level of intervention that it needs initially, and to decide whenever possible to address the issue at the lowest appropriate level first, with the closest teacher or staff member involved, followed by his/her lead supervisor.

Involvement of The AcademyACL Board of Directors

The AcademyACL Board of Directors holds open public meetings each month. There is always a section for public comment included in that meeting. These are formal meetings that follow specific procedures and requirements.

If there is a particular issue that is brought to open meeting and it has not previously been addressed to the Academy Director and/or addressed in a letter of notification to the Board, the Board will not address the issue at that meeting. If necessary, the Board may choose to withdraw to a private executive session to discuss the issue as appropriate and as allowed by Colorado's open meeting requirement. For questions on this issue, please see the Board Policies online at the school's website, or send an email to boardpresident@academyacl.org.

Please note that AcademyACL Employees are not employees of Colorado Springs District 11. Concerns are addressed ultimately by AcademyACL's chartered Board of Directors, not District 11.

3. Academic Expectations

At Academy for Advanced and Creative Learning, we value our *open enrollment, open welcome* policy as a way to celebrate the strengths of a diverse student body. Our program is a school of choice designed to meet the needs of students who require more advanced content and complex vocabulary above their age level.

Therefore we rely heavily upon parents to understand our program and to know if their child needs an advanced curriculum designed for gifted learners who work *above grade level* in at least one area. Every student who enters our program is respected by staff and other students as a *smart* learner and capable of hard work, interesting ideas, and contributions that benefit the rest of our learning community. We value a supportive and active community of parents. We believe that a positive family-student-teacher partnership is critical for success in our mission to educate and support the whole child.

Academy for Advanced and Creative Learning is designed as **an entire school focused on gifted educational programming**, not a school with a gifted program. Each of our classes is focused on being a “gifted” class. As a public charter school, it is a school of choice for parents to support the gifted educational needs of their children. While formal identification of giftedness is not required for enrollment based on federal and state charter law, we recognize that formal identification of giftedness is very helpful information for students when they transfer to new programs, as they work within our program on their strengths, and as parents and community members ask about AcademyACL’s program. We often receive inquiries concerning what percentage of our population has been formally identified. This information is also used by the state of Colorado in academic reports. As a school we use information concerning how students identified with giftedness are performing in relation to Colorado standards and this helps us to determine our progress towards our mission of gifted education.

Class Placement

We use multi-age classrooms and assign students to flexible skill groups for World of Math, and Art of Language classes, based on student-need.

We assign homeroom placement officially after the first three weeks of school. On the first day of school, students may be assigned to a homeroom teacher to start, and then may have homeroom placement adjusted. Often, but not always, students remain in the same homeroom for two years. Students move around in various classroom groupings within their division during the initial orientation period each year. Our goal is to arrange a placement for each child that can offer that child the greatest chance of success and support for that school year and the morning classes. The teaching staff takes multiple factors into consideration, including but not limited to the following, in no particular order:

- Intellectual, social, emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs
- Preferred learning styles
- Physical and social maturity
- Interactions with other students
- Social dynamics within particular groups of students
- Male/female ratios
- Leadership skills
- Student friendships

There is not a process for parents to request teachers. If there is an adjustment to be made, the Dean of Students will oversee that process. The Academy Director and the Dean of Students approve the classroom placements for the year.

Assessment

AcademyACL is responsible for accurately reporting the degree to which your child has mastered and surpassed the Colorado content standards. We communicate progress in a variety of ways.

Assessments and Tests: We use a variety of assessments to gauge students’ needs for goal setting. This includes **NWEA MAP** data three times per year, Fall, Winter, and Spring. Other assessments include Acadience (formerly DIBELS) reading, Aimsweb, a variety of reading inventories, and handwriting assessments.

Standardized Testing: AcademyACL also participates, as required, in state assessments, generally in the springtime.

This type of testing measures our students' progress against their age and grade peers at the state and national level. There is a four-fold purpose:

- Revealing success in academic content areas and students meeting their goals.
- Familiarizing students with standardized testing they will face throughout their schooling.
- Measurement tool to evaluate institutional effectiveness.
- Compliance with state and federal law and district requirements.

We believe in the viability and effectiveness of our curriculum, and we integrate test-taking techniques as natural connections to student work rather than spending intense time preparing for a particular standardized test.

State Testing: *District 11 has provided the following information:* The state assessment, now known as CMAS (formerly CSAP, TCAP, PARCC), provides valuable information to the Colorado Department of Education and District 11 and its schools regarding student achievement levels. Parents and students are asked to take this assessment seriously. The results are used to determine whether the District and its schools meet the achievement and growth criteria necessary to continue to be accredited. The results tell us what your student needs to be academically successful. The results determine the placement of the student in classes and interventions, tutoring or other supports and the state scores are a permanent part of a student's transcript.

Colorado tests for reading, writing, math, (3rd-8th grade), science (5th & 8th grade), and social studies (every 3 years, 4th and 7th grade) are called CMAS tests ([Colorado Measures of Academic Progress](#)). We will be advised if we will be taking science or social studies tests after January.

AcademyACL is required to maintain 95% participation in state assessments, per state and federal requirements, despite state law that allows for parents to opt individual students out for a specific need on a test. The individual student may face no penalties for an opt-out (no replacement curriculum provided). The failure of a district [or school] to assess all students can lead to sanctions against the district or the student's school.

Our most effective assessments, however, are **authentic in-class work**. We place more priority on students on quality work in class over time, and we de-stress standardized tests where possible; they are one data point at one time that can be useful, but not the whole story. Classroom assessments vary, with some being more formal, end-of-unit assessments, while others may be project-based or presentation-based to demonstrate a student's understanding of the content. Checklists and rubrics are used as both a guide during class as well as a way to score an assessment to demonstrate depth of understanding.

Giftedness Identification: The state of Colorado and Colorado Springs District 11 (D11) uses multiple measures including cognitive, academic, and observational data to create a body of evidence that may result in a Tier III identification [85% -94% Talent Pool / 95%+ Gifted] for formal identification of giftedness, including **CogAT** (Cognitive Abilities Test) & **NGAT** (Naglieri General Ability Test) as universal screening tools in grades 2 and 5, and KBIT (Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test) as a one-on-one screening tool for students at all levels as needed. Students are identified in the *Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)* model for *Tier II* and *Tier III* levels of support for advanced skills. Tier II skills are at an advanced level, and Tier III skills are at a gifted level.

The Academy Director and the Dean of Student Support receive information reports for all students. AcademyACL teachers may receive scores for their students on the CogAT when they are within the 80th percentile or higher range in at least one area. AcademyACL submits scores with a full body of evidence to District 11, and formal identification is made by D11 according to its most recent criteria and Colorado state guidelines. This process can take weeks or months, depending on the backlog of files at the district and the return rate of paperwork from parents and others who provide information on the body of evidence for the student.

Curriculum Overview

We view curriculum in two ways: Curriculum that is created by educators to support student learning and creates connections between ideas and curriculum which is purchased from publishers to act as a resource for learning. AcademyACL Curriculum is created by our teaching staff using curricular resources purchased from publishers. We design our Curriculum intentionally around a big idea to support connection-making and deep understanding. Our Curriculum is in constant revision and updating as it is taught, and our resources are reviewed regularly. When major curriculum changes occur, such as a change in math curriculum, our community is invited to review a variety of options before a final decision is made.

At the beginning of each school year, the first three weeks are spent in an orientation period in which students school-wide study topics on a particular theme. Past themes have included the 1950's and its technological developments, 150 years of Colorado's history, space exploration, and flight. The orientation period allows students to be assessed for placement into Art of Language and World of Math classes, as well as homebase classroom placements in their divisions. This time provides opportunities for teambuilding within divisions and the creation of social contracts within divisions. Fall assessments are given, which include NWEA MAP tests in reading, language, math, and science, DIBELS for K-3 students, and specific placement tests for incoming students in upper level classes. Encore classes hold introductory classes as well, giving students an overview of each encore class.

Lifeskills

We use a variety of resources during Lifeskills class to support the social-emotional and executive functioning needs of our students. Capturing Kids' Hearts offers a variety of lessons that focus on themes such as the use of social contracts, integrity, empathy, kindness, advocacy, and responsibility. Lessons from The Kindness Curriculum, Little Spot, SuperFlex, Bully Free curriculum, Second Step, and others specially designed by our staff are used as well, in collaboration with our support team. Special topics, such as use of Safe2Tell and allergy safety, are discussed as appropriate.

Art of Language

Students are initially grouped during our orientation period into Art of Language classes which span Kindergarten level through Advanced levels. All levels allow for flexibility throughout the year should students demonstrate that they are ready to move forward into the next level having mastered both reading comprehension and writing skills at a particular level. We group primarily by reading level, understanding that writing develops on a continuum, and it is not always in line with reading ability. Gifted students are often asynchronous in their growth, reading and language developing at a high level with writing skills developing at a slower rate.

Curriculum in Art of Language classes is focused on reading and discussing authentic literature and non-fiction and authentic writing opportunities that incorporate conferencing and sharing of student writing. We use resources from The College of William and Mary, LearnZillion, and a variety of teacher created units of instruction that were developed using the Integrated Curriculum Model as the basis for our Art of Language Curriculum. AcademyACL uses Michael Clay Thompson's four-level sentence analysis to teach grammar and sentence structure, and Michael Clay Thompson resources and Structured Word Inquiry to develop spelling and vocabulary skills. Neither of these resources rely on worksheets or rote memorization to develop skills, but rather incorporate discussion and inquiry to create "hooks" on which students can build connections.

While most Art of Language classes are single year courses, some classes are designed to be multi-year courses and it is intended that students spend more than one year in a class to develop solid skills before moving forward into the next level. It is not a reflection of deficiency, but rather the knowledge that particular students need additional time before moving on that has enabled us to develop these courses intentionally to meet the needs of our students.

World of Math

World of Math classes utilize Reveal Math resources as the basis for our work, with support from ALEKs as an additional online resource. World of Math levels range from Kindergarten to Algebra II and Geometry, with Independent Study courses through BYU available for mathematics courses beyond Geometry, supported by an upper level mathematics teacher in our building. We have also partnered with Coronado High School when schedules allow for concurrent enrollment.

Homework is more common in mathematics courses than any other class, and it is often assigned as needed based on how students demonstrate understanding of specific skills. For younger students, this may involve playing math games with family members, completing a short investigation with support, or finishing a specific number of problems. This homework may be sporadic, as it is intended to support specific mathematical concepts that your child is working on and it may be different than that which other students may be receiving.

When students are enrolled in upper-level mathematics classes (Levels 5 and up), they will have nightly homework with the expectation that they spend 30-40 minutes on the assigned work, stopping after the time is up, with an adult family member signing off that the **time** was spent working, whether the total number of problems available to do was completed or not.

It is critical at all levels of mathematics that students **show** each step of their thinking, not simply the answer, because **the**

process matters, not just the result.

ALEKs (an online platform) may also be assigned each week during class or as homework. ALEKs is not intended to be a way to “test out” of a level, but rather an additional way to practice specific skills at a student’s chosen pace in another format. A student may be working in one level of mathematics and in another level through ALEKs.

Scientific and Historical Inquiry

Each Division studies specific topics in Scientific and Historical Inquiry and rotate on a Year A and Year B schedule.

Scientific Inquiry units are developed around standards in Physical Science, Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science. Big Ideas include systems, patterns, change, and relationships and involve hands-on experimentation including physics, practice with documentation of experiments, observations, and communicating results orally and in writing.

Historical Inquiry progresses through the study of early civilizations such as Mesopotamia in Division I to the ancient civilizations of Egypt, China, Rome, and Greece in Division II. Division III studies the Medieval period and Colorado history (4th grade Colorado standards). Division IV studies the Renaissance and Reformation and Division V delves into American history, civics, economics, and geography.

All Divisions participate in exploration projects which allow students to study and present on topics of their own choosing, which are done at a level that is developmentally appropriate for each Division. Division I and Division II will typically begin the year with smaller group projects or projects supported at home, expanding to individual projects as the school year progresses, while Division III begins the work of small research projects early on. Division IV and V begin in-depth and longer term projects from the beginning of the school year, often incorporating expert voices as they research and present to larger groups on a more formal level.

All curriculum resources for Scientific and Historical Inquiry are developed based on what our students have illustrated they need and vary from year to year. We invite community speakers, develop field trip based learning opportunities, and invite experts to share their knowledge with our students as time and resources allow.

Encore

Encore Curriculum is developed and refined from year to year with feedback from students. Division I-III students participate in Theater, Art, Music Foundations, Spanish, and PE. Division IV and V students participate in Theater, Art, Spanish, PE, Technology, and Music, as well as choose an elective of one of the six. The focus of the elective is often determined in part by the interest of the group of students.

Standards-Based or Competency-Based Grading

In Alma, we use standards-based grading, which uses a 1-4 scale to show progress toward mastery. This allows for more precise evaluation of discrete skills, and eliminates points-based and assignment-based grading. Below is a basic rubric:

1 - Beginning	2 - Developing	3 - Mastery	4 - Advanced
The student needs significant support to demonstrate the skill or understanding of the content.	The student can demonstrate the skill or understanding of the content independently with less support or demonstrates it inconsistently.	The student demonstrates the skill or understanding of the content independently and consistently .	The student applies the skill or understanding of the content in new or innovative ways or in a variety of situations. The student <i>may</i> also be able to explain the skill or content to others at this level, but it is not required.

AcademyACL uses the concept of supporting standards toward mastery of “power” or overarching standards, which are what are shown on trimester learning reports. Power standards encompass all supporting standards for those skills at a particular level, e.g., the 276 individual supporting standards for one writing standard in a level four language arts class. In Alma, assignments illustrate mastery of supporting standards, and it is common for students to show mastery on specific supporting standards yet not receive a mastery level score on their learning report in the first or second trimester.

Alma is not used to communicate with individual teachers about assignments, but rather serves as an online gradebook.

Homework

Three fundamental differences distinguish the gifted from more typical learners: learning at faster rates; finding, solving, and acting on problems more readily; and manipulating abstract ideas/making connections more easily.
(VanTassel-Baska, J. and Stambaugh, T., 2006).

The AcademyACL homework philosophy has always been intended to reflect and address the needs of gifted students who require less basic repetition in their areas of giftedness. Typical learners usually need at least four to eight repetitions for an area of basic mastery, and learners who struggle in an area need more than eight repetitions, whereas *gifted learners often need only one to three repetitions to master a basic new concept*. Therefore homework in a gifted education program should be used to reinforce particular concepts on a differentiated and as-needed basis. Additionally, we believe that *homework* in our gifted education program, as *all* work, should be of high quality for intentional benefit and use at home rather than to fill a predetermined requirement of X amount of homework each night (e.g. 15 minutes of homework for 1st grade, 30 for 2nd grade, 45 for 3rd grade)

For higher level math classes (starting around levels 5 and 6 and pre-Algebra at level 7), including for mathematically gifted students, plan on regular, nightly math homework. This supplies routine practice that will be required in high school and beyond.

This homework philosophy also recognizes some students *need frequent repetition of homework in order to make academic progress*. If a student is struggling with a concept, s/he needs to spend extra time learning that concept, particularly in an academic environment that uses less repetition on a routine basis than typical programs. ***The reduction of repetition is one of the most distinct differences in a gifted education program***, and it is critical that families with students who are struggling in a particular area ensure that the student has enough time at home to practice that area so that s/he can continue to make academic progress with confidence. Additionally a few gifted students have short-term memory issues that mean they do need to practice initial information before it transfers to long-term memory where they are able to use it in advanced and gifted ways.

Homework will be meaningful and appropriate for an individual student's needs. It will address their current level of mastery and the depth of connection to the current unit of instruction. We expect our teachers to spend their time designing and implementing high-quality, differentiated lessons. We understand that students must experience rigorous, challenging coursework during the day and have quality family time at night. We also understand that some projects might require extended time and resources not easily available in the classroom, and that many students have additional hobbies and interests after school that develop other aspects of their lives. We encourage students to advocate for support with time management on long-term projects or assignments from multiple teachers.

Homework will be assigned...

- When students are not using their time efficiently in class according to appropriately designed expectations, they may receive classwork as homework, and the family will be notified.
- When students are working below grade level in **any** area or demonstrating a need for additional practice with particular skills, they will have specific work that addresses those areas in need of improvement.
- When students are enrolled in upper-level mathematics classes, they will have nightly homework with the expectation that they spend 30-40 minutes on the assigned work, stopping after the time is up, with an adult family member signing off that the **time** was spent working, whether the total number of problems available to do was completed or not. It is critical at all levels of mathematics that students show each step of their thinking, not simply the answer, because **the process matters, not just the result**.
- When students need support from home to access resources not available at school, such as library resources on a topic the student has chosen, materials for a specific project, etc.
- When students need **additional time** to complete an assignment or a project and no further time is available to do so at school. Arrangements will be made with the family.

- When students need practice with specific executive functioning skills and work at home will support that skill.

We expect all students to read at home continually. However, reading logs tend to be inappropriate and demotivating for gifted readers, and will only be used for specific students with a specific need to record personal reading time, or as a class goal for a limited period of time.

AcademyACL expects students to do their own work on assignments and projects. Each student should be able to explain in their own words the details of the completed work that is returned, and any completed project work should be developmentally appropriate. In pre-approved cases, a parent may “scribe” for a student by writing down the exact words of the student’s answers.

If a teacher determines that a student cannot explain the work independently to the teacher when asked, or it is determined that a student used AI to complete an assignment, the student will not receive credit for the assignment. We acknowledge that AI can be a very useful tool. However, it cannot replace the learning of specific skills or the understanding of content.

PLEASE LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF HOURS that students struggle through an assignment if something is not working or the student is having difficulty for whatever reason. We have many students who are perfectionists and they can spend way too much time on an assignment, against their own health and family well-being. ***Please communicate with teachers if your student seems to be spending an inordinate amount of time on one or more assignments~ and please ensure they get good rest each night.***

Please do not keep students up late at night because they missed an assignment. There are free times during the day and other opportunities for students to make up work, and ways to have them learn not to procrastinate the next time.

Please distinguish what is a ‘low risk’ and a ‘high risk’ assignment, and support your students with consequences accordingly. For example, forgetting to do one or two math assignments is one issue. Getting behind on three assignments is not good, and will be hard to catch up. Not completing a classroom test would be a serious issue that might still be able to be completed. The final draft due for a regional contest is a ‘high risk’, as is failing to complete a district or state test; deadlines are deadlines for those contests and tests.

The development of good work habits and time management skills is very important in the AcademyACL design. Students will be routinely expected to set and meet deadlines for work completion, and to adjust their pacing to schedules defined by teachers. By the time they reach high school, our goal is for students to be able to break down large projects into multi-step tasks and meet deadlines with excellence. They will learn how to study and review for tests. Division V teachers may use periodic, appropriate homework to extend assignments and/or to ensure that critical skills are mastered, and teachers will work with students so that they are aware of high school expectations and grading systems.

Students are REQUIRED to take home and return a designated assignment folder and/or planner every day. This planner will document class accomplishments and any homework that is assigned. Homework is designed to be meaningful, occasional, and differentiated according to individual learning goals. Different students might have different work provided. Students who are struggling to reach grade level requirements in any particular area are expected to complete routine homework assignments as additional required practice in order to reach proficiency.

- *If students have a specific plan accommodation to take a photo of their assignment list, an adult or helper at home will be expected to help them transfer that to their planner nightly. This process of seeing visually and at one’s fingertips what is due is a major factor for high school success.*
- *Student Planners are used to track learning objectives and assignment or project planning. This is where parents can have conversations about what students are learning in class. Because there is not a lot of homework you may see—THIS is what you should look at and use as conversation starters.*

All families are asked to make sure each student has a valid Pikes Peak Library card and access to a branch of the library system or Book Mobile on a frequent, regular basis.

We expect regular and continual research on a variety of topics and students will often need to bring that research into class to continue their work.

We recognize a greater need for communication from teachers as most of our students do not routinely bring home worksheets and “official” homework, so our teachers are continually looking for creative ways to keep you updated on the progress that students are making in class. When class or home assignments are not completed/returned on time,

teachers will enable students to experience the natural consequences of their choices. These may include having to complete this work during learning center time, game time, or 'free choice' time. This teaches your child to recognize the study habits and strategies most effective for him or her. Teachers work with parents to help children create a study and extended project structure. When needed, please ensure that your children have the time in the evening to follow through on a study plan and hold them accountable for its completion.

Adults should only provide *assistance on assignments* as needed: *the majority of the work should be completed by the child, in the child's own handwriting* unless there is a documented learning disability in the writing area with pre-arranged teacher's approval on the assignment and use of a scribe, and/or the assignment is a rough draft that the student completes in his/her own handwriting. Parents who check the student planner and communicate with their student's teacher find that their students make the most gains in this school.

Please see additional specifics as needed from classroom teachers for your child/ren's individual divisions, classes, and grade levels.

Learning Reports and Family Conferences

AcademyACL runs on a system of trimesters. Learning reports reflect progress toward mastery of power standards using the same 1-4 scale as used on assignments in Alma. At the end of the year, the learning report will denote whether a student has passed to the next level in Art of Language or World of Math, or if the student should repeat a level, or if they will be continuing in a level for another year for those courses which are denoted as multi-year courses. Learning reports contain a narrative section for each class, which includes information about particular areas of strength and areas of growth as well as general information about the class itself for that trimester.

Family conferences are held four times a year: in August before school begins, in the late fall for Art of Language classes, in the late winter for World of Math classes, and in the spring before the end of the school year for homebase classes. Families are always welcome to meet with teachers to discuss the progress of their students at any time and they have access to Alma to review individual assignments, assessments, and project results. Encore teachers also welcome conferences with families both during family conferences and at other times throughout the year to discuss student progress in their classes.

Acceleration & Retention Practices

AcademyACL uses District 11 guidelines and both acceleration scales and retention scales as individually appropriate when a student is considered either for a division-skip (rarely needed due to multi-age classrooms and flexible grouping) or retention for an additional school year in a particular division (needed when students are below level and require additional time to catch up in their academic progress).

Recommendations for retention or acceleration are made as part of the intervention process after Winter Break, for those interventions that are to take place the following school year. Families have access to Alma all year long, and should be discussing the progression of standards with teachers all year so that the appropriate interventions can be implemented, and so that recommendations to not proceed to the next level at the end of the year are not a surprise if students have not made sufficient progress.

Understand that full-grade level acceleration is a multi-step process involving the development of a robust body of evidence including work samples from all subject areas collected over a long period of time, cognitive and academic testing data which illustrates a significant need for more advanced challenge, as well as formal interviews with teachers and the family to determine whether full-grade level acceleration is appropriate. This process must begin a full academic year prior to the proposed acceleration year.

4. Attendance

School Hours and Calendar Summary

School hours are 8:00 a.m. through 3:10 p.m.

Children are welcomed into the classroom at 7:50 a.m. through the exterior doors on the east and north sides of the building.

We expect students to arrive by 7:50 or 7:55 so that they have a chance to orient themselves for instruction beginning at 8:00 a.m. **School begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. and dismisses at 3:10 p.m.**

Supervision of students outside school hours is the responsibility of parents and guardians. Students must be supervised by parents or guardians before 7:45 a.m. unless Before Care arrangements are made with our Before Care provider.

School begins in August, and typically ends before Memorial Day. We honor a Fall Break mid-October that aligns with the Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented conference held annually to allow for our staff to attend. We have a full week for Thanksgiving Break in November and roughly two weeks for Winter Break in December until just after New Year's in January. Spring Break typically falls in the last week of March. AcademyACL holds four family conference days per year, and attempts to minimize half days whenever possible. We try to align with Colorado Springs School District 11, but it is not always possible as our conferences and teacher work days are not in alignment with theirs.

Tardies, Absences, and Early Dismissals

Colorado requires students attend school with no more than 4 absences in a month or less than 10% of a marking period.

Students will:

- Attend school daily with no absences or tardiness
- Follow school policies for check-in and check-out
- Remain on campus during the school day
- Maintain an active schedule at school
- Monitor individual attendance and grade

Parents and Guardians will:

- Notify school of current contact information
- Ensure their student arrives on time daily (7:50am)
- Contact the school for attendance related issues within 48 hours of an absence
- Monitor their students' attendance and grades
- Provide proper documentation related to attendance (e.g. doctor's notes)
- Stress the importance of daily school attendance
- Arrange appointments for after school hours when possible

Families whose students are chronically absent or habitually truant/tardy may require a meeting with Administration and an attendance plan. Parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor their student's attendance by using Alma. Alma will track attendance, in addition to ongoing grade/scores and Learning Reports/report cards.

Colorado statutes and district policies continue to stress the importance of parent/guardian involvement and responsibility in ensuring their student's educational development. The Colorado Compulsory Attendance Law was created to make sure that students from the age of six to seventeen attend school. Recent changes to this law include steps to identify and monitor student attendance that is the result of chronic absenteeism and/or habitual truancy. These steps

include, but are not limited to: school and District attendance plans; referrals to community support agencies; and/or referrals to the court system. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make sure that the children under their care attend school on a regular basis.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

Temporary illness/quarantine
Mental, physical, or emotional disability
Removal from school for a disciplinary action
In the custody of law enforcement
Pursuit of a school-sponsored work-study program under appropriate supervision
Attending an approved home school program
Any other reason set forth in school policies or provided by law

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

Family visiting from out of town
Family trips during the school year
Oversleeping
Parent transportation issues (not weather related)
Staying home to watch younger siblings
Staying home to work on homework or projects
Parent choosing to keep student home
Birthday parties or family events
Doesn't feel like to coming to school

***Note that when a student is absent, they may not attend after school enrichment, activities, or events.**

When a student misses more than 10 percent of any marking period, whether excused or unexcused, they are **chronically absent** from school. When a student misses any part of a school day, with no excuse provided by the parent/guardian, the student is **truant**. Students who are “skipping” school or class regularly, or who are absent from school for reasons that do not meet the statutory criteria above, are truant from school. *Habitually truant* students are those students who have four or more days of unexcused absence from school in a month, or ten days of unexcused absence in one year. Chronic absenteeism and truancy affects a student’s achievement and may delay a student’s academic progress. Students and parents/guardians who willfully violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action at the school and through the judicial process.

If your child is going to be unexpectedly absent, please notify the office by 7:50 a.m. on that day *by voicemail or email* to office@academyacl.org **if you are seeking it to be excused for medical reasons** before or after the fact (required for documentation in your student’s file).

If a student is going to be absent for more than three days, parents are expected to send emails and/or arrange meetings with your student’s Core and Encore instructors to obtain work for the child to do while away from school. Records of absences and tardiness are kept and noted on grading period report cards, filed with District 11, and reported to the Colorado Department of Education.

If a student is absent *without written medical permission* for more than 15 days of the school year, he/she may be considered for retention for that year of school.

Chronic Absence and Truancy Procedures

A school may take the following steps, as applicable, when a student has unexcused absences, chronic absences that are excused *or* unexcused, or has become habitually truant:

- The school will develop an attendance contract and send a letter home to inform parent/guardian of attendance according to school, district, and state policy regarding unexcused absences.
- A truancy filing checklist will be maintained to document any communication, intervention or school involvement.
- The school will send an attendance *Request for Initial Notice* to Student Discipline Services by email when the student has reached the four unexcused days in one month’s time (30 days), or ten unexcused absences in one school year’s time (habitually truant).
- A copy of the *Notice of Noncompliance* is sent to the home of the parent or guardian if attendance has not improved by the compliance date on the initial notice.
- School personnel and parent/guardian will be notified of the initial advisement court date.
- School will continue to monitor students’ attendance. If there are any more occurring unexcused absences, or an incident occurs that the judge deems “contempt” on the part of the parent/guardian or student, contempt will be filed with the court.

If at any time during this process a student who has been identified as an attendance concern withdraws to home school, they must file that homeschool's educational curriculum with the District 11 homeschool office before they are able to drop from school.

All truancy records/cases will follow the student from school to school, even if they move out of our district.

Students may leave campus **with a parent/guardian** during the school day for the following reasons:

- For illness
- For a given behavioral concern, as approved or requested by the Academy Director
- A school-sponsored activity or field trip, if pre-approved by the Academy Director or designee
- For a pre-arranged absence approved by the Academy Director or designee (typically a dentist, doctor or therapist's appointment, but not for an excessive number of absences during a critical learning period)
- For lunch, if requested by the parent/guardian and approved by the Academy Director

PARENTS MUST COME TO THE OFFICE TO MEET THEIR CHILD. Students will not be sent out to the parking lot nor pulled from class early to "be ready." Students will not be released to walk home alone during the school day under any circumstances.

Tardiness

A very critical component of AcademyACL's program is the **AcademyACL Lifeskills© curriculum that begins promptly at 8:00 a.m.** Students participate in class meetings that establish the warm and supportive school culture that we strive to create, and teachers use lessons crafted very specifically to address social-emotional needs that students are facing daily. We prefer that students arrive dressed, fed, and ready to learn.

Please aim for 7:50 arrival so that students can be ready to learn by 8:00. Often, they need that time to settle in and get ready for the start of their day. We recognize that families are very busy and mornings can be hectic. Tardiness affects the entire class as well as the student. **Students who "dawdle" in the mornings** (and prevent the rest of the family from being on time) **are welcome to come in their pajamas to school!** Teachers can support you with ideas for 'natural consequences' so that kids and teachers can start the learning process on time, one sibling doesn't make the rest late, et cetera- just schedule a time to brainstorm with teachers for any chronic patterns you're seeking to break.

As of 8:00 a.m., class begins and teachers need to direct their full attention to the classroom. All students are expected to be in their assigned areas (meeting areas, work centers, etc. as defined by each teacher's expectations) with the necessary supplies *ready to begin* when the bell rings.

Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. are marked tardy. **After 8:00 a.m. students need to go to the office to sign in.** *Students with frequent tardies will be required to come with a parent/guardian to create an On-Time Plan to enable students to begin every day by 8:00 am.*

Walking/Biking to School

If a student LIVES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD and WALKS/BIKES/BOARDS without an adult TO SCHOOL, please notify the office so that if the student does not show up at school, without forewarning, the office can contact you to ensure there were no problems on the commute.

Before Care and After Care

Before- and After Care is currently provided by **Leading Edge**. This company has contracted with us to provide high-quality service to our students and families. Additional information from this company is available on their website (leadngedgekids.com) concerning their specific procedures for attendance, billing, and other specific policies.

Leading Edge is not allowed, per their current licensing, to accept 4 year olds (including those who have qualified through Early Access) unless they will turn five by October 15th. They can accept students through eighth grade (typically 13-14 years old). Should this be a constraint for your family, please reach out to the Academy Director.

Registration with Leading Edge is required if you anticipate needing After-Care on an on-going basis. If you are not here by 3:30 p.m., your student will be brought to the office by the classroom teacher. We will begin calling you and all emergency contacts we have on file at that time to arrange for your child to be picked up as soon as possible. Our front office staff does not provide child care. If we cannot reach anyone, the appropriate authorities, including D11 security or

CSPD, will be contacted for additional support.

Please provide full information to After Care personnel concerning any health concerns, dietary needs and restrictions, and allergies. SEPARATE medication, including epi-pens, is required for After Care; the office is locked and Leading Edge employees are without access.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR PAYMENT IS CURRENT with the After Care program. Failure to pay for contracted services creates difficulty for the Before/After Care program. They will handle collections of payment with you directly.

5. Health, Wellness & Safety

Illness

Colorado law requires that a child with a contagious disease be kept at home. Please keep your child at home if he/she is feeling ill with contagious symptoms, or pick him/her up promptly if your student becomes ill at school. If any doubt exists about a student's ability to complete the school day safely, the parents will be called, and the child will be sent home.

We want your students here every day, however, we do not want them to come to school ill, miserable, and infectious to others. Children will be sent home if these symptoms develop at school.

We follow the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control, and **the following symptoms of illnesses are not acceptable at school:**

1. **A fever of 100 degrees** (Note that a 99 degree temperature may include other symptoms below). People with fever must remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8°C]), signs of a fever *without* the use of fever-reducing medications, per CDC guidelines.
2. **Sore throat** or trouble swallowing
3. **A skin rash** not diagnosed by a doctor as non-contagious (documentation needed). This could include sores or infected skin patch (crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of skin).
4. **Pinkeye; red, watery and/or swollen eyes** not diagnosed by a doctor as non-contagious (documentation needed).
5. Frequent and/or unusual:
 - Coughing (including wet, productive coughing)
 - Sneezing
 - Running nose
6. **Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.** Students need to remain home until 24 hours after the last occurrence.
7. **Generalized malaise, lack of appetite, not feeling well.** This indicates the child might be in the most contagious phase at the beginning of an illness. *Please make sure children get eight to ten hours of sleep each night, drink plenty of fluids, and eat healthy meals in order to keep their immune systems strong!*

We encourage parents to report contagious diseases other than colds to the office so that we may inform families of fellow class members. AcademyACL will comply with additional guidelines for specific illnesses, will notify families as possible on frequent illnesses 'going around', and will update this policy as needed.

An absence is *excused* if the parent has contacted the school *with the symptoms above* **within 48 hours of the absence**. Please notify the office as soon as possible when a child will be absent and in advance if the absence is expected for an event other than illness. *This is particularly important if a student is going to be absent for more than one day.*

For specific questions, please email nurse@academyacl.org.

Medication

AcademyACL is legally allowed to administer medication during the school day *only* if the school has a medication consent form with signatures from the parent/guardian **AND** a person with prescriptive authority (doctor or nurse). A medication consent form is available in the office and on our website. We suggest that you keep a form in a convenient location in the event that your child may unexpectedly need medication while at school. If your child has severe allergies or asthma, a form must be completed and a care plan must be in place.

The medical form is for ANY (over the counter or prescriptive) medications that must be administered during school hours (INCLUDING MEDICATED LIP BALM, COUGH SYRUP, AND PAIN MEDICINE). If your child needs ongoing

medication, let your doctor know that it can be administered most easily during the lunch hour. Special arrangements for other medication administration times can be discussed with the office staff.

AcademyACL REQUIRES a specific medication form, available in the front office, to be signed by the doctor's office in order for medication to be administered. This particular form protects your child from the wrong dosage at the wrong time in the school setting.

PLEASE NOTE: In one instance, a parent provided medication *without* using the approved form from the doctor, and the office staff appropriately refused to give the medication until the proper documentation was in place. Upon review, the school nurse noted that *the child could have died* if the medication had been given as prescribed without the approved form, because the doctor was not aware of the school schedule and how frequently the medication would have been given as originally written. *These forms are here for the safety of your child and the other children in the building, and they are required.*

AcademyACL contracts with a school nurse who assumes liability for the administration of medication for any employee delegated by her to administer this medication. Our office staff members are required to take a medication administration class from the nurse and/or District 11. Only staff members who have taken the medical administration class and been designated by an insured nurse or doctor can administer medication. The nurse pays periodic visits to the school, checks immunization records, and is available as a resource for health information. Please contact the school office for this nurse's contact information if needed. As the nursing position is for a small amount of hours with us, the actual nurse who works with us may change from time to time.

Parents are expected to bring approved medications in the *original container/prescription bottle* to school and leave them with office personnel. For safety reasons no medications will be sent home with children. **If your child uses an inhaler to treat asthma, request a doctor's prescription to obtain an inhaler for school use.**

- **Under no circumstances should a child be permitted to carry any type of medications** (prescription or over-the-counter), such as Advil, Tylenol, cough drops, eye drops, medicated lip balm, or the like, with the exception of Epi-Pens for Life-threatening Allergies and/or inhalers that have been specifically cleared by a doctor for the student to carry and for our school nurse to acknowledge and review.
- Please note that any substance that limits the amount to be taken within a 24-hour period may be considered a 'medicine' that cannot be given at school without a doctor's consent. This includes some types of cough drops, lip balm, etc.

All medications **MUST** be in the original packaging and include the following information:

- Student name
- Prescribing doctor's name
- Name of the drug, dosage, and time the drug is to be administered
- Purpose of medication
- In original container
- Prescription date
- Date medication to be stopped

IF YOUR DIVISION II-V STUDENT TAKES MEDICATION regularly AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS, please ensure that you have full, signed information from the doctor **2 weeks prior** to an overnight field trip.

STUDENTS MAY NOT ATTEND A TRIP if there is not sufficient information present concerning the use and administration of the medication and if a trained AcademyACL staff member is not present to administer or oversee the administration of the medication.

Accidents & Injuries

Academy staff are trained in basic first aid. If a child is injured he/she will be sent to the office. Staff will care for minor scrapes and abrasions. For an injury requiring more than first aid, a parent or other designated adult indicated on the child's emergency card will be notified. 911 will be called in emergencies. **Please make sure** that your insurance information, medical information, and hospital of choice information are kept up-to-date.

Immunizations

Colorado law requires each student to present a Certificate of Immunization prior to attending the Academy (aside from waivers for religious and/or personal reasons). These forms are in the parent packet and are available from the office and online. There may be updates to this policy as legislation changes; please watch for those in Weekly Updates.

Allergies

Peanut-Free Campus

We are a Peanut-Free Campus, because we have several students with severe life-threatening allergies. **Please refrain from ANY peanut products.**

Allergy Documentation and Policy Updates

This policy is adjusted from year to year (and sometimes during the year) if/when we receive updates from doctors. Occasionally, we need to adapt our food policies so that items will not trigger any life-threatening allergic reactions. Therefore, **other substances may be limited or prohibited as well.**

Students at certain ages who deliberately expose a student with a Life-threatening Allergy to a known allergen can be subject to local, state, and federal law enforcement as applicable; please emphasize to students how serious this allergy is and how seriously precautions must be taken.

Mental Health Supports and Counseling

AcademyACL employs a mental health professional who is a valuable member of our support team. Her role is not as therapeutic in nature nor is she available for the student body or individual students as a counselor or as a psychologist on “on call” basis; rather she serves as support for students with documented IEP or Section 504 goals or needs as a part of their plan. She also works closely with teachers to develop Lifeskills lessons that address issues and concerns that they are encountering in the classroom, providing intervention ideas as a part of the MTSS team, providing emergency mental health support during crisis situations, and she is also working with families as a part of our resource center to address the social and emotional needs of gifted and twice-exceptional learners and their families.

Emergency Drills and Preparedness

AcademyACL and Colorado Springs School District 11 uses a Standard Response Protocol to safety drills and issues that comes from the *I Love U Guys* organization, found at <http://iloveuguys.org/srp.html>.

AcademyACL employees have been trained in Crisis Prevention procedures. These procedures include but are not limited to fire, tornado, harmful wildlife, and emergency lock-down and ‘shelter-in-place’ procedures. In the event of a crisis, parents will be notified in the most appropriate way possible, which may include a Flash Alert on local television and radio stations, a phone call, email, a notification sent home after the fact, and a Facebook or Instagram posting or via the D11 system.

In an Emergency situation, PLEASE DO NOT CALL your student’s cell phone first, unless you get a phone call from them or information from the school that it is okay to do so. Ringing phones could cause several safety issues at certain times.

PLEASE DO NOT DRIVE to the school if you hear of an emergency, until or unless you are asked to do so. We would never want to clog the streets from emergency workers, and often in true emergencies, there may be an offsite location at which to meet.

Crisis Response and Evacuation Sites

Monthly and each semester (depending on the type of drill), AcademyACL will conduct routine drills such as Hold, Secure, Lock Down, and Evacuate. These drills are in compliance with the State of Colorado Mandated “Crisis Plan” training procedures. The school conducts these drills to be sure that their students and staff are informed of the

appropriate measures to take in the event of any emergency situation. In the event of a local or national emergency, the safety and well-being of your child will be the school's primary concern. AcademyACL's Academy Director will communicate with District 11 Security and the president of the AcademyACL Board of Directors to monitor the situation and keep everyone in the AcademyACL community well-informed of actions to be taken.

- In the event of an attack or crisis event at a **distant location**, or in the event of **military action**, a sense of normalcy will be attempted at the school in the best interest of your children and their learning environment. However, parents/guardians may come to the school and pick up their children if they so desire. AcademyACL requires that parents follow the normal release procedure of signing the student out of the building by the parent/guardian.
- In the event of a **Local Emergency**, students will be sheltered at school whenever possible, until parents/guardians can safely arrive to pick up their child/ren.
- Outdoor activities may be cancelled, restricted to classroom areas, or moved to a sheltered location in the building as the situation requires or as security or emergency authorities direct.
- **Parents/Guardians arriving at school must check students out through the main office** to reduce anxiety for students who remain at school. Furthermore, in certain situations all doors accessing the building are required to be locked. This is for the security and protection of all students. Parents will have access via the main entrance to the office. In addition, **the school may require positive identification before allowing access into the building** and allowing the release of student/s to parental care (*this may occur during a safety drill as well*). AcademyACL appreciates your cooperation and understanding in this matter; it is the safety of your students that is our highest priority.
 - PARENTS/GUARDIANS IN THIS SITUATION **WILL** BE REQUIRED TO SHOW AN I.D. There may be support personnel who do not know you on sight, and they will require ID in order to allow your child/ren to leave with you.
- Parents are encouraged to develop a **Family Plan of Action** that includes instructions to students about the school's procedures and locations where and with whom the child may go if parents/guardians are not available. Procedures for transportation in case of **Early Release** should also be in place.
- In the event students are evacuated from the school property, all students will be directed to the following location in GOOD WEATHER: **PRIMARY LOCATION~ Parking Lot, St. Luke's Anglican Church, 2425 N. Chestnut**; BAD/COLD WEATHER/**ALTERNATE LOCATION~ Saints Constantine & Helen, Holy Theophany Orthodox Church, 2770 N. Chestnut St., 473-9238.**

6. Code of Conduct & Discipline

Bully-Free School

Students should report bullying and unsafe behavior immediately to school staff, the Academy Director, Dean of Students, online through safe2tell.org or by calling 1-877-542-SAFE.

AcademyACL staff implements a comprehensive, school-wide anti-bullying program from the very beginning in order to promote positive self-assertion and prevent bullying on all levels. The Colorado Department of Education defines “bullying” as follows:

According to HB 11-1254, "Bullying" means any written or verbal expression, or physical or electronic or gesture, or pattern thereof, that is intended to coerce, intimidate, or cause any physical, mental, or emotional harm to any student.

In contrast, "normal" peer conflicts differ from bullying situations in the following ways:

“Normal” Conflict:

The children involved are of equal power or are friends.

The conflict that occurs is occasional or often accidental.

*There is an equal emotional reaction to the conflict to both children and power or control is **not** being sought.*

*Having disagreements with peers is a normal developmental task of childhood; bullying, while it may be a common childhood experience, should not be tolerated. Trying to discern between the two may be difficult as a parent. It may be helpful to assess the situation closely – assessing if the action is **Repeated, Intentional, and involves a Power Imbalance.***

Tuesday, October 27, 2015, *RIP: DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN PEER CONFLICT AND BULLYING*, Posted by Karla Belzer – Parenting, as downloaded from https://web.extension.illinois.edu/hkmw/eb380/entry_10672/

The state statute regarding bullying and safe schools is available at the state website, for CRS 22-32-109.1 Safe Schools Act (Senate Bill 00-133) and amendments through August 2013. Please note that, “in creating and enforcing a school conduct and discipline code” this statute expects that each Board of Education “shall:

Impose proportionate disciplinary interventions and consequences, including but not limited to in-school suspensions, in response to student misconduct, which interventions and consequences are designed to reduce the number of expulsions, out-of-school suspensions, and referrals to law enforcement, except for such referrals to law enforcement as are required by state or federal law

Include plans for the appropriate use of prevention, intervention, restorative justice, peer mediation, counseling, or other approaches to address student misconduct, which approaches are designed to minimize student exposure to the criminal and juvenile justice system.”

As a K-8 elementary school program, we define bullying very carefully with students and we teach and reinforce a variety of conflict resolution skills. We have seen instances of unkind behavior that could become “bullying” if left unchecked.

We have also seen instances of students who irritate each other on a given day, and one of them knows that saying ‘I’m being bullied!’ can get adults’ attention very quickly.

We teach students that disagreements happen, and there are productive ways to work through those situations. Bullying, however, meets the criteria listed above.

AcademyACL’s comprehensive approach to anti-bullying includes:

- using Bully-Free program items from Dr. Allan Beane as a part of LifeSkills;
- empowering students with positive self-advocacy and assertiveness;
- promoting a school-wide culture that expects and reinforces kindness, and implements consequences for bullying;
- providing professional development for staff;
- Using Capturing Kids' Hearts, Little Spot, Second Step, The Kindness Curriculum, and other materials to support Lifeskills lessons (National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention);
- and the cultivation of a positive school climate that encourages mutual support and appreciation for everyone's unique strengths and intrinsic value to the AcademyACL community.

Please note with your students: all social cultures include times when people may disagree with each other, or may feel grumpy or rude and therefore act unkindly with each other on a given day. All communities have times where *social dominance* plays out- a sorting of personalities and who will be leaders and followers. These can change often during childhood. These are opportunities that teachers use to enable students to work through conflicts, their own emotions, and navigate a community that will have different opinions and moods all on a given day; this is different than bullying.

Classroom Expectations

Students are expected to complete all class work as assigned, and/or to discuss possible options for modification with the teacher in a positive way and a timely manner. They will be expected to maintain a positive attitude and cultivate 'good sportsmanship' at all times.

Teachers design curriculum and class work based on the unique needs of each student. Teachers may use a variety of instructional techniques including but not limited to whole-group mini-lessons and direct instruction, small group work, independent work, learning centers, hands-on demonstrations, et cetera. Teachers will frequently use games in both competitive and collaborative formats to provide opportunities to practice new and developing skills.

To the degree that students are able to work on their own, teachers will provide further differentiated learning assignments such as independent learning contracts. Students may work on assignments that are very different from other students, with appropriate times designated to conference with the teacher and receive guided instruction.

Self-Advocacy is a major skill that we seek to develop at all levels, from Division I students opening their own lunches to Division V students not getting along with a peer. Students are expected to learn to self-advocate positively if they need to vary their work and/or their learning environment such as using a stand-up desk or a rocking chair, or changing lighting conditions through the use of a lamp, etc, in order to complete their work. Teachers will work with each student to develop and implement a personal learning plan (PLP) of individual goals and will train students to use those goals on a daily basis in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Student behavior should be in alignment with the social contract developed by the class and the teacher, modeling respect, responsibility, safety, and kindness at all times. Behavior should not impact anyone's right to learn, following the general guidelines of "Do nothing that causes a problem for yourself or anyone else." If they are unable to maintain appropriate behavior expectations, a student may be asked to recover in another space with the intent that that recovery will allow them to reset and return to their classroom to continue working and learning, or they may be directed to work in another classroom or space altogether for a longer period of time, having lost the privilege of remaining in their classroom.

AcademyACL does not tolerate students choosing to speak disrespectfully to adults, and insubordination, which is the refusal to comply with a reasonable request, will result in loss of privileges and disciplinary action.

Communication Responsibilities Regarding Behavior Needs

One value that makes our AcademyACL community distinctive is our emphasis on communication with parents. Our primary concern is the educational, social-emotional and physical wellbeing of your child. Communication is a two-way street; we enjoy informing you about the status of your child's classwork and school development, and we invite you to communicate regularly with us. Complete and timely information concerning your child allows the Academy to address and resolve situations that inevitably arise during the school year. With pertinent information, we are better able to help your child with situations that may impact him/her academically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, or medically.

If you know that your child is experiencing a situation that may impact their behavior in the classroom, your first point of contact should be their classroom teachers. We know that situations happening at home, everything from not sleeping well or dietary changes to changes in medication or schedules impact children's behavior. Knowing that something else may be impacting your child helps us change our approach to their behavior, offering a variety of interventions or accommodations that may support your child through whatever is going on.

Teachers will also reach out if something seems "off" on a given day—when a child is acting in a way that doesn't seem typical. We come from a place of curiosity first.

It is your responsibility to inform your child's core instructors if your child is regularly seeing an occupational or speech therapist, clinical psychologist or any other medical professional whose services directly impact your child's behavior in the classroom. While this information is private and you may choose not to share it with your child's classroom teacher/s, *we do believe in a team approach and in providing consistent messages to your child.* Not knowing this information can prevent us from providing that consistent team approach. The Academy may request periodic meetings with these professionals in order to share information and ensure similar goals and methodologies; there is a HIPAA form available in the front office that you may sign to grant permission for such personnel to communicate with AcademyACL staff concerning the support systems needed for your student's success in the classroom. Members of the *MTSS team* may include the school's special education specialist and gifted/talented specialist as appropriate.

Outside therapists chosen by parents may not conduct any therapy on school grounds. They may, however, speak with the Academy Director to schedule observation times, with parent request, to observe their client in the classroom, given appropriate parameters are followed. There is AcademyACL Board Policy that regulates this practice.

Additionally if your child takes medication, and if there is **any** change in medication, or if the child, for any reason, did not get his or her medication on any given day, *please let the teacher/s know so that we may take any change in behavior into account and provide possible accommodations!* We must have the correct doctor's note on file.

Capturing Kids' Hearts

Our staff follows a model called "Capturing Kids' Hearts," (www.ckh.org) and we appreciate the chance to enable students to work together as a team to become 'self-managing' learners. Students are taught ways to affirm each other, remind each other to meet goals, and to self-advocate positively. Each classroom creates a social contract that supports a self-managing learning environment, empowering students to call each other out for making good choices and enabling others to act appropriately.

Whenever a student is off-task, the following questions will be used, schoolwide, and we welcome parents to try them out at home in calm, positive tones as well:

1. What are you doing?
2. What are you supposed to be doing? (what should you be doing?)
3. Are you doing that?
4. What are you going to do about that?

If the student does not fix the problem and these questions have to be asked again, this fifth question is added: "What happens if I have to ask you these questions again?" to which the student must be able to supply the consequences that will occur.

As a school of choice focused on enabling advanced learning and creative abilities to continue to grow and grow, our learning environment requires students to choose to learn with us and reach challenging goals for themselves. We know that everyone has bad days occasionally, and we choose to support each other when that occurs. Disruptions of others' ability to learn in the classroom, however, is not acceptable, and parents will be called as necessary to pick up their children from school if a student is disrupting the classroom and does not choose to redirect the behavior and demonstrate readiness to learn.

Discipline Philosophy

Because we believe that children are learners who deserve clear, consistent boundaries and that misbehavior presents unique learning opportunities for further growth, the following Love & Logic principles (Fay, 2005) are used to guide disciplinary decisions across the school:

- Attempts are made to maintain the dignity and self-respect of student and teacher.
- Students will be guided and expected to solve their problems, or ones they create, without creating problems for anyone else.
- Students will be given the opportunities to make decisions and live with the consequences.
- Misbehavior will be handled with natural or logical consequences whenever possible.
- Misbehavior will be viewed as an opportunity for individual problem solving and preparation for the real world as opposed to personal attack on school or staff.
- Students are encouraged to request a “due process” conversation whenever consequences appear unfair, by quietly asking, “Can I talk with you about this later?” to the teacher/staff member.
- School problems will be handled by school personnel. Criminal activity will be referred to the proper authorities and is outside of school control.

All staff have the same high expectations for kindness, safety, responsibility and mutual respect, and all staff support the intent to “set students up for success.” Staff members also provide students with a warning, where possible or appropriate, and opportunity to redirect behavior that violates basic rules and procedures (without causing serious safety issues) before instituting more formal procedures. More formal procedures include specific levels of intervention as needed.

Recovery

Recovery is not intended as a punishment; it is an opportunity to reset, reflect, and gather oneself to be able to return to class. Each teacher has his/her own recovery area where students can regain self-control and reflect upon necessary behavioral adjustments. Additional recovery areas may be used in another teacher’s classroom and in the office as appropriate. Students need to regain behavioral control and rejoin the learning process as quickly and appropriately as possible. Multiple recovery opportunities may result in simply being provided an alternative workspace altogether.

Minor Discipline Incidents

“Minor” discipline infractions are those behaviors that disrupt the learning environment but do not present a material and substantial disruption to the school and/or do not harm the safety or welfare of pupils and/or staff. Appropriate disciplinary action, including prevention and intervention strategies, will be addressed by classroom teachers. Further disciplinary action for repeated minor discipline infractions, including suspension by the Academy Director (or his/her designee), shall be optional.

Material and Substantial Discipline Incidents

“Material and substantial” discipline infractions create a substantial disruption to the school day and/or threaten the welfare and/or safety of other pupils or school personnel. Behaviors that are material and substantial are presumed to be initiated, willful, and overt on the part of the student. Material and substantial behavior infractions are grounds for suspension by the Academy Director (or his/her designee) in accordance with C.R.S. 22-33-106. Further disciplinary action, including expulsion by the Superintendent (or his/her designee(s)) shall be optional.

Participation in Extracurricular and School Sponsored Activities

Participation in school sponsored events and extracurricular activities is a privilege. Students who participate in these must follow all applicable laws, District 11 Board policies, and school-based behavior guidelines. Forfeiture of extracurricular activities and participation in school sponsored events is a possible consequence for inappropriate behavior. Any student who commits a discipline infraction may lose the ability to participate in school-sponsored events or extracurricular activities for up to one year. Furthermore, any student who is suspended or expelled from school will forfeit participation in extracurricular or school-sponsored events throughout the suspension or expulsion period, including year-end commencement exercises.

State and District Statutes

AcademyACL complies with Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-33-106, May, 2008 rules (or the most recent version), for suspension, expulsion and denial of admission procedures as well as applicable and required District 11 policies.

AcademyACL Policies and links to D11 Policies can be found at

<https://www.academyacl.org/board-of-directors-and-financial-transparency>.

Dress Code

Dress Code at AcademyACL follows the basic principle that each student is welcome to wear items that do not create a problem for him/herself or someone else. We seek to ensure that a challenging and supportive learning environment is in place at all times.

We do not use uniforms at AcademyACL. We have many students who use their clothing to demonstrate their creativity, and we welcome that spirit of adventure even if it sometimes involves interesting color choices or costume designs!

There are all kinds of opinions about dress codes, varying nationally and regionally and reflecting a variety of situations. Our stance is that students will have a code of dress in their adult lives, for a variety of situations, and that they should learn to find out and follow what rules and expectations are in place for each social situation they are attending. In our school setting we support a wide range of children's ages and want them to be comfortable and able to move rapidly and with physicality as appropriate for childhood. Generally, we expect our students and families to adhere to the following guidelines:

We expect all students to move rapidly and with physicality as appropriate for childhood. Clothing should allow a full range of movement, while consistently preserving coverage. All private areas, including midriffs and bellies, should be covered at all times.

Shorts should be worn beneath skirts, to allow children to run, tumble, etc.

Shorts shall be a reasonable length, allowing for modest coverage.

Any wording and images on clothing or accessories should support a positive, appropriate, and welcoming learning environment for all of our students.

All students need to wear tennis shoes/sneakers on a daily basis to allow a full range of safe exercise (no flip-flops, slip-on shower shoes/sandals, or 'heelie' rolling sneakers).

Clothing should not be ripped or torn in any way that undergarments can be seen underneath.

Clothing should be easy to wash, allowing students to paint, go outside, etc. We are not responsible for stained clothing.

These dress code principles extend to hats, jewelry, roller backpacks, other accessories, and 'fidgets.' If an item can be worn and/or used without injuring or distracting oneself or others, it falls within the acceptable parameters. If an item begins to cause a problem that a child does not solve on his/her own initiative in a helpful way, the child will be asked to leave it at home.

The Academy Director may approve dress code exceptions in support of school activities and/or events. Medically approved apparel and/or devices will also be allowed.

We go OUTSIDE as much as we can. In the *grass*. And we encourage students to build their vestibular systems and their core strength by *rolling up and down hills*. Please DO NOT SEND students in clothing where you're worried about grass or dirt stains.

We paint, and color, a lot. Please do not send students in clothing where you're worried about paint and coloring stains. We attempt to use smocks effectively, but kids and color love each other.

The one exception to this rule is that **colored, thin "jelly" bracelets are not allowed**. These particular bracelets are not to be worn or used on campus, as nationally they have been used with very inappropriate discussions in other schools (particularly middle and high schools) and we do not accept the instigation of those discussions on our K-8 campus.

HEAT Note: The beginning and end of the school year can be HOT. Please send the filled water bottle DAILY, and apply hypoallergenic sunscreen at home. Teachers are not allowed to apply sunscreen. Teachers are also not allowed to help students with bathroom needs (as can occur with young children), so please send them with easy-access clothing such as elastic waistbands.

For other items that can create a distraction or nuisance, such as Silly Bandz and Pokemon cards, we expect

students to learn how to make good decisions. If an individual student continues to be distracted by an item without making a choice on his or her own, that student will not be allowed to bring that item on campus and it will be confiscated for a parent to collect later.

We expect our students to continually develop self-awareness for their job at school- we want them here *to learn in a positive environment*, and not to create distractions from that learning task and environment. Different items may distract each of them, and we want them to recognize their individual needs and make good decisions based on those needs. For this reason, we do not use school-wide bans on a variety of items that are not safety concerns, because this would take away the thoughtful and sometimes difficult decision-making process that children should learn to use.

We recognize that some children find it helpful to use hats to reduce the glare on a page as they read. Any hats worn must be used respectfully and positively at all times without creating distraction- or zoning out- from the learning tasks at hand. *Hats are especially welcome for sun protection during outside activities.*

We also recognize that occasionally, students are late getting ready in the morning and may even come in their pajamas as parents try to reinforce the child's need to take responsibility for using morning time wisely. As long as clothing covers and does not cause a problem for oneself or someone else, this practice is in compliance with our dress code policy. We would prefer that students arrive at school by 7:50 a.m. to begin calmly at 8 a.m. ready to learn... as opposed to frantic, stressed, late... and/or perfectly well-dressed.

Our staff's dress code policy is outlined in our staff manual. We expect AcademyACL staff to maintain a professional appearance that also provides freedom of movement to work *actively* with students in a hands-on learning environment. This may include frequent use of athletic pants, tennis shoes, and paint smocks worn by staff members as well.

Specific dress requirements will be noted on field trip permission forms, and modifications or updates to the Student Dress Policy will be available on our website. ***Please remember the unpredictability of Colorado weather. Please send students with appropriate layers of warmth, and you may consider applying sunscreen in the morning as well.***

If you have financial difficulty in providing school clothing, shoes, or winter gear, *please email office@academyacl.org*. We can confidentially locate and access resources to help wherever possible!

COLD Note:

Colorado temperatures change rapidly. We can seemingly see four seasons in one day! Wind also changes conditions quickly as well. Our building has many different zones, and the new 2020-21 building creates new air pockets that also change with the sunlight, wind, feeling of warmth or not, et cetera based on location. Please understand that we do not have the capacity to provide individual indoor recess opportunities for students who prefer to remain indoors or who have chosen not to bring appropriate clothing for the weather. Some choose to leave the house without coats or appropriate footwear for the weather, expecting to be allowed to stay inside or play in the gym. All staff members have fun and fitness duty daily—we are all outside or all inside depending on the weather, so encourage your student to dress accordingly.

District 11 has used the following guidelines concerning students safety during inclement weather conditions:

- Students will be allowed entry into the building ten minutes before classes convene when outside temperature at the school site is less than 15 degrees/F and/or conditions of precipitation are present. Wind currents must also be considered under other conditions.
- With temperatures less than 15 degrees/F and/or conditions of precipitation present, elementary students will be permitted to remain indoors during recess and lunch periods. Wind currents must also be considered under other conditions.
- Parental requests for students to remain indoors for health reasons during school hours will be honored. We've had students with asthma, a cast, and other situations need to use this regardless of a specific number on a temperature gauge.
- The principal is responsible for prudent decision making for conditions not presented in these guidelines.

Typically, we take the "real feel" temperature into account as well, as sunshine often creates a warmer temperature and overcast or windy conditions may make it seem colder.

Electronics - Personal Devices

We follow [D11's personal electronic device policy](#) and require that all cell phones, smart watches, and other personal devices be powered off and kept in backpacks during the school day. Students who refuse to comply will have their device confiscated and kept in the office for a parent or guardian to retrieve at the end of the day. Continued noncompliance with this will result in further disciplinary actions. Students who require access to personal devices for medical needs as outlined in an individual medical care plan, Section 504 plan, or IEP are exempt from this policy.

Students are welcome to use classroom phones or telephones in the front office to contact their families if needed. If a student feels ill, they will be sent to the office to have a member of the office staff call home on their behalf. Should you need to reach your student, you may call the front office and they can relay any necessary message.

All parents are asked to monitor the contents of their students' phones and other devices (websites, text messages, social media, etc.) frequently. We ask that all parents monitor their student's internet usage and accessibility when offsite. Behavior that occurs off-site but then affects on-site learning can also be grounds for disciplinary action, such as bullying over social media, or sharing inappropriate content that makes its way back to affect the school's learning environment. It is your responsibility to monitor your child's online activity while they are at home **and intervene**, removing access to apps, games, websites, and devices when you see that there is unhealthy behavior occurring. AcademyACL and its staff cannot monitor your child's online activities when they are not in school nor assign home-based consequences for their online behavior when they are at home.

Students are expected to listen to music that their own parents/guardians have approved, not share music. Staff members will not take the time to review and monitor personal music choices that no one else can hear; we ask parents to do so.

7. School Operations & Logistics

Drop-off Procedures

Students may not be dropped off before 7:45, and should arrive well before LifeSkills begins at 8:00.

Walk-Up: Parents may park in the neighborhood and walk students to the front of the building. Division I families may walk their students to the Division I playground gate no earlier than 7:45. Siblings may not be brought to the Division I play area.

Kiss & Go: Parents may enter the parking lot after turning right from Southbound Chestnut and right again from Westbound Van Buren. **No left turns into the parking lot.** Parents may then drive through the northbound lane and release students from the passenger side door. Students may not be released from vehicles until the vehicle is in the front of the south doors and an attendant signals the student can be released. The driver may NOT exit the vehicle to assist. Students will enter through the south doors and walk directly to their classroom from the interior hallway.

The vehicle must exit the line, then turn RIGHT onto Van Buren and continue LEFT onto 7th Street or straight on to Centennial.

Southbound Chestnut: Students may be released at any time after 7:45 from the passenger side of the vehicle only. There is no parking on Chestnut and drivers must remain with the vehicle at all times. There is no attendant to release your student or walk them to their door. Drivers will continue on southbound Chestnut to either turn left onto a side street to go around the block to meet northbound Fillmore or continue southbound. There are no U-turns on Chestnut.

Melany: Students may be released from their vehicles to walk across the park to their doors no earlier than 7:45. There are no attendants in this area. There are no U-turns on Melany and drivers must continue in the direction they drove in.

Dismissal and Pick-Up Procedures

Dismissal begins at 3:10pm. Students are kept in their classrooms until their family number appears on a spreadsheet projected in their classroom. Older students will go to younger sibling's classrooms to dismiss with them unless other arrangements have been made. Students attending After Care will be dismissed from classrooms by the teacher.

Division I parents may not pick up their students from the Division I playground. Division I families must use Kiss & Go or pick up their students from the Language Lab.

Language Lab: Adults walking up to pick up students may go to the Language Lab exterior door to present their family number and wait for their student to be dismissed to the lab.

Kiss & Go: Cars waiting at Kiss & Go must present their family number in either a front or side window for it to be entered by an attending staff member. Students dismissed to Kiss and Go (*typically DI and DII families) will exit the building through the southern exterior doors and will wait until their car is one of the first three in line before being allowed to enter the vehicle. They may not go through the lot to their waiting vehicle. Vehicles exiting Kiss and Go will turn RIGHT onto Van Buren, and then left onto 7th to meet Chestnut or continue on to meet Centennial.

Chestnut: Cars waiting on Southbound Chestnut must present their family number in either a front or side window for it to be entered by an attending staff member. Students dismissed to Chestnut (typically DIII-DV families) will exit the building through their exterior door or the front exterior doors to their waiting vehicle at any point in line. Waiting vehicles must pull up as vehicles exit the line. Drivers leaving the line must continue to the next street to turn left and go around the block or continue straight through on Chestnut. **No U-turns are allowed.** There is no parking on the east side (northbound lane) of Chestnut.

Walkers: Students may be listed as "walkers" and meet their rides on Melany where there are no attendants. Those exiting on Melany may turn left onto Chestnut to continue north to Fillmore or right onto Chestnut to continue straight through on Chestnut. No U-turns are allowed to go west on Melany.

It is expected that drivers will maintain respectful and appropriate driving behavior at all times, and those walking will

use crosswalks whether they are attended or not.

Emergency Contacts & Pick-Up

We require that parents notify the office prior to taking your child from campus other than regularly-scheduled dismissal times.

Anyone (including nannies, babysitters, or family members) picking up your child must have your family number and should be listed on your family's approved pick-up list. If they do not, they will be directed to appear in person in the office and you will be contacted to give permission to release your child to that individual. Please notify the office in advance to add someone to the approved pick-up list.

Unless we are notified of any changes, AcademyACL will not allow a student to leave campus with any person other than those listed in Alma as authorized to pick up your child in an emergency. Please ensure that the office has up to date information. To add additional security, families may provide a small photograph 'face shot' of each person authorized to pick up your student(s) for your students' file, particularly if there are any areas of concern such as restraining orders or custody disputes. Please provide documentation of any such restraining orders or disputes to the front office and notify your student's teacher as well, so that we can proactively monitor any such situations.

If your child will be going home with a friend, please notify the classroom teachers of both children by email, copying the other parent and the front office to ensure that all likely parties are aware of this change.

Neighboring Community

AcademyACL is proud to be part of our neighborhood. We are committed to honoring the safety of the families who live here and the children walking across the street to get to school. **PLEASE obey the speed limit by driving 20 to 25 mph or less as you enter and leave the premises; never any faster!** Also, please **do not block driveways.**

Whenever possible, please record the license plates of speeding drivers and report them to the Colorado Springs Police Department. Also, **avoid the local alleys**; do not use them as through-streets or parking areas. These alleys are currently in poor condition through erosion and the city is not addressing them due to lack of funds; neighbors would like to prevent further erosion as much as possible.

In Colorado, dial *277 to report aggressive driving, or DRIVE SMART COLORADO at 719-444-7534.

Transportation/Bus Service

AcademyACL does not provide transportation via bus to or from school. Transportation to and from the school on time is the responsibility of each family. AcademyACL will facilitate information concerning the use of carpools between families but will not set up carpools. Please note that it is up to families to determine if a carpooling solution will work for them as a viable and safe option. Because the neighborhood was designed around a neighborhood school model, it is not designed for large amounts of traffic. City traffic coordinators recommend carpools as much as possible. Families are welcome to notify AcademyACL if they have difficulty arranging transportation to see if any suitable solutions can be found.

From the city of Colorado Springs: Carpools "help reduce congestion at school drop-off and pick-up areas, save time and money and help improve air quality by reducing the number of vehicles on the roadways." For more information visit [Carpool | City of Colorado Springs](#) online. If schoolpool does not turn up a match, the city bus may be a good option; bus fare for youth 18 and under is only .85 cents per ride (as of the last time we noted the fee).

Meals and Nutrition

Snacks and Waterbottles

Please send with each student (K-8) a **healthy, non-messy mid-morning snack**; AND a **filled, non-spill water bottle** of at least 12 ounces. An afternoon snack may be brought if required for individual health needs.

Lunch Service

AcademyACL has contracted with Colorado Springs School District 11 to use its food service program, and we

support the development of its Good Foods Project. The following information is provided directly from District 11:

The National School Lunch Program went through a reauthorization process which drastically changed the face of school meals. You will notice the new Federal requirements at service time. Students must now take a full ½ cup of combined fruit and vegetables when they come through the point of service. This means that students cannot come through the line without this food on their tray and will be sent back to the salad bar for more food when not compliant. We are working on signs and messages to help teach our students.

No Meal Charging – Alternate Meals PROVISION

District 11 is providing meals to all children regardless of income for the current school year.

PLEASE SEE THE DISTRICT 11 WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RECENT INFORMATION: [Healthy School Meals for All - Colorado Springs Schools District 11](#)

Lunchtime in Classrooms

Students eat IN the classroom, not in a noisy lunchroom. Students buying hot lunch go to pick up their lunch from the lunch line. Students packing their lunch remain in their homeroom. Students, after Orientation time, may set up lunch appointments with students in other classrooms, at teachers' discretion. Lunches can be provided from home or through the school lunch program.

Some classrooms may have a refrigerator and a microwave oven available. Students who forget their lunches will make a phone call to parents, and District 11's food service personnel may have solutions available. **Please refrain from sending sugary snacks and juices in your student's lunch.** Research shows that these have a negative impact on student achievement and a large part of the AcademyACL program supports healthy habits in students. If students do bring sugary items, they will be requested to eat them either at the very end of the meal, or at the end of the day as they are leaving to go home, at the discretion of the teacher.

Peanut-Free Campus

We are a Peanut-Free Campus, because we have several students with severe life-threatening allergies. **Please refrain from ANY peanut products.** Occasionally, we need to adapt our food policies so that items will not trigger any life-threatening allergic reactions. Therefore, **other substances may be limited or prohibited as well.**

Students at certain ages who deliberately expose a student with a Life-threatening Allergy to a known allergen can be subject to local, state, and federal law enforcement as applicable; please emphasize to students how serious this allergy is and how seriously precautions must be taken.

Dietary Accommodations

We recognize that additional students have a range of other health needs, including diabetic and/or hypoglycemic needs that require frequent high protein snacks, and/or other unique circumstances that we will need to consider. Please provide information about any unique needs to your child's classroom teacher and the office staff, and provide a *signed note from your doctor* that can be copied for your student's file and provided to the District 11 Food Service personnel. Without this note, Food Service personnel will not provide modifications to the school meal.

No Food Sharing

There is a NO FOOD SHARING POLICY among students. If you would like to celebrate a birthday for your student, please send a non-edible item such as pencils or stickers. *Other than a pre-approved potluck celebration, students are to adhere to the no food sharing policy.*

At class or school-wide potluck events, all ingredients should be labeled, to allow students to monitor for allergens.

Lost and Found

Our lost and found is a wardrobe, "Narnia," near the front office. We do not monitor the lost and found, nor are we responsible for any missing items. If anything of obvious monetary value is found, we ask for it to be turned into the office. Students who bring valuable items to school, leaving them in the open areas of the building (e.g. on top of

cubbies, on desk tops, or out on the playground) risk them ending up in the lost and found or going missing altogether should they be found and not turned in. We ask that students either refrain from bringing items of value to school at all or zipping them into their backpacks when not actively using them. Further, we ask that parents and guardians mark jackets, sweaters, and other personal items with their students name so that they can be returned to the student before items are set out to be claimed by families during community events such as conferences or school-wide events.

Field Trip Guidelines

Field trips are an important part of the learning process at AcademyACL. They are designed as meaningful, educational learning experiences related directly to immediate studies. Teachers will notify parents of upcoming field trips and any associated fees, and will strive to keep these fees as low as possible. Parents are encouraged to contact the core teachers if they have particular connections to a special field trip opportunity for any classroom. Additionally, teachers may bring special programs and speakers into the classroom.

These types of Field Trips are integral to our curriculum and we ask that whenever possible, every student attend each trip. However, students who have lost the opportunity to attend a particular trip, or do not have parental/guardian approval to attend, will have a replacement curriculum provided in an alternate classroom.

Chaperones

Parent Volunteers serving as chaperones are required to be calm, organized people who can sustain energy and kind words to students for long periods, help students and adults solve problems effectively and positively, and maintain schedules throughout the time scheduled. Chaperones may not get into arguments with other adults, or with kids. Chaperones may not address behavior with students inappropriately, against school practices and policies.

Chaperones may not bring non-students on the field trip, regardless of age, without a specific academic reason approved by the Academy Director. Babies and toddlers may not attend. These are academic class lessons in an environment outside the teachers' routines and therefore, their time should not be complicated by the logistics of supporting non-students.

Chaperones will often be assigned to a learning group that might not include their child. This will be at the discretion of the staff planning the trip.

All teachers retain the right to designate the amount and selection of volunteers/chaperones on any given trip. Many field trip locations also limit the number of adults/chaperones who are allowed to attend in addition to requiring a set student/adult ratio be followed. If there are more perspective chaperones than are needed, the following skills be prioritized):

- Current, full background check on file with AcademyACL
- Medical/CPR trained and documented
- Specialized support for emergency health needs of a child
- Formal educational experience with elementary children
- Ability to maintain a calm, focused, organized, small group of students for extended periods of time
- Ability to maintain own calm, focused stamina throughout a long period with students
- Willingness to be assigned to a group that might not include their child
- No previous problem issues on a trip or in interactions with students
- Ability to follow teachers' directions consistently
- Ability to maintain appropriate behavior and boundaries with students
- Other criteria which may or may not be unique to this trip

Overnight Trips/Lock-ins

Instructors may plan overnight trips and/or lock-ins for older student groups. **Adults who wish to attend any overnight trips as chaperones MUST have a full background check** on file with District 11.

Transportation

In order to provide these field trips, AcademyACL needs to secure appropriate and safe transportation. Parents always have the option of transporting their children to the location. If group transportation is arranged, the following rules will

apply:

- The driver will control the behavior in the van/vehicle. Students are allowed to ride in the van/vehicle only if they follow the driver's instructions. Riding in these vehicles is a privilege.
- The driver--not students--will determine where students sit.
- Operating vehicles requires the driver to be able to concentrate on the road. Loud talking that may disrupt the driver is prohibited. The driver can require a student not to talk, if necessary.
- Hands should be kept to oneself at all times.
- Students may not eat or drink in the bus/vehicle without permission of the driver.
- At the end of a field trip, students are to remain with their group until they are instructed to board the van/vehicle. The driver can suspend a student from riding in a bus/particular vehicle for infractions of the rules. The latest requirements for state law will be followed regarding car seats.

8. Special Programs & Services

Special Education and Section 504

AcademyACL's Special Education and Section 504 Plans are handled by members of our Support Team. Johanna Butt (johannabutt@academyacl.org) is our Special Education Teacher, and she is always happy to meet with families to discuss the process for evaluation for Special Education. Section 504 Plans are handled by Mrs. Jennifer Tarbox, our Dean of Students. She can be reached by email at jennifertarbox@academyacl.org.

Gifted and Talented

We are an all day, every day gifted program. As such, we do not have pull out services for gifted and talented interventions. We provide universal screening in the late winter for second and fifth grade students who have not already been formally identified. We also submit students for talent identification in non-academic areas such as visual art, performing arts, and music annually in collaboration with Colorado Springs District 11's Gifted and Talented Department. Incoming students have the opportunity to receive screening for Tier III gifted needs upon submitting a request for enrollment. For more information about the identification process, contact Mrs. Jennifer Tarbox, our Dean of Students at jennifertarbox@academyacl.org.

English Language Development (ELD/ESL)

We do not provide pull out services for English Language Development, rather we provide a sheltered instruction model (SIOP). We can offer screening for students who are identified through a questionnaire as a part of their request for enrollment.

Academic and Behavioral Intervention & Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is like a safety net of support that school provides for every student. It means constantly checking how each student learns and behaves. It begins with high-quality teaching for everyone in the classroom (Tier 1). If a student needs a little extra help, or intervention with a particular skill or set of skills, targeted support in a small group may be provided (Tier 2). For a few students needing more intense, individualized help, there is a specialized level of support (Tier 3). Progress is constantly monitored, and support is adjusted as needed. Families are encouraged to be involved in this process by talking with their child's teacher and attending meetings to discuss their progress.

After School Enrichment Classes

Enrichment classes that are provided onsite from third-party vendors execute a rental agreement with Colorado Springs School District 11 to use the facility. Vendors who wish to provide such classes must show proof of insurance, verify that they have a background check process, and pay a rental fee to the District (of which AcademyACL receives a portion).

Enrichment classes offered by AcademyACL employees to students are approved by the Academy Director and may be offered by AcademyACL without needing a separate vendor agreement, as part of the school's vision and mission. These classes change as the needs and interests of our community change.

Contact the front office for additional information and any after-school program.

FASST (Family and Student Support Team)

Students who are struggling with a particular family situation such as divorce, death/bereavement, illness, loss of job, homelessness, etc. may be referred to AcademyACL's *Family And Student Support Team (FASST)*. Families who have additional needs during stressful situations, such as when a parent is deployed with the military or faces critical illness, may also be referred to FASST so that their student(s) can be monitored for additional needs, and suggestions can be developed for the rest of the AcademyACL community to provide further support as appropriate. As appropriate, FASST members may schedule a meeting with the family to discuss concerns.

9. Family Involvement

Events and Community Building

AcademyACL will schedule school events designed to create a supportive school community and provide needed services to families. AcademyACL recognizes that families are very busy and family time is precious, so we try to not over-schedule these events. Attending family meetings, AcademyACL community events, and learning seminars will enable parents to support their children in this unique school model. Additionally, these school events will enable relationships to be built that create a supportive, challenging environment for everyone to learn and grow; and a school with curriculum, programs and procedures that are truly connected to the community's needs. If there are particular dates that might create a conflict with religious observances of some families, please let us know so that we can be considerate of those issues when possible.

Our primary events tend to not change from year to year and include:

- **Sock Hop:** A 50s themed community dance to celebrate the beginning of the school year. This event is usually held in August on a Friday evening, with food trucks available on site. A band or DJ joins us to provide music, and families and staff come together to enjoy an evening of dancing.
- **Orientation Night (Hawk Homecoming):** This event has gone by a variety of names and formats in the past, and it highlights the core of who we are, who we serve, and why we exist as a resource in our community. Staff and other community members provide sessions on a variety of topics pertinent to the needs of our community, including gifted identification, perfectionism, anxiety, advanced academic needs, and more.
- **Read-a-Thon:** Usually held the first weekend of October, this is our primary fundraiser. Students and staff are challenged to read a large selection of books, asking family and friends to sponsor their goals in support of a variety of projects. Read-a-Thon kicks off with an assembly during which students learn whether or not their fundraising goal has been met and continues throughout the weekend. Friday evening, food trucks are on site for families to come to enjoy dinner and reading at school as well.
- **Mystery Theater:** An interactive staff performance held in the late fall, families can come to enjoy a who-dun-it performance with staff members
- **WinterFest:** A celebration of Encore-supported performances and showcases. Usually held in December, Division I, II, and III students' work is showcased through a music and theater performance, art showcases, and a cultural or language showcase. Upper division students often highlight their inquiry projects as well.
- **Chili and Board Game Night:** Usually held in February, this event highlights the culinary talents of our families and staff, while providing opportunities for families to play board games together or challenge staff members to games of chess.
- **SpringFest:** Similar to WinterFest and held in May, showcasing the work of upper division students and encore electives.

Other events for families and parents, such as pop-up conferences, collaborations with Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented, UCCS, and other organizations also happen from time to time.

Fundraising

AcademyACL is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, and may accept donations and provide documentation for donor's tax records. The donor will be responsible for verifying the value of any item donated. Donations of items accepted must first be approved by the Academy Director (we only have room for so many pianos! ☺).

AcademyACL is also a public charter school and is funded by public tax dollars. The Academy Director works with the Business Manager and board-designated Finance Committee, under the direction of the AcademyACL Board, to use the funds to support mission-critical areas of our budget- with the academic needs of students and the fiscal health of the organization as primary goals. Public financing can vary greatly from year to year. Mission-important goals are helped and made possible with additional support from fundraising.

AcademyACL's Readathon

AcademyACL has ONE primary all-school fundraiser each year: the Readathon, held in the fall. This event raises between \$15,000 and \$25,000 annually, and supports the school's vision and mission to celebrate kids (and "geekiness!") with their love of books. Kids read as many pages as they can in one weekend, and ask for students to locate sponsors to donate

towards their reading. We also seek community sponsors to donate reading prizes, although our focus is on the fun of reading, not getting something separately for reading.

We do not ask students to sell things, and we prefer to have sponsors across the community support kids with donations as a way to build connection, partnership, and knowledge of what our school is doing. As always, participation in fundraising projects is voluntary.

Student Fundraising for personal projects is not allowed during school hours. This includes Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, etc. Certain projects of donation items (such as blankets for the Humane Society) may be approved by the Academy Director. Any vendors seeking to sell items at after-school events must have approval from the Academy Director, including documentation of value added back to the school, in line with district policy.

Visitor and Volunteer Opportunities

The safety of your child is our prime concern and all visitors' IDs will be scanned on entry. Accordingly, we require every visitor, including family members, to sign in at the office immediately upon entry to the building. You will need to have your driver's license or state ID with you when you visit the school.

You must go directly to the office, every time you are in the building, and sign in and get a badge, during school hours.

Visitors, unless they have been cleared by the Academy Director, may not wander the building without an Academy ACL staff member as a tour guide. This is to ensure the safety of our students and lack of interruption to our learning environments. Additionally, we have to account for every person who enters the building, in case of an emergency.

We do not schedule visits and general volunteer times in classrooms from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. during LifeSkills time and Goal-setting from 3:00-3:10 p.m. as those are thoughtful, personal reflective times, so that students can feel encouraged to share openly about their progress and goals with classmates and the teacher without "strangers" in the room as an audience.

Lunch Visits

You're welcome to come to lunch with your student up to twice a month, with prior approval of the teacher. You will be eating in the classroom with your student, unless you sign your student out to eat off campus. Siblings will need to remain in their own classrooms unless arrangements have been made with classroom teachers to meet in one classroom—the office cannot facilitate calling multiple classrooms to make those arrangements. Know that most classrooms do not have large areas to accommodate large numbers of family members, with seating for 23-25 students at most. You must sign at the office, and the student is still under the authority of the teacher. Any and all visitors, including at this time, are responsible for following the volunteer guidelines in this handbook.

Visits to the Classroom

Visits and volunteers in-class need to be pre-approved with the teacher at least 24 hours notice. In general, we ask parents and other visitors not to visit the classroom during Lifeskills time without a specific request from the teacher for a given day. As classrooms build their learning cultures throughout the year, they often share thoughtful, personal reflections with each other that can be disrupted by the presence of someone who is not a regular part of that learning culture.

Throughout the K-8 Academy ACL experience, parent helpers transition from being an active advocate in core classrooms to being a participatory resource. This is done gradually and in developmentally appropriate increments from Division I to Division V. Through Divisions I, II and III, parents assist with centers or small group activities, participate on field trips as chaperones, and offer copying and other clerical support. Divisions IV and V use parents in the classroom in a variety of ways inside the classroom that may include guest speakers and classroom clerical support, scribes for particular writing assignments, and outside the classroom as possible research assistants, event coordinators, etc. Parents of upper divisions might also provide support with differentiated learning centers with the goal of continually developing student independence and self-directed, autonomous learning skills.

Parent Connections

We love for our parents to have the chance to connect with each other. You are welcome to sit outside at picnic tables on the east side or north side of the building, benches under the trees, or in Pike Park. You are welcome to use our playground after school as well. We ask that you not gather on the sidewalks in front of classroom doors or at Kiss & Go to allow for students to pass.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer time is important in the AcademyACL mission. Students develop an attitude of community service and leadership as they see their families contributing to the health of the school by volunteering their time and energy. Volunteers must register through D11.

Opportunities may include, *but are not limited to*, the following ideas:

- Committee Work
 - School Accountability Committee
 - Board committees such as Finance Committee, Policy Committee, Board Development Committee
- Teacher Appreciation (breakfast and/or lunch food donation, set up or tear down)
- Campus Beautification (painting, gardening, etc.)
- Chaperone (field trips)
- Division Parent Representative (DPR)
- School/Classroom Event Volunteer (e.g. Medieval feast, STEAM Day, etc)
- Office/Clerical help
- Guest Speaker

Division Parent Representatives

Division Parent Representatives (DPRs) work with division teachers to assist with activities and events occurring in the classroom such as end of unit celebrations, field trip organization, and classroom preparation. If you are interested in volunteering as a DPR, please contact the classroom teacher or the school office to find out if there is an opening or to be put into contact with the current DPR.

Visiting Students

Parents should be aware that student visitors may occasionally participate in classrooms for a “shadow day” to decide if they want to transfer/enroll at AcademyACL.

Older students who have graduated must have prior approval from a teacher, for a designated and specific purpose and time limit, that is on file in the office before they may visit during the school day, aside from a quick visit at lunch or Fitness and Fun.

Outside Tutors and Care/Service Providers

For a variety of reasons, Outside Care Providers (OCPs), including tutors not employed by AcademyACL or District 11, are not allowed to work with students on AcademyACL property.

10. Enrollment & Records

Enrollment/Re-Enrollment Procedures and Lottery

Each year, AcademyACL opens our enrollment window in November, providing the opportunity for new families and siblings of existing students to join our community. Requests for enrollment are available online via our website, academyacl.org. Families are welcome to schedule tours during school hours or in the evening.

All requests for enrollment are due by the first Wednesday in March, and our lottery is held the evening of the second Wednesday in March. Families are assigned a lottery number and seats are filled according to our Lottery Policy. Families are encouraged to attend in person, however all families receive notification of their result of the lottery within a few days. When a seat has been offered, we request records from the previous school and review those records. When that step has been completed, a formal confirmation of enrollment is sent.

Current families are not required to re-enroll, however if families know that they will not be returning the following school year, we ask that they let us know early so that we can open up an appropriate number of seats for the lottery.

Enrollment and Outreach Coordinator: Mrs. Valena Geerts is our enrollment and outreach coordinator who works with new families interested in joining our community. She arranges tours, marketing opportunities in the community, and handles much of our social media presence. She also spearheads several of our favorite events such as our annual Sock Hop, Read-a-Thon, and STEAM Day. Her schedule is more flexible than the rest of the office staff, however she checks both voicemail and email regularly when she is not in the building. She can be reached by email: enrollment@academyacl.org.

Partial Enrollment

AcademyACL offers a partial-enrollment option for homeschooling families that wish to connect with our school community as they utilize homeschooling options. This permission and schedule is at the discretion of the Academy Director, and dependent on a variety of factors including full-time class size. We welcome these families' full participation in our community events and procedures, and will work with each family to outline the type of support that they need from our program. We have a target of seven to nine hours per week of instructional time for partially-enrolled students to join us and fulfill state requirements for this type of program. A Partial Enrollment Agreement is available in the front office and provided to families interested in this option. A partially enrolled student must attend a target of 7-9 hours in order to be enrolled, and must complete and receive approval by the Director for a Partial Enrollment Plan. Days of attendance need to be consistent for teachers to plan accordingly. Most families choose to enroll either morning (Lifeskills, Art of Language, World of Math) or afternoon (Encore, Historical & Scientific Inquiry) daily for simplicity and to ensure that their student is receiving instruction regularly in a particular class or group of classes.

A partially-enrolled student may forfeit his/her enrollment if the outlined attendance expectations are not met. Excessive absences may result in loss of partial-enrollment placement at AcademyACL.

Withdrawal/transfer process

Families wishing to withdraw from AcademyACL or transfer to another school at any time must fill out withdrawal paperwork to ensure that we have accurate information as to where records should be sent. The withdrawal form can be requested from the front office or located on our website to send to the front office.

Family Rights and Student Privacy Act

As outlined in the federal Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student and family information is restricted to AcademyACL staff on a need-to-know basis. Student records are confidential and will be released to faculty and selected professionals for authorized educational purposes. We may collect various types of information about you and your child in order to provide a quality educational program, such as students' name, date of birth, social security number, and permanent address, in addition to contact information for both parents. Information for student directories or carpool efforts is

provided with the consent and request of the families involved, and withheld if such a request is given within the designated time frame as outlined in the Privacy Act. Volunteers who work in classrooms or with students will be asked to sign an agreement that they will also protect the privacy of the students with whom they have contact, and student data will be concealed by staff as appropriate. Furthermore, volunteers without current background checks on file and/or appropriate licensure will not be allowed to work alone with students at any time.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns or questions about the privacy or security of the information you have provided to the AcademyACL, feel free to contact the Academy Director for further information. The full Family Rights and Privacy Act is available on our website and we will notify you each year of your rights under this legislation

(<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>).