

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL
OF ABU DHABI *SINCE 1972*



Elementary School Handbook

[School Calendar](#)

American Community School of Abu Dhabi

P.O. Box 42114

+971 2 681 5115 | acs.sch.ae

Elementary School Hours:

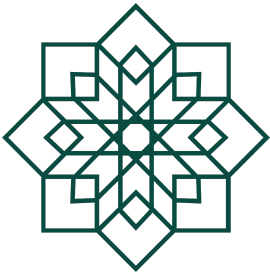
Monday through Thursday | 8:30 - 3:30 KG2-G5

Monday through Thursday | 8:30-3:15 or 8:30-2:00 KG1

Friday | 8:30-12:00 KG2-G5

Friday | 8:30-11:45 KG1

The ACS Star



Reflecting Middle Eastern culture and the UAE, our host and home, the shape of the ACS logo has 8 points.

These points represent:

- The four Pillars of ACS: *Academics, Arts, Athletics and Service*
- The four Core Values of ACS: *Courage, Curiosity, Compassion and Integrity*

All eight points radiate outward, symbolizing how we share our values with our community and the world. All points also connect to the center, which symbolizes the heart of our supportive and strong community.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO SHAPE THE FUTURE



PERSONALIZE LEARNING

- Offer a highly engaging, innovative & flexible core curriculum
- Meet the unique needs of learners requiring additional support
- Establish structures and resources to challenge uniquely motivated and talented students

PERSONALIZE LEARNING



DELIVER EXCELLENCE

- Build an innovative, globally leading new campus that pushes the boundaries of education
- Analyze and share data to enhance learning outcomes
- Implement innovative curriculum that promotes creativity and self-expression

DELIVER EXCELLENCE



GROW COMMUNITY

- Advance a shared understanding of who we are and what we do
- Deepen relationships with external partners and leading universities
- Distinguish ACS as an internationally-recognized, leading institution

GROW COMMUNITY



INSPIRE GLOBAL CITIZENS

- Strengthen school-wide service learning program to nurture global citizenship
- Provide social-emotional wellness programs to promote wellbeing and build confidence
- Enhance world languages model, including a leading Arabic program, for greater cultural understanding

INSPIRE GLOBAL CITIZENS

ACS STRATEGIC PLAN

[ACS Parent Partnership Agreement and Enrollment Contract](#)

American Community School Of Abu Dhabi

Board Of Trustees

Matt Ayoub, Board Chair
Serena Carnevale, Vice Chair
Julie Thurston, Secretary
Philippe El Bacha, Treasurer
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Adib Mattar, Member
Chadi Moujaes, Member
Fatiah Touray, Member
Robin Solomon, U.S. Embassy Representative

Administration

Monique Flickinger - Superintendent
Victor Guthrie - Assistant Superintendent
Waheeda Al Tamimi - Executive Assistant

Heather Collins - Elementary School Principal
Evelyn Lucero - Elementary School Assistant Principal Lone Wennestad - Elementary School Executive Assistant

MeMe Spurgeon - Director of Learning Support
Jen Ricks - Director of Curriculum and Professional Learning Christina Devitt - Director of Technology
Karl Poulin - Middle School Principal
Amy Greene - High School Principal
Jean Rueckert - Director of World Languages
Preben Geitz- Athletic Director
Jordan Moog - Assistant Athletic Director
Jodi Lefort- Director of Admissions
Zoltan Karazy - Director of Finance
Marise Philip-Jayendran - Director of Human Resources Yvette Campbell - Director of Institutional
Advancement Joni Wills - Director of Communications

Support Personnel

Farwa Devji - ES Counselor (KG1 and G4)
Dana Allen ES Counselor (KG2 and G3)
Robin Gabriel - ES Counselor (G1, G2 and G5)
Jennalee Murray - School Psychologist

Vision

We are a compassionate, student-centered community of learners that engages, prepares and inspires.

Mission Statement

Our American-based curriculum promotes excellence in academics, athletics and the arts. In a challenging learning environment and in partnership with parents, we empower students to define and shape their futures. Our dynamic educational approach prepares a culturally diverse student body for a lifelong commitment to learning, service and global citizenship.

Core Values

Courage

Curiosity

Compassion

Integrity

ACS Core Values were identified by ACS students, staff, and families, and are used to guide and celebrate many of the approaches and activities on and off campus. Our Core Values highlight behavior expectations from the ACS Mission and Beliefs. These values ensure we enjoy a safe, supportive, learning-focused community in the Elementary School.

ACS Profile of a Learner

ACS engages, prepares and inspires students to be:

Collaborative team members who...

- promote and sustain learning.
- communicate and listen actively and openly.

Responsible people who...

- balance their intellectual, physical, and emotional well-being.
- act with integrity and courage.

Self-directed learners who...

- are curious problem solvers and resourceful critical thinkers.
- persevere in the face of challenge.

Global citizens who...

- respect diversity.
- actively contribute to their world with empathy and compassion.

ACS Core Beliefs

- Curiosity and an enthusiasm for learning foster creativity, innovation, and deeper understanding.
- An ethical and compassionate community is built through participation, collaboration, and mutual respect.
- Reflection on learning experiences in and out of the classroom enables learners to define and shape their futures.
- Intellectual, physical, social, and emotional balance contribute to one's well-being.
- Leadership is developed through courage, resilience, and integrity.

General Information

(in alphabetical order)

Allergen-Awareness

The American Community School of Abu Dhabi strives to be an allergen-aware campus, and not an allergen-free school. An allergen-aware campus seeks to create an environment in which children with severe allergies can learn to make appropriate choices to keep themselves safe. Students who have chronic conditions such as allergies, asthma, diabetes will require their parent to complete a [health care plan](#) with relevant supporting medical reports/prescriptions so that we can ensure their health needs are met and considered throughout the school day.

We encourage parents to help us provide a safe environment for students by not sending food with peanuts or cross-contamination warnings. Should your child's class include a student with a serious peanut allergy, a letter will be sent home for class guidelines on food brought into the school.

For more information, please access this link: [Tree Nut and Peanut Allergies](#)

Arabic

Students in KG1-Gr.5 enjoy Arabic instruction. Students who carry an Arabic country passport and have at least one parent who is a native Arabic speaker are enrolled in the Modern Standard Arabic Program. Students with passports from non Arab countries are enrolled in the Arabic as a World Language Program. Arabic is integrated into the program of study in KG1 and KG2.

Arrival/Dismissal

Arrival

- All grades: the ES gates open at **8:15 AM** and close at **4:00 PM**.
- Students may enter school via Gate #1 or Gate #2
- After 8:30 AM ALL students must enter through the Main Gate #2.
- When a child is dropped off at school, they will enter their grade level gate and proceed directly to the classroom.

Dismissal

- Parents who need to pick up their child before regular dismissal must inform the classroom teacher and the ES Executive Assistant lonewennestad@acs.sch.ae. The classroom teacher will send the child with an Exit Slip to the main gate for pickup.

KG1 and KG2

- KG1 and KG2 students may be released in two ways:
 - To a parent/caregiver who has come onto campus to meet them on the KG playground*
 - To a bus

GRADES 1 THROUGH 5

ES students in Grades 1 to 5 may be released in up to four ways:

- **To a parent/caregiver who has come onto campus to meet them in the ES Playground or a determined meeting place area:**
- **To a bus**
- **Independently exiting campus walking, scooting or biking if they are in Grades 3 through 5**
- **Carline**
 - Families choosing to pick up by car need to have signed up for a [Car Spotter number using this process](#)

- Please remain in your car and your child will be escorted by a staff member directly to your car

Assemblies

ES Assemblies are held several times during the year and give the ES community a chance to celebrate achievements, watch performances, share student work, etc.

Assessment and Grading

For a detailed description of Elementary Assessment and Grading practices and agreements, please [see this link](#).

Attendance/Absence/Tardiness

Attendance

Attendance in Elementary School is important to ensure consistent and appropriate academic, social and behavioral development. Students must be in school for 4 hours to count it as a school day. Teachers cannot effectively evaluate students who arrive late, leave early, or have excessive absences. For reporting purposes, students must be in school 80% of the days in a reporting period in order to receive grades/comments on a report card. This generally translates to missing no more than 9 days per quarter, or 18 days per semester.

Teachers are *not expected* to prepare work for students who miss school unless there is a clear emergency that necessitates the student be absent for an extended period. Some school experiences are not the kind of activity that can be made up or substituted by outside make-up work. Work will not be provided for students on vacation. Students will not attend school events (parties, programs, etc.) if they missed school earlier that day. Attendance and tardies are recorded on the report card.

Absence

If students are absent from school, even for one day, parents must inform the teacher and the ES Executive Assistant (lonewennestad@acs.sch.ae) before 8:15 AM. **[Please use Veracross to report your child's absence](#)**. The nurses will be updated if follow-up is required. At 8:45, the ES administrative assistant will begin calling parents of absent students if we have not heard from parents. If appropriate, work can be collected from a classmate or by talking with the teachers directly about work missed. If students are absent for more than 3 days, due to medical reasons, they must submit a doctor's clearance form.

Tardiness

Classes start at 8:30 AM with the UAE national anthem. Families who are tardy on a regular basis will be asked to meet with the principal to discuss strategies for improving attendance and punctuality.

Back to School Night

This annual event is held early in the year. The purpose is to give parents the opportunity to learn about the Elementary School, the annual goals and the grade level programs. Parent participation in Back to School Night is expected.

Behavior Expectations

At ACS we emphasize making good choices. We understand that children do not make good choices at all times. This is part of the learning process. We are sensitive to the needs of our students who:

- are young and still developing an understanding of appropriate behaviors and how to behave in social situations.
- are new to the school and still learning ACS expectations or who are experiencing transition issues.
- have been unduly provoked.
- are under extreme stress for valid reasons (death in the family, impending divorce, etc.).

Grade Level Expectations

- Grade level teams will maintain consistent behavior expectations for students in their classrooms, on the playground, in

the cafeteria, on field trips, and during assemblies/performances and school events.

- Each grade level will have a developmentally-appropriate system for informing students of behavior expectations, a classroom management system, and a communication system for parents. The classroom management system is communicated to parents early in the year.
- Classroom agreements rely heavily on the ACS Core Values.
- The goal of the classroom agreements and systems is to offer students positive and proactive strategies for independently solving problems and resolving conflict.
- The strategies that we encourage students to use at ACS are:
 - Walk away
 - Wait and cool off
 - Keep calm, take a breath and don't react
 - Move on
 - Tell them to stop
 - Talk it out
 - Share and take turns
 - Apologize
 - Make a deal
- Teachers and counselors will inform parents if there are concerns about a student's problem-solving strategies.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays on the first Friday of the month. You will receive a communication from your child's classroom teacher ahead of the celebration to let you know how the class will be celebrating the birthdays each month. These celebrations might include: games, privileges or snacks.

If party invitations for the entire class are brought to school they are to be given to the students at the end of the day. Unless party invitations are to be given to each classmate, students and parents are asked not to hand them out at school.

Books

The school provides materials for instruction. Books used in class are loaned to students during the school year. Students are responsible for the good care of each book on loan and must pay for damaged or lost books. Parents should supply book bags to protect the books.

Chewing Gum

Chewing gum is not permitted on campus.

Communication

Home/school communication is very important. Teachers and the ES office will send emails via family Veracross accounts. Individual student folders going home will include letters, forms, or notes that need parents' attention. Parents are encouraged to log onto Veracross frequently to stay informed of news and events. Parents may use email to communicate with teachers and/or the ES office. If needed, a response will be provided within 48 hours of receipt of the email unless it is a weekend or holiday. It is the responsibility of parents to frequently check their ACS Veracross Parent Portal.

Communicating Student Performance and Progress

Elementary School report cards contain information on the individual growth of a student and his/her behaviors that support learning. Elementary students receive report cards at the end of the 2nd and 4th quarters. Students receive a Progress Report at the

end of the 1st and 3rd Quarter (See Assessment and Grading above for more information). Progress Reports and the First Semester Report Card are sent home electronically via the parent portal in Veracross. Year-end Report Cards are printed and sent home with students on the final day of school (as well as being available online).

Parent Conferences

Before the conclusion of the 1st and 3rd Quarter of the year, parents are requested to attend conferences with homeroom, specialist, and Arabic teachers to review the current level of student performance, progress, and Approaches to Learning. Conferences may include students in older grades, and act in collaboration with Progress Reports to ensure a clear understanding between school and home of specific student strengths, needs, and goals moving forward. It is crucial that ACS parents attend conferences to support continuous communication and partnership in the student learning process.

Community Service

We believe that good citizens participate in community service and act as positive contributors to society. In the ES, each child is given numerous opportunities to participate in community service projects sponsored by individuals, groups and grade levels. We believe that service is best done by ES students when they can have a direct impact on the problem. Direct action that impacts the student is the meaningful way to build an interest in community service. Soliciting money for a cause will not be part of the ES community service program; however, ACS believes this is an appropriate activity for secondary students.

Core Values

Foundation

In the Elementary School, we encourage our students to model ACS Core values:

Courage: Possessing confidence and resolve to take risks and make right decisions in the face of pressure, and adverse or unfamiliar circumstances.

Curiosity: Eager to learn, explore and question things to gain a deeper understanding.

Compassion: Appreciating the value of a person or an object through your words, actions and attitude - treating people appropriately with common courtesy.

Integrity: Being truthful, fair and trustworthy in your words and actions; doing as you say and saying as you do.

Our Elementary School tries to incorporate these values into the daily language and learning. These core values and their meanings are continually emphasized so that students associate their behavior with the positive values we endorse.

Counselors

robingabriel@acs.sch.ae (Grades 1, 2 and 5)

danaallen@acs.sch.ae (KG2 and Grade 3)

farwadevji@acs.sch.ae (KG1 and Grade 4)

The ES Counselor develops programs which follow guidelines from the American School Counseling Association. They also provide both prevention and intervention services to all students. The counselor works with students, parents, faculty and administration to create and maintain a climate where every student feels safe and supported in their socio-emotional as well as academic development.

Our Values

The Elementary School supports the ACS Mission Statement, Core Values and Profile of a Learner. In the ES, we also follow the mantra of “Do the Right Thing” with all the children in the school. Each classroom teacher works to promote these important values. The counselor also incorporates these core ideas in the classroom counseling lessons and in individual and group meetings with students.

Counseling classes

Elementary counselors support the social and emotional development of our students through regularly scheduled classes. Some of the topics discussed in these classes are communication skills, understanding feelings, problem solving and conflict resolution, peer relationships, coping strategies and prosocial skills, empathy, understanding of self and others, multicultural and diversity awareness, transitions and assertiveness strategies. The classes are presented as a whole class discussion, role play interactions, reading and discussion, through puppetry or games.

Responsive Counseling Services

The counselor provides individual and group short-term counseling as needed and will have “lunch bunch” groups to work on social skills and promoting friendships. The counselor also consults with parents, faculty and administration on a regular basis to offer support to students and families.

Transitions

Each year, ACS has new students and teachers. The counselor meets with students both when they are new and when they are leaving to help cope with the loss associated with a move. Moving to Middle School is another milestone on which we work with our Grade 5 students to anticipate changes they may face and allay fears as they move forward. The counselor will offer parent education classes through “Active Parenting” and “Love and Logic” workshops. Informational pieces will be shared via divisional newsletters and New Parent Orientation.

Student Support Team (SST)

The ES counselor serves as a member of the Student Support Team, focused on the needs of students who require academic and behavioral intervention. Members of the SST work together to try and meet the needs of all of our students.

Health and Wellness

In the health and wellness program students learn how to keep their mind and body healthy and fit. An example of this is a Grade 5 unit, “My Changing Body.” In this unit, Grade 5 students learn about the physical and emotional changes that children begin to experience as they enter pre-adolescence and the role that diet, exercise and balance play in the successful navigation of these changes.

Curriculum

The Elementary School curriculum can be accessed through the [ES Grade Level Guides](#).

ES Grade Level Guides

In the ES Grade Level Guides families can access the Elementary School curriculum. Within these guides you can access the following:

- Information about the curriculum organized by Grade Level
- Information about the curriculum organized by Subject Area
- Remote Learning Guidelines and weekly guides
- Library information
- Information about activities and events (when they are in session)

Field Trips

KG1-Grade 5 students enjoy field trips related to their curriculum. Students are expected to participate in all school trips because they are curriculum-based and are supported by classroom instruction/activities. If students are not able to go on a field trip, they will not come to school for the time the class is gone from ACS.

Students on field trips must demonstrate the same integrity, compassion, courage, and curiosity that is expected of them while at school. While the focus of all field trips is on the learning experience, student safety is the most fundamental goal of any

school-sponsored trip.

Gifts

ACS Board policy states that “students and their parents are discouraged from presenting elaborate or unduly expensive gifts to employees.”

Guests and Visitors

This year, visitors and guests who wish to visit during the regular school day may be invited into a classroom, virtually. In adherence with ADEK guidelines, there are no visitors permitted on campus.

Harassment and Intimidation

No harassment of another student, whether verbal, written or physical is tolerated at ACS. Any student found harassing another student may have the harassment policy invoked (Board Policy 1.2.3 Harassment Free Environment). No bullying is tolerated and all incidents are thoroughly investigated. Cyberbullying by ACS students on campus or off campus is in violation of ACS values and will be treated as any other form of harassment or bullying.

Health and Wellness Center

The health office is open from 8:00 to 4:30 on Monday to Friday and is staffed by 2 HAAD licensed School Nurses. They support the health and well-being needs of the school population through delivery of the HAAD (Health Authority Abu Dhabi) School Health Program. This includes responding to minor injuries on the campus, prevention of ill health through monitoring communicable diseases, undertaking the School Health Screening for Grades 1-12 (see school policies), childhood immunizations programs (G1+G11), health promotion campaigns, working to HAAD standards of practice to ensure the safety and well-being of all our students.

If a student requires a course of medication through the school day parents are required to complete the relevant consent form (downloadable from our webpage).

If a student becomes unwell during the school day they are to attend the Health and Wellness Center where the nurses will document and assess if they need to go home.

Students who have a fever or diarrhea/vomiting need to be free of symptoms at least 24 hours without medication prior to returning to school per Health Authority directive even if they feel well enough to attend school. This reduces the risk of infectious diseases/ill health to our students and staff.

For any inquiries to either school nurse, please email nurses@acs.sch.ae or telephone 025084412. For any additional health information and guidance check out the Health & Wellness page under community links on the ACS website.

Home Learning

Home Learning should be the choice of the student and follow these essential guidelines:

- Takes into account student well-being in all 4 ACS Pillars: Academics, Athletics, Service and the Arts
- Empowers students to make choices in their learning and learn in a variety of ways
- Includes inquiry, exploration, and joy in learning
- Promotes independence, responsibility, and the desire to keep learning and growing
- Acknowledges the importance of developing a variety of talents and interests outside the school
- Fosters intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning that students enjoy

At the beginning of each year, Elementary teachers share information and resources around Home Learning with parents and with students. All information can be found on the ACS webpage to facilitate ease of access.

Islamic Studies

The Islamic Studies program in the ES is mandatory for all Muslim students from Grade 1-5, for both native and non-native Arabic speakers, according to the guidelines set forth by the Ministry of Education in which the basic precepts of Islam and Islamic morals are introduced. Students study verses of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, Fundamentals of Islam, the life of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), as well as stories of other prophets. The ES office will contact parents to inform them of the classes, which are offered once per week in an online format.

Learning Support Services

The aim of learning support at ACS is to assist students who are behind in their academic progress or having difficulty meeting behavioral, social, or emotional expectations at ACS. The Elementary Student Support program is managed by the Director of Learning Support in collaboration with the Division Principal. It is designed to ensure positive academic or social support for all Elementary students, based on need. Before a student receives formal support, parents will be notified in writing and informed of the purpose of the services.

ACS offers student support in academics or social/emotional areas for students through the Student Support Process. These students receive support either in their regular classroom or as part of a small-group program. Learning Support teachers work in collaboration with classroom teachers to help students meet grade level expectations. Student progress will be monitored by the Student Support Team (SST) and homeroom teacher to ensure that they make appropriate gains. Due to the limitations of our program, it may be necessary for parents to access additional academic support for their child outside of school especially in cases where the student is performing significantly below grade level expectations. The school reserves the right to set limits on the number of students who require additional support that will be admitted at each grade level. (See ACS Policies)

For more information regarding K-12 Learning Support Services, please contact the Director of Learning Support, MeMe Spurgeon (memespurgeon@acs.sch.ae.)

Leaving School Grounds

Elementary School students are not allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours unless a parent informs the classroom teacher and the office. The student will be escorted to the main gate - Gate 1. Students who are leaving early may be collected from the Guard's station at Gate 1.

Library

ACS has two libraries. The Elementary school library is located on the second floor of the main Elementary building. The secondary school library is located on the second floor of the main secondary complex, next to the auditorium.

The Elementary school library is open every day from 8:30 AM-4:00 PM. KG1 students are allowed to check out one book per week. KG2 - Grade 5 can check out two books at a time for a two-week period. Materials can be renewed for extended use.

Students and parents are financially responsible for lost or damaged books and materials. The cost reflects not only the purchasing cost, but also the shipping and processing charges. Students with overdue or lost materials will not receive their report card until this obligation has been met.

The Elementary school librarian gives students opportunities for book checkout during their library class rotation. During Library time students are invited to engage in literacy lessons, as well as innovation using technology as part of their creative process. The Librarian also supports lessons in the classroom. Robyn Gibson rob yngibson@acs.sch.ae is our Elementary Librarian.

Lost and Found

Items left by students around the Elementary School building/grounds are brought to the atrium and placed in the lost and found shelves. The exception is valuable items such as wallets, jewelry, or money. These are given to the ES administrative assistant.

We encourage your child to be responsible for his/her belongings but sometimes things are misplaced. Please help your child relocate his/her misplaced items by **labeling everything with a first and last name.**

Lunch and Snack

This year, all students will eat their snack and lunch in their classrooms. Much research has been done on nutrition's impact on children and their learning. It is clear that there are foods that nourish the brain and foods that contribute to lack of focus, tiredness, and/or hyperactivity. Establishing good attitudes about eating and ensuring a nutritionally adequate diet is a tough job for a parent. By consistently sending them to school with healthy food, you are helping them establish life-long good eating habits.

Healthy Snack Suggestions	Healthy Lunch Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fruit: fresh (apples, grapes, bananas, pears, sliced mango or orange) and dried (raisins, dates, all citrus fruits) ● Veggies: carrots, cucumber, green/red pepper or celery sticks/slices, cauliflower or broccoli florets, sugar snap peas, dark green leafy vegetables ● Dry cereal such as Cheerios (sugar free) ● Crackers ● Snack mix: combine pretzels, whole-grain cereal, banana chips, plain popcorn, etc. in a plastic container ● Boiled eggs (one egg gives a child almost 1/3 of their daily protein needs. Boil a dozen and leave them in the refrigerator; they last for a week!) ● Plain popcorn ● Dairy products: cheese (string, sliced, or cubes), plain yogurt or lebneh (add fruit, wheat germ, or sugar-free cereals), milk ● Meat: tuna, salmon, sliced turkey or chicken ● Bread/baked items: whole wheat sandwiches; muffins and breads made with grains and banana, zucchini, blueberry, etc.; raisin bread toasted with cinnamon; whole wheat rolls w/butter; oatmeal/raisin cookies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sandwiches: falafel, egg and cheese, turkey, deli meat, quesadillas, hummus, cheese ● Salads ● Pasta: spaghetti with sauce, macaroni and cheese ● Soup in a thermos ● Chicken "fingers", chicken legs, sliced chicken breast ● Potatoes ● Meatballs with sauce ● Drinks: water, juice, milk <p>Snacks are often eaten at a set time each day between classes or during an activity. Please pack items that make it easy for your child to enjoy his/her snack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Simple: nothing messy, no drippy sauces, nothing that needs to be cut up ● Small: the size of your child's fist ● Quick: must be eaten in a few minutes
<p>Things to avoid</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Soda ● Candy bars ● Unhealthy cookies ● Anything with frosting or powdered sugar on top ● Salty products - chips, pretzels, salted popcorn ● Chocolate ● Donuts ● Cake ● Brownies ● Sugary granola bars 	

Allergen Aware Campus

As with all schools, ACS has a number of students with mild to severe allergies. We encourage you to help us provide a safe environment for these students by being mindful of allergies when providing snacks or treats. Should your child's class include a

student with a serious food allergy, a letter will be sent home for class guidelines on food brought into the school.

For more information, please access this link: [Tree Nut and Peanut Allergies](#)

Recycling / Garbage-Free Snacks and Lunches

ACS is an environmentally-responsible campus, so we encourage you to reduce the packaging sent to school by:

- Sending recyclable containers or containers that can be taken home, washed, and reused.
- Avoiding multiple small juice boxes by pouring no-sugar-added juice into small plastic juice containers that can be brought home at night and washed for future use.
- Avoiding plastic wrap in favor of plastic sandwich containers.
- Packing inexpensive cutlery that goes home for washing.
- Giving your child an attractive/fun cloth napkin rather than a disposable napkin.
- Supporting your child's enthusiasm for and interest in efforts to "reduce, recycle, and reuse." Help them make daily choices to be responsible.

Mini-Vipers

(From 3:45-4:30 PM)

Elementary teachers provide many opportunities for students to take part in a variety of online recreational activities after school. Through the organization of the ES Activities Coordinator, students in KG1-Grade 5 will be encouraged to participate in activities that suit their particular interests. Mini Vipers help students develop their skills in the areas of arts, academics and active lifestyles through fun, non-competitive activities. Details about activities and the online sign up system will be available at the beginning of each quarter. Parents who wish to sponsor a Mini Viper activity are encouraged to make their interest known to the ES Activities Coordinator. Shaundreyer@acs.sch.ae For more information regarding Mini Vipers, please contact Shaun Dreyer.

Movies

Audio-visual materials can be a very effective tool for curriculum-related instruction. However, due to the importance of carefully protecting instructional time, and to the fact that not all content is appropriate for Elementary-aged students and our host culture, the following guidelines are followed in the Elementary division:

- Movies rated PG will require parent or guardian approval for in school viewing.
- The ES Principal may also be consulted if there is any suspicion content may not be appropriate for students.

Nuisance Items

Nuisance items are things such as toys, electronic games, Pokemon/collector cards, toy weapons, fidget spinners, personal recorders, water pistols, skateboards, roller blades, sling shots, silly bands, personal iPads,, etc. These things are not to be brought to school unless asked for by a teacher for a specific program or activity. The school is not responsible for lost/stolen nuisance items.

While bicycles, roller blades, roller shoes, and skateboards may be used between home and school, they are not allowed to be used on campus at any time. Bikes and scooters must be parked inside the main gate.

Policies

The school policies of the ACS Board of Directors are available for parents to read. The ES office has a copy parents may borrow. The policies are also posted on the [ACS website](#).

Parent Opportunities

Homeroom Parents

Each class has a Homeroom Parent who is confirmed at the beginning of the school year. Responsibilities include communicating with homeroom families about upcoming events, organizing events as requested by the school and organizing classroom contributions to PTA events.

Library Volunteers

Library Volunteers will be selected to help with daily library duties: book checkout, shelving, reading with students, special events organization. Specialized training is required to work as a library volunteer.

ES Homeroom Parent Liaison

To help facilitate parent volunteers such as homeroom parents and others who support large school events, an ES Homeroom Parent Liaison works together with the ES Principal and Assistant Principal and coordinates directly with PTA leadership.

Parent Coffees

Periodically throughout the year, ES parents will have the opportunity to attend a Parent Coffee. Examples of topics could be curriculum, report cards, technology, etc. These are both social and informational events held in the morning for about an hour.

Parent-Teacher or Student Led Conferences

Conferences will be scheduled for all Elementary students after the 1st and 3rd Quarters. All parents, per their membership in the ACS Community, are expected to attend conferences.

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a strong support for the social, physical, and fundraising needs of the school. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend meetings and sign up for events.

Parent Support For Learning

(Please refer to an extended description of the Parent Partnership at the end of this handbook)

In order to ensure students enjoy every opportunity to succeed at ACS, parents must cooperate in several ways:

- Send students to school well rested
- Feed students a healthy breakfast
- Send a healthy lunch and snack from home
- Attend Back to School Night and Parent Conferences
- Accept grade, classroom, or learning support decisions
- Complete family responsibilities as listed in home/student contract (if applicable)
- Attend Student Support Team (SST) meetings when requested
- Implement appropriate interventions at home when requested
- Complete checklists if requested
- Agree to internal or external testing when requested
- Supply the school with outside testing results when requested

With strong support from home, the school will be able to provide a more supportive learning environment for all students.

Promotion and Retention

In collaboration with parents, the school will determine the appropriate grade level placement for students. The following guidelines are used to assist in making a decision for promotion or retention:

- Promotion to the next grade: Students have been able to make continuous progress and can continue with the standard ACS curriculum appropriate for his/her grade, or have demonstrated appropriate progress with learning support and

should remain with their age level peers.

- Retention: Retention is considered as the last resort for a student after other academic and behavioral supports have been put into place and have not been successful.
- When considered necessary in support of adequate student growth, the school may prepare a letter of conditional enrollment or re-enrollment to be signed by the child's parents. This letter will stipulate the conditions and support systems under which a child may be enrolled or re-enrolled in the school.

Recess

Recess for students in Elementary is intended as a mental and physical break from work being done in the classroom. Students may not be kept in the classroom to work instead of participating fully in recess.

Playground Rules:

At all times while on campus, students are expected to follow playground rules to ensure safety and proper use of equipment:

- Children shall be respectful, responsible, honest and fair while on the school grounds.
- Playground and equipment use during school hours is restricted to Elementary students.
- Playground equipment must be used appropriately.
- No food or drink (other than water) is allowed on the early childhood playground, big playground, or Cramer field due to the artificial turf in these areas.
- Children should walk near large pieces of equipment.
- Children must wear shoes (not flip flops) at all times to avoid injuries. They may remove their shoes while playing in the sand.(see Uniforms and Dress Code)
- Students must wear hats for sun protection or remain in shaded areas.

Report Cards

ES report cards contain information on the individual growth of a student and his/her behaviors that support learning. Elementary students receive report cards at the end of the 2nd and 4th Quarters. Students receive a Progress Report at the end of the 1st and 3rd Quarter (See Assessment and Grading above for more information). Progress Reports and the First Semester Report Card are sent home electronically via the parent portal in Veracross. Year-end Report Cards are printed and sent home with students on the final day of school (as well as being available online).

Security

Safety and security are top priorities at ACS. Students, parents, and staff are expected to comply with ACS security procedures in a courteous manner. Adult ACS community members must have their campus access cards with them. Visitors and ACS community members who do not have their campus access card will register at the gate, leave a form of personal identification and receive a visitors' card. Access cards are available through the Main Office. For entrance to the campus, the ES gates are only open for arrival (7:30-8:20) and dismissal (2:45-3:30). When the ES gate is open, the main gate (guard house) is closed and vice versa.

Smoking/Drug Use

ACS is a smoke and alcohol-free campus for students and adults. Smoking and drug use (i.e. stimulants, inhalants, depressants, etc.) are illegal for minors in the UAE. (See ACS policies 7.3.2 and 7.3.3. for details and consequences.)

Specialist Classes

Art, Music, Drama and Dance, Library and Innovation and PE are referred to as "specialist classes." Students in Grades KG1-5 have one specialist class each day. This varies by grade level. Each classroom's schedule is posted on the Veracross calendar and a physical copy is sent home with each student so families are aware of which day children have their specialist classes.

Physical Education

ACS offers a progressive and sequential physical education program at all grade levels. KG1-Grade 5 students are required to take part in scheduled activities.

For reasons of illness or injury, students may be provided an alternate activity during the physical education class activity. The following will be honored:

- A recommendation from the school nurse following a parent request. Parent notes will be passed on to the nurse. She will evaluate, make a recommendation and notify the parents.
- An excuse written by a competent physician which includes the reason for excuse and beginning and ending dates.

Unless other arrangements have been made, students excused from PE class are to report to their instructor at the beginning of class.

PE students are evaluated in the following ways:

- Skill development
- Class participation
- Approaches to Learning

Standardized Testing

An annual battery of standardized tests, as well as other internal and external assessments in the areas of reading, writing, and math are given to Elementary School students in Grades KG2-5 to help teachers identify, address, and communicate their learning needs. The tests are just one indication of academic achievement and not a composite of the student's on-going educational progress and performance.

For more information regarding standardized testing at ACS, please contact Jennifer Ricks. (jenniferricks@acs.sch.ae).

Swim Program

Our ES swim program will be proceeding as usual this year.

Technology

Technology is integrated into the ES curriculum to enhance learning. Students in Grades KG1-5 have access to a device for daily use (iPad or MacBook).

For more information regarding the use of technology in the Elementary School, please contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@acs.sch.ae.

Telephones

Students' mobile phones are shut off from 8:30-3:30. Students may ask to use the school office's phone when an emergency exists. Establishing play dates and requesting forgotten items (books, swimsuit, etc.) are not considered an emergency. Phone calls can be avoided by planning ahead for the school day and taking responsibility for materials and activities.

Students and teachers are not called to the telephone during the school day. Emergency messages will be taken by the ES administrative assistant and delivered when they do not interrupt student learning time.

Transportation: Bus Service

If you're not currently using school bus transportation and are interested in bus service for part or all of next year, please complete [this non-binding survey](#) to receive more information. Standard home-to-school round transport service will be AED 8,000 per student annually. A prorated cost will be available for families opting to only use transportation for part of the year. Current bus riders do not need to complete this form.

Uniforms and Dress Code

ACS parents should be aware of school uniform guidelines. Students are proud of their school and are aware of their role as guests of the United Arab Emirates. They come to school appropriately dressed according to the ACS dress code guidelines:

- An ACS-approved uniform top (t-shirt, polo, sweater, pull-over, cardigan).
- Beige or black pants (must be in good condition), or shorts/dresses which reach at least to the knee.
- Appropriate athletic footwear for playing.
- Shoes or sandals including Crocs with a secure heel strap are allowed.
- Flip flops, Heelies/Street Gliders, and rubber thongs are not allowed.
- Hats are required for outside play in the sun.
- Sunblock is recommended for outside play in the sun.
- Students and visitors to ACS must wear shoes on campus at all times as a safety precaution.

Parents are ultimately responsible for the clothes ES students wear to school and must help their children learn to make wise choices each morning.

On Campus: You can book an appointment to come on campus in August to our school store with your child to ensure the right size. Visit www.trutex.ae, click book an appointment and select our school. If you have more than one child, be sure to book a separate appointment for each child. Appointments will be available from Aug. 3-31, Monday through Saturday, from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Online: You will be able to order online with delivery direct to your door or collect from school before school starts. There will be a fitting and size guide to help you select the right size, but there are also easy returns both in-store or through a courier in case it's not quite right. The website is currently being built and will launch on Aug. 3. Details on how to set up your online profile and how to order online will be shared at the end of July.

Valuables

No school is completely safe against theft; therefore, we discourage students from bringing valuables to school. Students have non-locking "cubbies" or desks provided for their personal belongings and texts. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. (see *Lost and Found*)

Water

The water from the school water fountains is drinkable since it is on the campus water purification system. We encourage students to stay well-hydrated by drinking lots of fluids. Students should bring a reusable water bottle that can be refilled periodically during the day.

Withdrawal

Parents wishing to withdraw students from the school need to put this request in writing and address it to the ACS registrar.

Every Elementary student withdrawing from ACS must receive clearance from the library, the cafeteria, the accountant, the registrar, and his/her teacher. This clearance must be obtained before school records and transcripts can be released.

Appendix

- [ACS Parent Partnership Agreement and Enrollment Contract](#)

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

From the ACS Board of Directors

Purpose

At the American Community School, we believe that both teachers and parents have a critical role in the education of our students. Our mission statement says that we will work “in partnership with parents” in pursuit of our educational mission. The purpose of this document is to define the roles and expectations for the partnership with particular emphasis on the roles and expectations of teachers and parents. This document is not a policy document to define requirements. It is intended to be a guide to help parents and teachers better understand how they can work together to deliver the best possible educational experience for our students.

Dealing With Problems

Board policy established a framework for dealing with matters such as poor academic performance or disciplinary problems, and both teachers and parents are expected to work within the policy framework. All ACS policies are readily available to parents and teachers and can be obtained from the superintendent.

If a teacher notices a serious or recurring problem with a student, whether an academic matter or behavioral, the teacher is expected to communicate promptly with the parents of that student so that the teacher and parents can work together to resolve the problem.

If a parent is concerned about his/her child’s performance or anything that happens in the classroom, the parent is expected to contact the teacher to arrange a meeting and discuss the problem. Most problems can be resolved between the teacher and the parent if both parties treat each other with respect, focus on resolving the problem rather than assigning blame, and work as true partners to do what is best for the student.

If an issue cannot be resolved between the teacher and parent, either party may take the matter to the Principal for resolution and then, successively, to the superintendent and to the Board if necessary. Parents and teachers are expected to respect the authority of administrators and to appeal matters to the Board only if it involves a policy matter. Parents and teachers should not expect the Board to overturn decisions of administrators when administrators make decisions within their authority that are consistent with Board policy.

Problems or issues involving students may evoke strong emotional reactions from parents. We expect parents and teachers to deal with matters calmly and rationally, focusing on the facts.

After gathering the relevant facts, each party should ask himself/herself, “What can I do to help solve this problem or resolve this issue?” With each party seeking to make a positive contribution to resolution of the problem, most issues will be resolved satisfactorily and the partnership between teachers and parents will be strengthened in the process.

Roles

In the education partnership at ACS, teachers and parents each have a critical role. Roles may vary somewhat depending on the age of the student and the time and resources that the teacher and parent are able to provide. If circumstances warrant, a teacher and parent(s) may agree to revise their roles to suit a particular situation. The following role definitions are provided as a general guide.

The role of the teacher is to:

- Ensure the health and safety of students while they are under the teacher’s supervision
- Manage the classroom, including student behavior, lesson plans, and instructional material
- Create a positive learning environment in the classroom that addresses both the physical and emotional needs of students
- Work within the written curriculum and ensure that standards are met
- Determine the type and volume of homework that is appropriate
- Assess student performance, give continuous feedback to students, and report results regularly to parents

- Provide advice to parents on how best to help a struggling student
- Reinforce the core values of ACS while students are under the supervision of the teacher

The role of the parent is to:

- Ensure the student arrives at school on time and well rested
- Provide for adequate nutrition for the student throughout the school day
- Communicate any special health or learning needs of the student to the teacher
- Create a positive learning environment at home that addresses both the physical and emotional needs of the student
- Demonstrate interest in what the student has learned/accomplished
- Ensure that homework assignments are properly completed
- Provide positive reinforcement for learning and school activities, make education a high priority for the student, and help motivate the student to do his/her best
- Serve as a resource for the student by answering questions or helping the student to find the answers
- Serve as the student's primary role model for good character and appropriate behavior
- Reinforce the core values outside of the ACS campus

Both parents and school personnel are concerned with communication between the school and parents. The school will communicate with parents through the use of Veracross, emails, student progress reports, scheduled conferences, quarterly report cards, and at the ACS PTA/Association meetings.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the need for proper communication among students, parents, teachers, administration, and the Board. To assist in achieving this objective, the following general procedures are recommended for all concerned parties.

1. When the problem concerns your son or daughter and their work in school the best person to see is the classroom teacher. An appointment to see an Elementary teacher may be made by calling the Elementary school office.
2. Problems which cannot be resolved through a conference with the teacher, or are questions of a more general nature concerning the operations of the school, may be discussed with the Principal. The Elementary school office should be called to make an appointment with the Principal.
3. Problems which have not been resolved after conferences with the Principal may be taken to the superintendent who will discuss any questions related to the general operation of the school or school policies. An appointment may be made by calling the superintendent's administrative assistant.
4. The superintendent is the executive officer of the Board of Trustees and is responsible for the organization, operation, and administration of the total school program. Therefore, she is the normal channel of communication between the Board and the public. Questions about school policy should be directed to the superintendent. Normally, communications directed to the Board will be referred to the superintendent for reply or action. Individual Board members refrain from directly involving themselves in administrative matters involving students, teachers, and administrators, but they may act collectively when such matters are formally brought before them.
5. Requests for changes in school policy and appeals regarding decisions made by the superintendent may be addressed to the Board. All communications to the Board should be in writing and should be addressed to the Chairman, Board of Trustees, ACS, P O Box 42114, Abu Dhabi. Decisions about school policy shall be made only by the Board acting as a whole in a regular or special meeting.
6. All parents are members of the ACS PTA/Association. Their rights are expressed by electing the Board of Trustees at the Association meeting held in the spring. In addition, regular meetings of the Board are open to parents or other interested

persons. Meetings are usually held at 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the Multipurpose Room unless published otherwise. Any parent may request a subject be placed on the agenda of the Board meeting by submitting the request in writing to the superintendent's office at least one week prior to the meeting. The Board will attempt to honor such requests if the schedule permits.