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# ASHLEY RIVER

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CLASSICAL ACADEMY

Ashley River Classical Academy

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Ashley River Classical Academy

2025 Bees Ferry Rd. Charleston, SC 29414

[www.ashleyriverclassical.org](http://www.ashleyriverclassical.org)

Phone TBD

2025-2026 Family Handbook

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Mission**

The mission of Ashley River Classical Academy is to train the minds and hearts of our students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with a focus on fostering moral character and civic virtue.

### **Virtues**

- Prudence | “I will make wise, well-thought-out decisions before acting.”
- Justice | “I will treat everyone with the fairness and respect they deserve.”
- Temperance | “I will exercise self-control in all of my actions.”
- Courage | “I will do the right thing, even when it is unpopular or difficult.”
- Responsibility | “I will do my duty and accept the consequences of my actions.”
- Compassion | “I will treat everyone with kindness.”
- Perseverance | “I will be persistent in my efforts despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.”

### **School Pledge**

- I will learn the True.
- I will do the Good.
- I will love the Beautiful.

### **Honor Code**

An Ashley River Classical Academy student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. An Ashley River Classical Academy student aspires to excellence in prudence, justice, temperance, courage, responsibility, compassion, and perseverance.

## **A Note from the Head of School**

Dear Families,

Welcome to Ashley River Classical Academy, where wisdom is embraced, character is nurtured, and a journey of enlightenment unfolds for each remarkable scholar. We extend heartfelt appreciation for choosing our academy amid numerous educational options.

The mission of Ashley River Classical Academy is to train the minds and improve the hearts of young men and women through a rigorous, classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in good character and civic virtue. Choosing classical education is embracing a demanding yet profoundly rewarding path—a celebration of hard work, critical thinking, and knowledge for its own sake. Our methods uphold time-honored traditions, fostering genuine understanding and enduring value.

At Ashley River Classical Academy, curiosity is kindled, intellect refined, and character fortified. Our scholars are explorers of wisdom, architects of thought, and stewards of virtue. We prioritize more than accolades. While scholars excel in public speaking and critical thinking, our paramount goal is nurturing ethical foundations that transcend professions. Our mission is to guide scholars toward excellence in both knowledge and character.

A liberally educated scholar stands as a beacon of wisdom grounded in knowledge and virtue. By choosing us, you join a community dedicated to fostering brilliance, nurturing virtue, and upholding knowledge's flame. Your support is invaluable. Partnership between parents and educators is key. We invite you to explore our ethos on our website and witness classroom magic through observations.

Together, let's embody core virtues—courage, moderation, justice, responsibility, friendliness, prudence, and wisdom. Your active role shapes young minds into beacons of virtue and discernment. With gratitude, we anticipate a year of exploration and shared accomplishments. Here's to our journey, fostering a legacy of wisdom and virtue.

In Partnership,

Alexandria Spry  
Head of School  
Ashley River Classical Academy



## **SECTION 1: SCHOOL LIFE & DECORUM**

### ***School Hours***

School Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Front Office: Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Closed weekends and during school holidays

Summer Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Phone: (123) 456.7890

Email: info@ashleyriverclassical.org

Attendance email: attendance@ashleyriverclassical.org

### ***Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up***

Students should begin arriving no earlier than 7:30 a.m. Faculty, staff, and volunteers will be at the front of the campus in the morning to escort our younger students from their vehicles to the building. Other staff will be inside to supervise students on their way to class. At 8:00 a.m. our doors will be locked to ensure the security of students and staff.

### ***Car Line***

Procedures for drop-off and pick-up give priority to the safety and security of all students. Parents are expected to cooperate fully to ensure that the process is safe and orderly. The school will release students only to parents, legal guardians, or adult designees.

The adults driving through the carpool line are expected to serve as role models by always exhibiting courteous behavior. Please share these policies and procedures with anyone who will be picking up your student, as everyone in the car line is expected to know and follow the procedures.

[Site Specific Carline Maps and Procedures TBD]

### ***Parking***

The school will communicate designated parking spaces. Employees and parents are asked to adhere to the parking plan.

The school has established five “five-minute parking only” spaces near the entrance to the main office to facilitate carline needs, deliveries, etc. Parents and visitors who will remain at school for more than 5 minutes should park in the designated visitor spots in the rear of the lot.

### ***Attendance***

South Carolina law requires every child between the ages of 5 and 17 to regularly attend:

- A public or private school or
- Kindergarten or
- Be approved by their school district or the South Carolina Independent Schools Association for home instruction

A parent/legal guardian whose child or ward is not 6 years old on or before September 1st of the school year may waive kindergarten attendance for his/her child. There are several, limited exceptions to this compulsory attendance requirement. For exceptions, see S.C. Code Ann. §59-65-30. Parents/legal guardians are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The law provides statutory penalties for parent(s)/legal guardian(s) who neglect this responsibility.

Classical education is highly interactive and requires consistent and punctual attendance. Because the classical approach relies heavily on classroom discussion among students and teachers, most work done in class cannot be made up if a student is absent. For this reason, parents should exercise prudence and make every reasonable effort to ensure that students do not miss class, including restricting trips to the allotted breaks.

### ***Absences***

Planned absence during the school term is highly discouraged. We discourage doctors' and other appointments during the school day when they are avoidable. When those appointments are unavoidable, students are responsible for any make-up work during their absence. Assignments that are not made up, according to the time restrictions set by the teacher and school, will be reflected in their grades. In the Grammar School, students must attend class for at least half of the instructional day to be considered present for that day. In the Upper School, absences are calculated by course.

### ***To Report an Absence***

Parents must alert their student's teachers and the front office for every day a child is to be away from school. To notify teachers, please email your student's teachers directly. To notify the front office, email [attendance@ashleyriverclassical.org](mailto:attendance@ashleyriverclassical.org). Please include your child's name and the reason for his or her absence in your email. Parents must make us aware of the child's absence before 8:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If a parent fails to notify the office of a student's absence, the absence will be coded as unexcused.

### ***Make-up Work***

Students may complete homework and other assignments that they miss during excused absences. Excepting major assignments (see below), students returning from an excused absence will have two additional days for each absent day to make up work that was due during or immediately after the absence. For example, if a student has an excused absence on Monday, then he has until Wednesday to turn in any work due on Monday or Tuesday; if a student has an excused absence on Thursday and Friday, then work due on Thursday, Friday, or Monday is not due until Thursday of the following week.

The extra time is intended to allow students to catch up on any missed notes or lessons prior to turning in related material. Students are responsible for retrieving notes and assignments for themselves, preferably from a classmate, and are expected to be respectful of their teacher's time.

An absence on the date of a major assignment, such as a test or major paper, will not extend the deadline of that assignment if the student is absent only on that day. In cases of a single-day excused absence, the student must complete the assignment on the day of his or her return. In cases of a

multi-day absence, teachers will work with students to determine an appropriate deadline for major projects and a makeup time for tests.

### ***Lawful and Unlawful Absences***

Lawful absences include but are not limited to absences due to: a student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his/her health or the health of others, an illness or death in the student's immediate family, a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith, or activities that are approved in advance by the Head of School.

Unlawful absences include but are not limited to absences of a student: without the knowledge of his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) or without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his or her parent(s)/guardian(s).

Suspension does not constitute an unlawful absence for truancy purposes.

### ***Excused Absences***

The following will be considered excused absences:

1. Illness
2. Court-required appearance
3. College visit
4. Death in the immediate family
5. Emergency conditions as determined by the Head of School
6. Religious observances
7. Attendance at any school-sponsored activity for which a student is eligible
8. Pre-arranged absences of an educational nature
9. Prior permission of the Head of School with consent of the parent/guardian

Any student who misses school must present a written statement signed by a parent(s)/guardian(s) or a medical statement from a licensed/certified medical practitioner. Valid absences will be recorded as unexcused if the statement or physicians note is turned in within 3 days after the student returns.

Valid excuses must be submitted to the register or emailed to [attendance@ashleyriverclassical.org](mailto:attendance@ashleyriverclassical.org), documentation must be in writing, and must contain the following:

- First and last name of student
- Date(s) for absence(s)
- Reason/explanation for absences(s) - if no reason is provided the absence is automatically unexcused
- Signature of valid party (parent/guardian, physician, court clerk, etc)

Physician's Notes should include the time of appointment (recorded by the doctor's office). Only the appointment time, minimum travel time, and student receiving medical attention will be excused. ARCA may call the physician's office for clarification if needed.

### ***Unexcused Absences***

Absences are unexcused when parents do not follow the procedure to excuse absences noted above, when a student is unaccounted for, or if a student does not make a reasonable effort to come to school on time. Such absences are liable to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension. Students will not receive credit for homework and assignments that they miss during unexcused absences.

When the parent does not explain sufficiently the reason for unexcused absences, a parent conference will be required, and credit will be withheld. An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence will be entered on the student's record. The parents or guardians of the student receiving an unexcused absence will be notified by the school of the unexcused absence.

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to start the school year on time
2. Truancy
3. Missing a ride
4. Unauthorized trips, such as family vacations without prior permission, including shopping, hunting, fishing, ball games, etc.
5. Birthdays or other celebrations
6. Updating an expired immunization form

### ***Tardies and Early Release***

Each tardy or early release prevents students from engaging their classes appropriately. In order to get the most from class, students must begin and end on time. Tardiness refers to any occasion in which a student arrives after 8:00 a.m. or after the established school or class start time. Early release refers to any occasion in which a student leaves before 3:00 p.m. or before the established school or class finishing time.

### ***Tardy to School***

Students are required to report to school no later than 8:00 am. Tardiness to school is excused for the same reasons as absences. Unexcused tardiness may result in disciplinary action. Only an excused tardy will permit academic work to be made up. Any exceptions to this tardy policy will be reviewed by the Dean of Lower School or Head of School. After 20 excused tardies, a doctor's excuse is required for each successive tardy. Any student who misses more than three (3) hours of the school day will be marked absent for the day.

**Tardy to Class (Upper School)** A student is considered tardy to class when he/she is not in the classroom ready to learn at the designated start time for that class period.

### ***Releasing a Student from School***

Ashley River Classical Academy's campus is closed during the school day to encourage friendship among all our students. Students may not be taken from the school or playground unless parents have signed them out in the office.

In the case of divorce or separation of the parents, both parents shall have full rights until legal notification is provided to the school limiting the rights of either parent.

School-sponsored activities require a teacher or sponsor to be responsible for the students. Students may not leave the activity or event with their own parent unless prior written authorization is given to the teacher or sponsor from the Head of School.

Check-outs, check-ins, and tardies will be considered as absences from those class periods missed and treated as any other absence.

Students who leave school for any reason must check-out through the school office following the school's check out procedure. Only persons whose names appear in the student's registration and pick up form may check-out students unless the school receives permission in writing in advance from the parent/guardian. Written permission is to be given first by the parent/guardian or "emergency person" shown on the school's registration or pick up form before each check-out, except in cases of sudden illness, accident, or similar incident where email confirmation is the only alternative. Excused/Unexcused will be determined based on whether an excuse is submitted for check-in/out. Students are required to bring a written note when they return to school from a check-out.

### ***Early Drop-off and Late Pick-up***

Students participating in morning care can be dropped off at 6:30 a.m. If a student is not participating in the morning care they must be dropped off at 7:30 a.m. and must be picked up by 3:30 p.m. Students with siblings in clubs or athletics must still be picked up or wait outside with a parent/guardian at 3:30 p.m.

Students still on campus and not participating in a club or athletics at 3:30 p.m. must wait for a parent/guardian in the front office. The late fee for pick-up after 3:30 p.m. is \$10 for the first minute and \$1 per minute thereafter. Aftercare students must be picked up by 6:15 pm.

### ***Chronically Absent***

Any student in grade K-12 who misses 50 percent or more of the instructional day for any reason for 10 percent (or more) of the enrollment period. Students who are enrolled in the same school for an entire academic year and miss 18 or more days (10 percent) will be considered chronically absent.

- All types of absences contribute to chronic absenteeism:
  - Excused Absences
  - Unexcused Absences
  - Suspensions
- A student is absent if he or she is not physically on school grounds and is not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-ground location for the school day.

## ***Truancy***

South Carolina Board of Education Regulation (SBE) 43-274 specifies the state requirements for school attendance. The regulation applies a three-tiered approach to defining the varying levels of truant behavior. Depending on the attendance circumstances, a child can be deemed truant, a habitual truant, or a chronic truant.

- Truant: a child (6 to 17 years old) who has accumulated three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences. ○
  - Only full-day unexcused absences contribute to truancy.
  - Excused absences and suspensions do not affect truancy.
- Habitual Truant: a child (12 to 17 years old) who fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, child, and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and has accumulated two or more additional unlawful absences. The written intervention plan and documentation of non-compliance must be attached to the truancy petition asking for court intervention.
- Chronic Truant: a child (12 to 17 years old) who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of habitual truant has been referred to family court and placed under an order to attend school, and continues to accumulate unlawful absences. A chronic truant may be referred to the Family Court for contempt of court (violation of a previous court order) if referrals and community alternatives fail to remedy the attendance issue. All intervention plans in existence for the child and parent(s)/guardian(s) must accompany the Contempt of Court petition along with a written recommendation from the child's school as to what action the court should take.

The Attendance Intervention Team (AIT) will work to develop a written intervention plan to address the student's continued absence in conjunction with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). If a parent/guardian refuses to cooperate with the intervention planning, the school district may refer the student to Family Court pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §59-65-50 and a report will be filed against the parent(s)/guardian(s) with the Department of Social Services for educational neglect in compliance with S.C. Code Ann. §20-7-490(c).

## ***Homebound***

State Board Title of Regulation No. R 43-241 effective June 27, 2003 Section I states the following: Students who cannot attend public school because of illness, accident, or pregnancy, even with the aid of transportation, are eligible for medical homebound or hospitalized instruction.

- A physician must certify that the student is unable to attend school but may profit from instruction given in the home or hospital.
- Any student participating in a program of medical homebound instruction or hospitalized instruction must be approved by the district Superintendent or his/her designee on standardized forms provided by the SCDE.
- A SC school district may count in membership a pupil who is compelled to reside outside the state to receive medical services provided the teacher is certificated by the Department of Education in the state where services are rendered.
- All approved forms must be maintained by the district for documentation.

Additional information regarding Homebound Instruction and Regulation No. R 43-241 may be obtained by contacting the School Counselor's Office.

### ***College Visit Absence Requests***

High school students who meet the following criteria will be allowed to have two excused days of absence for a college visit during their junior year and two excused days of absence for a college visit during their senior year:

1. The student must have passed the required parts of the EOC tests for the previous year.
2. The student must be on track to graduate on time.
3. The student must be classified as a junior or senior based on credits earned.
4. The student must pass all coursework.
5. The student must meet the 90% attendance rule.
6. The student cannot have any disciplinary issues.

Students must submit a “College Visit Absence Request Form” to the office at least two days prior to the day requested for a college visit.

### **Uniform and Personal Appearance**

A school uniform is crucial to a successful classical school, accomplishing three key goals. First, it diminishes the burden of thinking about clothing and fashion, which can become all-encompassing for many students. This removes distractions in the classroom and increases focus on the task at hand. Second, it helps students take school more seriously by acknowledging that, through dress, we respect fellow classmates, teachers, and the common enterprise of education. Third, it develops school identity and pride. All students are, therefore, expected to adhere to the school uniform policy.

When questions about particular aspects of the uniform arise, the student is expected to follow the general and leading spirit of the policy, which is to diminish distractions, show respect, and elevate the tenor of the school.

Students must be in uniform in order to attend class. Students not in uniform will be sent to the office. The office will keep a limited inventory of basic uniform items that a student may be permitted to wear in order to meet uniform requirements and return to class (in most cases, with a tardy slip). Loaned items will be carefully tracked and must be returned in clean, like-new condition. In the event that the office does not have appropriate uniform items for a student out of uniform, the student must call a parent or guardian. Parents will either bring acceptable attire, or students will be sent home. These absences are not excused.

Max and Alice is the sole uniform provider for ALL uniform pieces. The uniform and dress code policy is that students will dress according to the mandatory and optional items listed on the Board-approved uniform policy for boys and girls, respectively, plus the following series of directives. Basic details for the school uniform, including ordering information, can be found on the Ashley River Classical Academy website.

### ***Additional Uniform Provisions***

- Students may wear their own outerwear (coats, sweaters, vests) to school and on the playground. If a student is cold in the classroom, he or she should wear one of the long-sleeved uniform items or one of the uniform outerwear items.
- All students must be in uniform at all times. NO OTHER clothing other than uniform tops and bottoms are permitted. No outside tops, jeans, or bottoms are permitted in the building unless approved by HOS on certain days.
- All shirts must be tucked in.
- Skirts and shorts shall fall no higher than 2 inches above the knee as measured when the student is standing.
- Leggings or tights may be worn underneath clothing but must be ankle length or footed in a solid color—gray, navy, white, or black. Leggings are not to be worn without other bottoms on top.
- Girls may wear gym shorts or compression shorts underneath their skirts, so long as these are not visible when the student is standing.
- Students may use any backpack as long as it is clean and tasteful.
- All girls' and boys' polo shirts may have the top button unbuttoned. All other buttons must be buttoned.
- Modest jewelry is allowed. An object that has a purpose other than jewelry cannot be worn as jewelry (i.e., chains or collars). Students may wear no more than two necklaces at one time.
- Students are permitted a maximum of two earrings per ear on the earlobe, and earrings must not be larger than a quarter. No stretched piercings (gauge) or holes may be visible.
- Hats and sunglasses are not to be worn in the building. Hats include visors and bandanas.
- Religious headgear is permitted when worn for religious purposes.
- All Lower School (K-5) students must wear tennis shoes. Dress shoes, boots, moccasins, crocs, and slippers are not permitted.
- Upper School (6-12) students may wear non-marking tennis shoes or dress shoes. Boots, crocs, and slippers are not permitted.
- Shoes must be closed-toed, closed-heeled tennis or dress shoes; boots, sandals, crocs, and slippers are not permitted.
- Shoes, socks, and shoelaces should be mostly white, black, blue, brown, or gray.
- Good personal hygiene is required at all times. This includes wearing neat, clean clothing. In addition, clothes may not be ripped or torn. Strong/offensive body odors are inappropriate.
- The use of perfumes, oils, and body sprays by students should not inhibit the learning environment, and smells should not be detectable in the course of a normal school routine. Smells of this nature that saturate a room often cause headaches, exacerbate allergies, and cause disruption to the learning environment. Should this occur, students will be excused to the front office to call home.
- Should a student require reasonable uniform alterations based on religion, disability, or medical condition, please contact the administration.
- All school-sponsored events, including after school and weekends, are subject to school uniform policy.



### ***Uniforms and Financial Assistance***

ARCA will not allow financial need to limit access to the School, and this includes access to uniforms. At a minimum, the School will fund one complete uniform set for children whose families qualify for financial assistance. If you need assistance, please contact the Head of School's office.

### ***Lost and Found***

The student Lost and Found is in the front office. Students are responsible for retrieving their misplaced items. Due to limited space, all unclaimed items will automatically be donated to either Goodwill or the school uniform store on the last school day of each month.

### ***School Meals & Lunchtime***

Applications for free or reduced meals are available in the front office.

Lunchtime provides an opportunity to relax, play, and restore the body and mind. Students must talk quietly and behave calmly during lunch.

### ***Snacks***

We understand that young students require snacks to keep them going during the day, and teachers in Grades K-2 will set aside a time in the morning during which students can enjoy a quick bite to eat. Parents are responsible for sending students to school with a small, healthy snack that can be eaten in a couple of minutes. We ask that students bring things that can be eaten without utensils and without creating a mess.

With the exception of water bottles and K-2 snacks, food and drink are not permitted in the classrooms or libraries.

Upper School students may eat a quick snack between classes in the hallways as long as they bring food that can be eaten without utensils and without creating a mess. Students may not chew gum.

### ***Birthday Celebrations***

If you would like to bring birthday treats in for your student's class, please coordinate with the classroom teacher several days in advance. Our students' academic days are carefully scheduled, and we cannot accommodate last-minute celebrations.

## **School Culture and Discipline**

### ***Virtues and General Expectations for Behavior***

At Ashley River Classical Academy we seek virtue in all its forms, and we focus specifically on the classical virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, courage, responsibility, compassion, and perseverance. We hope that regular recurrence of these virtues in our learning, social interactions, and discipline will help students learn self-governance and strive toward excellence in all areas of life.

The emphasis on virtue at Ashley River Classical Academy is not primarily intended as a discipline policy: we aspire to excellence for its own sake because it is good, and because we are made better as

we aspire to it. We have bound our commitment to virtue into an Honor Code that we ask our families and students to sign as a common pledge.

### ***Honor Code***

The ARCA Honor Code: An Ashley River Classical Academy student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. An Ashley River Classical Academy student aspires to excellence in prudence, justice, temperance, courage, responsibility, compassion, and perseverance.

At the end of the Family Handbook is a separate page with the honor code and a place for parents and students to sign as a pledge of acceptance and agreement. At least one parent from each family is required to sign the pledge. All students in grades 6-12 are also required to sign it.

### ***The Purpose of Discipline***

The main purpose of all disciplines is to teach moral and intellectual virtue. Self-discipline arises from a desire for virtue, and without that desire, a student will falter when laws and rules are silent. A secondary purpose is to foster an orderly and disciplined environment in which all students can learn and develop friendships. Order and discipline are the foundation for a thriving school culture. Any departure from proper decorum is liable to disciplinary action. Because not all students respond to the same arguments, incentives, or punishments, any discipline policy must be at once equal to all students and consistently applied and also fitted to both the nature of each individual student and the circumstances in which any misbehavior occurs.

### ***Consistent School-Wide Rules and Expectations***

Teachers, coaches, and other staff members across all grade levels will prominently post and train all students in our fundamental five classroom rules: (1) Be on time, (2) Be prepared, (3) Be respectful, and (4) Be safe. These rules, of course, must be applied in an age-appropriate manner. For example, Lower School students may not have control over their arrival time to school but can control lining up promptly after recess. Seventh graders may also not control their arrival time to school but should be on time for all class transitions. Training students in preparedness includes developing their organizational skills and understanding how their preparedness impacts the functioning of the entire class. Finally, teaching students to make safe choices, seek help when necessary, and prioritize safety is crucial, as it fosters prudence, responsibility, and a safe learning environment for all.

In addition to our three school-wide rules, we will train students in all grades in the following specific behaviors:

1. Follow all classroom procedures.
2. Stand when answering a question in a formal setting.
3. Walk quietly and calmly when inside the school building.
4. Stand when adults enter the room.
5. "Tracking." When the teacher raises her hand to establish order, the students give their attention and stop talking, with their eyes on the speaker, and listening intently.
6. Take pride in and take care of the school facility and property.
7. Use "Sir" or "Ma'am" when addressing adults.

8. Respond when greeted. Shake hands when introduced to someone.
9. Open doors for others, and express gratitude when receiving that courtesy.
10. Appropriate etiquette at meals.
11. Make appropriate eye contact.
12. Maintain appropriate dress code.
13. Express gratefulness to peers, teachers, parents, and other faculty and staff members.

### ***Simple, Age-Appropriate, Consistent Classroom Procedures:***

Each teacher will follow and enforce our schoolwide classroom procedures in a manner that is age-appropriate. Consistent classroom procedures help students navigate the school day successfully. Those procedures, however, should not be elevated to the level of a “rule.” Violation of class procedures only becomes a disciplinary issue if the student has been effectively trained in a procedure but willfully violates it, thereby violating one of our three school-wide rules.

### ***Awards, Positive Recognition, and Weekly Assemblies***

Rewards and recognition are an important way of reinforcing positive attitudes and behavior in students. The purpose of rewards, however, is to encourage students to internalize the belief that positive actions are good in and for themselves rather than because of any extrinsic motivations. Because our goal is to motivate students to understand the importance of good behavior on its own.

Appropriate classroom rewards include such things as special recognition by the teacher and/or classmates, designating students with special classroom jobs that are highly desirable (assisting the teacher with passing out items, holding the door open for the class, etc.), and opportunities for greater autonomy in the classroom, as age appropriate.

Over the course of each week, teachers will submit to the Dean of Lower School the names of students who have excelled in the focus virtue of the month for recognition at our weekly assembly on a shared spreadsheet. There is no maximum number of names that a teacher may submit, and a student’s name may be submitted multiple times for excellent actions over the course of the week. Every teacher, however, must submit the name of at least one student from their class to be recognized.

Each Friday, there is an all-school assembly in the cafeteria at 8:00 a.m. All students will be seated by class. These assemblies include the morning recitations, recognition for students who have done outstanding work in the previous week, and a short story, poem, or exhortation by the Head of School or other school leader related to that month’s focus virtue.

The last assembly of each month is a Scholar of the Month Assembly that includes a short awards ceremony for a Student of the Month at each grade level for that month’s focus virtue and a Teacher of the Month as well as poetry recitations and songs by grade level. One class is recognized with the Excellence Award by the Head of School and will receive a certificate to display on their classroom door.

Parents of all students are invited to attend ARCA's monthly assemblies. Parents of students who are to receive Student of the Month awards will be informed the week before the assembly and are highly encouraged to attend the ceremony

### ***Reasonable Consequences***

Ashley River Classical Academy will make every reasonable effort to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school environment and avoid negative behavior. Minor disciplinary issues should be addressed at the classroom level by teachers. School discipline should always be reasonable, timely, fair, and age-appropriate, and should match the severity of the student's infraction.

### ***Responsibility for Discipline***

In most cases, teachers will be able to manage student behavior and communicate with the parents if needed. Teachers will be assertive in controlling their classrooms through both positive reinforcement of good behavior and redirection and retraining if students engage in negative behaviors. In some situations, either due to the seriousness or repetitive nature of the negative behavior, intervention by the appropriate school administrator is warranted.

The Head of School and Dean of Lower School are the only staff members responsible for implementing suspension or expulsion. During extracurricular activities, the coach, teacher, or other designated school member reserves the right to deny athletic or extracurricular participation to any student whose inappropriate actions or conduct are addressed in this handbook, individual team rules, or are not explicitly covered.

### ***Disciplinary Interventions***

Each Lower School teacher provides a weekly report on student behavior to parents using our Lower School Conduct Tracker. This system allows teachers to partner with parents and administrators through frequent communication and allows the teacher to track student behavior to see if any patterns emerge that need special attention. The Lower School Conduct Tracker will be sent home each day in each child's assigned folder. Parents should review the Lower School Conduct Tracker, initial it, and return it to school the following day. If concerns arise, parents are encouraged to contact the teacher directly.

In the Upper School, there will be a system of formal merits and demerits. Upper School students will earn merits through excellent conduct, academic effort, and virtuous behavior. In addition to accumulating individual merits that will result in rewards and other opportunities for greater responsibility and autonomy, each merit will count as one point for that student's assigned House in our Upper School House System.

While demerits do not deduct House points nor are they subtracted from merits, students who accumulate demerits will lose opportunities for participation in some school functions and extracurricular activities and may be subject to disciplinary action, including detention and/or escalation to a Level 2 Demerit. Upper School merits and demerits will be communicated to parents via email daily.

For all students, the following represents the general series of disciplinary actions for minor infractions:

Students will be verbally redirected as needed. If the behavior is serious or repetitive, they will receive a mark on their Conduct Tracker (Lower School) or a demerit (Upper School). Both will be communicated to the parents. The number of warnings on the Lower School Conduct Tracker or the number of demerits that accrue for the same or related offenses will result in age-appropriate consequences, specifically ones that may help address the root of why the misbehavior occurred or that may reinforce for the student why the behavior was wrong, such as the completion of a Reflection Form (as age- and developmentally-appropriate). Serious or frequently repeated misbehavior that interrupts the learning environment will result in removal from class and a phone call home. The Dean of Lower School and/or Head of School will contact the parents and may ask the parents to conference with the teacher and administrator. The purpose of this conference is to determine a course of action to support the student's behavioral and academic success.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Ashley River Classical Academy will follow a progressive discipline action plan which will range from verbal warnings to suspension and expulsion and will be used to promote both a student's self-discipline and an orderly environment for all. Even when more serious discipline, like a suspension, is necessary, the purpose is not to punish but to educate.

Classroom/Teacher Managed Behaviors can adversely affect a student's educational progress. Classroom/Teacher-managed infractions should be handled by the classroom teacher and are not processed through a formal referral for disciplinary actions from the administration. However, these infractions are documented by the teacher. Multiple or chronic offenses may require administrative/guidance action and referral for interventions.

#### **Level 1 Demerits**

Level 1 Behavior Misconduct is defined as those activities engaged in by student (s) which tend to impede orderly classroom procedures or instructional activities, orderly operation of the school, or the frequency or seriousness of which disturb the classroom or school.

#### **Level 1 Consequences**

Results in a Reflection Form (as age- and developmentally-appropriate) and/or detention. Serious or frequently repeated misbehavior that interrupts the learning environment will result in removal from class, detention, and a phone call home. The Dean of Lower School and/or Head of School will contact the parents and may ask the parents to conference with the teacher and administrator. The purpose of this conference is to determine a course of action to support the student's behavioral and academic success.

Behaviors for which a student will be issued a Level 1 Demerit include

- o Being in a restricted area
- o Cheating/Plagiarizing
- o Chewing gum

- o Contraband Related
- o Detention Violation
- o Disrespect
- o Disrupting class
- o Failure to Comply
- o Forgery/Counterfeit
- o Leaving Class
- o Obscene Gesture
- o Passing notes
- o Profanity
- o Property Misuse
- o Stealing
- o Truant
- o Unprepared for class/Incomplete homework
- o Unauthorized Device
- o Violation of Medication Policy

### **Level 2 Demerits**

Level 2 Disruptive Conduct is defined as those activities engaged in by student(s) which are directed against persons or property, and the consequences of which tend to endanger the health, safety of oneself or others in the school. Some instances of disruptive conduct may overlap certain criminal offenses, justifying both administrative sanctions and court proceedings.

### **Level 2 Consequences:**

Can be issued at any grade level for more serious disciplinary infractions in which the school administration should be involved. Level 2 Demerits will accumulate over the course of the year. A student may be suspended or expelled immediately for especially serious offenses. Receiving a Level 2 Demerit indicates that a student's behavior is a serious problem, and earning repeated Level 2 Demerits will result in a series of escalating consequences:

#### **First Level 2 Demerit**

Student is sent to the office, and parents are notified. The student may receive detention or suspension, depending on the severity of the offense. Detentions may occur during the school day, during the student's lunchtime, before or after school, or on Saturdays, depending on the severity of the behavior and the age of the child. Suspensions may be in-school or out-of-school.

#### **Second Level 2 Demerit**

Student is sent to the office, and parents are notified. The student may receive detention or suspension.

#### **Third Level 2 Demerit**

The student is sent to the office, and parents are notified. The student receives detention or suspension, as appropriate. A parent conference is requested. The purpose of this meeting is to exchange accurate information about the student to determine how the school, working in partnership with the parents, can best help the student reform his or her behavior.

#### **Fourth Level 2 Demerit**

The student is sent to the office, and the parent is called. The student is suspended for at least the rest of the day, or additional days, and may not return to school until a parent or

guardian has conferenced with the administrator about the seriousness of the behavioral pattern and the consequences going forward of not reforming the behavior. The parent may be requested to accompany the student to class for one full day or portion of a day to observe the school day.

### **Fifth Level 2 Demerit**

The student is sent to the office, parents are called, and the student is sent home. The student will be suspended for multiple days or expelled, as called for by the nature of the offense.

Behaviors for which a student will immediately be issued a Level 2 Demerit include:

- o Aiding Others
- o Bite/Pinch/Spit
- o Bribery
- o Bullying
- o Cheating
- o Electronic Device Possession
- o Computer Violation
- o Confrontation/Altercation
- o Contract Violation
- o Disrespect to staff
- o Fighting
- o Fire Alarm
- o Fireworks Possession
- o Fraud
- o Gambling
- o Harassment
- o Hit/Kick/Push
- o Inappropriate Physical Contact
- o Intimidation
- o Leaving School
- o Leaving the room without permission
- o Lying
- o Major Disruption
- o Misc. Weapons
- o Physical Contact
- o Physical Harassment
- o Pornography
- o Profanity (toward adult)
- o Repeated disruptions to the learning environment
- o Sexting
- o Skipping class
- o Stolen Property
- o Tobacco
- o Trespassing
- o Urination
- o Vandalism

### **Level 3 Demerit**

Level 3 Criminal Conduct is defined as those activities engaged in by student(s) which result in violence to oneself or another's person or property or which pose a direct or serious threat to the safety of oneself or others in the school. When school officials have a reasonable belief that students have engaged in such activities, then these activities usually require administrative actions which result in the immediate removal of the student from school, the intervention of the School Resource Officer or other local law enforcement authorities, and/or action by the local school board.

### **Level 3 Consequences**

The student is sent to the office, parents are called by the Dean of Lower School and/or Head of School and the student is sent home. The student will be suspended for multiple

days or expelled, as called for by the nature of the offense. The Head of School, Dean of Lower School, and School Counselor will begin intervention with the School Resource Officer or other local law enforcement authorities and/or action by the local school board to make final decisions.

Behaviors for which a student will immediately be issued a Level 3 Demerit include:

- o Alcohol/Liquor Law Violation
- o Arson
- o Assault, Aggravated
- o Assault, Simple
- o Bomb Threat
- o Bullying
- o Burglary
- o Computer Violation- Criminal
- o Cyber Bullying
- o Drug Distribution
- o Drug Usage
- o Drug Paraphernalia
- o Drug Possession
- o Fire Alarm Possession
- o Forced Sexual Offense
- o Gang Activity
- o Homicide
- o Indecent Exposure
- o Kidnap/Abduction
- o Larceny/Theft
- o Major Disruption
- o Non-Forcible Sexual Offense
- o Robbery
- o Sexual Harassment
- o Sexual Violation
- o Threat to Staff or School
- o Tobacco Distribution
- o Trespassing
- o Vandalism

### ***Relevant Factors in Making Discipline Decisions***

When choosing appropriate consequences for a student's misbehavior, teachers, administrators, and staff must consider the following factors:

- Age, health, mental state, disability, or special education status
- Appropriateness of student's academic placement.
- Student's prior conduct, record of behavior, and attitude.
- Seriousness of the offense, the degree of harm caused, and the impact of the incident on the overall school community.

### ***Use of Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions***

The use of measures such as out-of-school suspensions and expulsions should be minimized and follow a clear and documented path of escalation and interaction as described above. Suspensions or Expulsions are the responsibility of the Dean of Lower School and Head of School only.

### ***Use of Suspension***

If a student is suspended, he or she will be permitted to complete homework, receive missed assignments, and take tests or quizzes held during the student's time away from school. This may require the parent/guardian to obtain the necessary material from the school.



### ***Use of Expulsions***

The authority to expel a student lies with the Head of School, and any appeal will follow due process. The board will be involved in the due process of any appeals relating to suspension or expulsion. The purpose of the appeal is for the board to determine if the Head of School gathered the appropriate evidence, reached the correct conclusion, and handed out a measure of discipline appropriate for the violation.

### ***Off-Campus and After-Hours Behavior***

The school's rules and expectations of students apply to students attending any and all school-sponsored activities, including but not necessarily limited to regular school activities, transportation on school-sponsored/provided transportation, field trips, athletic functions, and any other activities during which appropriate school personnel have supervisory responsibility for students.

### ***Arrests and Referrals to Law Enforcement***

If the Dean of Lower School or Head of School feels that a student poses a clear and present danger to the school, themselves, or other students, they will call in the appropriate law enforcement agencies. Such action should only be used as a last resort, and incidents should be resolved without the involvement of law enforcement whenever possible. All staff will receive training regarding student discipline and conduct, including which steps to take in a perceived emergency.

### **Due Process**

In the event a student is facing suspension or expulsion, the school will always afford them due process. Students facing suspension or expulsion can appeal the Head of School's decision and will:

- Be allowed to call a parent/guardian and have the parent/guardian speak with the Head of School and/or Dean of Lower School.
- Be informed of the allegations and evidence against them.
- Have an opportunity to respond to the allegations, verbally or in writing, and present their version of events.
- Be informed of the right not to submit a written statement if a written statement is requested.
- Have an opportunity to present evidence in their defense, including the right to have witnesses interviewed by the Head of School, Dean of Lower School, or other designee.

The school must also provide a written notice of suspension in a language that the parent/guardian can understand. Both the oral and written notices must:

- Inform the parent/guardian that the student has been suspended.
- Include the grounds for the suspension, the period of the suspension, and offer to schedule a time and place for the parent/guardian to meet with the Head of School and/or Dean of Lower School to review the suspension prior to or concurrent with reinstatement.
- State that make-up work will be provided during the period of suspension, and that the student's parent/guardian has the right to appeal the suspension and how to do so.

If an emergency requires immediate removal of the student from school, the Head of School, Dean of Lower School, or designee shall immediately notify the parent/guardian to determine the best way to transfer custody of the student to the parent/guardian.

While suspended, students shall be provided a reasonable opportunity to earn equivalent grades and academic credits as other students. They must also be provided the opportunity to make up tests, final examinations, and complete class and homework assignments while on suspension or within a reasonable time following the completion of the suspension. Suspensions are counted toward a student's unexcused absences.

### ***Right to Appeal Suspension - School Administration***

Students have the following rights during the appeals process:

- The right to request a meeting with the Head of School and/or Dean of Lower School within five days of the incident.
- The right to a representative to be present at the meeting.
- The right to address the Head of School, Dean of Lower School, or appropriate designee on the evidence and the appropriateness of the penalty.
- The right to submit a dissenting opinion regarding the disciplinary action, and have it included in the student's disciplinary file.

The student's parent(s) or representative may, upon request, have access to the student's previous school records; this request must be made in writing (or email) within at least two (2) days before the appeal. If the records of one student contain information about another student, that information shall be redacted from the copy furnished to the student's parents or representative.

The Head of School must do the following:

- Review all written documents
- Determine if sufficient evidence exists to corroborate the violation
- Determine whether the penalty imposed was appropriate
- Provide a written decision within five days of the appeal

If it is determined that no violation occurred, all school records pertaining to the suspension will be expunged from the student's file, and a corrected copy of the student's file will be provided to the student's parent or guardian.

If the penalty is found to be disproportionate to the violation, all school records will be revised to indicate only the facts leading to the reduced penalty imposed by the Head of School.

If the Head of School denies the appeal, the student and his or her parent/guardian must be notified of the right to a second appeal of the disciplinary action to be conducted by the Governing Board.

### ***Right to Appeal Suspension – Governing Board***

The student's parent/guardian may appeal to the Governing Board in writing through the Head of School within three (3) school days of receiving the Head of School's appeal decision.

Implementation of the penalty will be imposed pending the outcome of the appeal. New evidence may be admitted only to avoid injustice or to correct any facts presented earlier.

The Governing Board will convene an emergency meeting to conduct the appeals process. As a result of this hearing, the Governing Board will only reverse or alter the Head of School's decision in the instance the Board finds the Head of School's decision clearly in error or based on prejudice or discrimination. The decision put forth by the Governing Board is final and may only be appealed to a court of law.

### ***Procedures for Expulsions***

When a student is recommended for expulsion, the Head of School must, at the time of making such recommendation, give the student and the student's parent/guardian written notice of the recommendation in a language that they can understand. The notice must contain:

- Clear reasoning and documentation for the decision to expel the student
- The date set for the hearing, not to exceed ten days after the date of the notice
- A statement that the student may be present at the hearing to hear the evidence against them, an opportunity to present relevant evidence in their defense, and to notify parents/guardians that they can accompany the student or assign a representative of their choice

There shall be no expulsion without a hearing at which evidence may be presented on the student's behalf by the parent and/or an attorney or advocate of the parent/guardian's choice.

The student, parent/guardian, or representative must be allowed to question individuals presenting information.

Written statements made by the student may not be used as evidence unless his or her parent/guardian was present at the time it was signed by the student, or school officials had made reasonable attempts to have the parent/guardian present at the time of signing.

A written opinion notifying the student and his or her parent/guardian of the action taken must be issued within five days of the hearing. The period of expulsion shall not exceed one calendar year.

The Governing Board chairperson or a designee must also notify the student and his or her parent/guardian of their right to appeal the decision to the Governing Board within ten calendar days of the receipt of the notice. The notice must be in a language that the parent/guardian can understand.

### ***Right to Appeal Expulsions***

If an appeal is requested, the Governing Board must review the record and offer the opportunity for representatives of the school and the student to make statements to the Board. The Board must:

- Review all written documents
- Determine if sufficient evidence exists to corroborate the violation
- Determine whether the penalty imposed was appropriate
- Provide a written decision within five days of the appeal

If it is determined that no violation occurred, all school records pertaining to the expulsion will be expunged from the student's file, and a corrected copy of the student's file will be provided to the student's parent or guardian.

If the penalty was disproportionate to the violation, all school records will be revised to indicate only the facts leading to the reduced penalty imposed by the Governing Board.

Information will be provided to the parent/guardian of every expelled student regarding educational alternatives available during the period of expulsion.

### ***Specific Offenses***

The following is a list of several specific offenses that are contrary to the expected conduct of Ashley River Classical Academy students. Each of these activities will result in serious and immediate consequences for the student, as described below.

#### **1. Weapons and Deadly Objects**

Possession of a deadly weapon will not be tolerated on the school campus. Possession of a weapon will result in out-of-school suspension or expulsion. Possession of fireworks and explosives or the use of these items will also result in out-of-school suspension or expulsion. The school will contact Law Enforcement.

#### **2. Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol**

Ashley River Classical Academy is a tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free campus. Any possession or use of these substances is strictly prohibited. Possession, use, or sale of real or counterfeit drugs will result in out-of-school suspension for the first offense and expulsion for any subsequent offense. Drug paraphernalia, whether possessed for use or with the intent to sell or distribute, will be an attempt to promote the distribution and use of illegal drugs and will result in suspension or expulsion.

#### **3. Acts of Violence**

Fighting is not allowed. This action is considered one of the most severe infringements on the rights of others. Acts of violence, whether directed at another student, teacher, or adult, will carry a severe penalty. Possible disciplinary actions: In-school or out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

#### **4. Stealing, Robbery, or Extortion**

These offenses will result in in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. The severity of the crime and the number of offenses will dictate the punishment.

#### **5. Vandalism or Property Damage**

Actions that cause or attempt to cause damage to school property will result in fines levied upon the student and their parent/guardian. The fine will not exceed the amount spent on repairing or replacing the damaged or broken property. Severe cases of damaging, defacing, or mutilating school property, such as arson, damage to windows, playground equipment, computers, etc., may result in the suspension or expulsion of the student.

#### **6. Profanity, Obscene Acts, Demeaning Racial Statements, and Vulgarity**

These acts will be construed as an attack on the rights and privileges of other students who are attempting to receive an education and the rights of teachers to teach. Therefore, any incident of derogatory, hurtful, or insensitive remarks or statements will be a clear violation of the school's Code of Conduct. This policy will be enforced whether the infraction is caused through messages purposefully displayed on clothes, written, communicated verbally, or using physical gestures. The resulting disciplinary action will require changing offensive clothing, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, or a combination of any of these actions.

#### **7. Willful Disobedience**

Intentional defiance of teachers, administration, or school staff will not be tolerated. Such action may be exhibited while coming to and from school, during the normal school day, on field trips, or during school-sanctioned events or extracurricular activities. For the safety of the students, and their peers and the establishment of a nurturing learning environment, respect for faculty, staff, and parents will always be displayed. Students are expected to demonstrate good citizenship and act in a reasonable manner as presented by the school's virtues. Students demonstrating willful disobedience or other misbehavior during field trips, after school, or during other extracurricular activities and events may not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities for a period of time to be determined by the Head of School.

#### **8. Public Displays of Affection**

Public displays of affection are not allowed on campus or during school-related activities and are liable to disciplinary consequences.

#### **9. Sexual Harassment**

Prohibited sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Other types of conduct that are prohibited and may constitute sexual harassment include Unwelcome leering, sexual flirtations or propositions, unwelcome sexual slurs, labels, verbal abuse, derogatory comments or sexually degrading descriptions, graphic verbal comments about an individual's body, or overly personal conversation, sexual jokes, stories, drawings, pictures or gestures, spreading sexual rumors, teasing or sexual remarks about students enrolled in a predominantly single-sex class, touching an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way, cornering or blocking of normal movements, displaying sexually suggestive objects in the educational environment; and any act of retaliation against an individual who reports a violation of the school's sexual harassment policy or who participates in the investigation of a sexual harassment complaint.

The school leader or designee shall take appropriate actions to reinforce the board's sexual harassment policy.

#### **10. Act of Hate**

Any violence or threat of violence, threat or attempting to cause or participate in an act of hate can be defined as willfully interfering with or threatening another person's personal or property rights because of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

Speech that threatens violence, when the perpetrator has the apparent ability to carry out the threat, may be considered an act of hate violence. These offenses may call for reprimand, suspension, and/or expulsion.

#### **11. Other Harassment**

Intentionally engaging in harassment, threats, or intimidation against a student or group of students when the harassment is severe and pervasive and disrupts classes or creates disorder or an intimidating or hostile educational environment will not be tolerated. These offenses may call for a reprimand, suspension, and/or expulsion.

#### **12. Bullying**

Ashley River Classical Academy's Bullying Policy includes but is not limited to bullying based on an individual's:

- Race
- Sex
- Religion
- Creed
- Ethnicity
- Political Belief
- Age
- National Origin
- Linguistic and Language Differences
- Sexual Orientation
- Socioeconomic Status
- Physical Characteristics or Disabilities

It is possible for bullying to occur between fellow students, between co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or imposed by non-employees, including visitors, on employees, and/or students.

### ***Types of Bullying***

1. Verbal Bullying - saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes but is not limited to teasing, name-calling, insults, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, and/or threatening to cause harm.
2. Social or Relational Bullying - involves intentionally hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social or relational bullying includes, but is not limited to:
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other students not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors or lies about someone, and/or
  - Embarrassing someone in public purposefully
3. Physical Bullying - involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes but is not limited to:
  - Hitting
  - Kicking
  - Pinching
  - Spitting
  - Tripping
  - Pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone's things, and/or
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures
4. Social Media or Cyber Bullying - Involves bullying that takes place using electronic technology and social media. Cyberbullying can include but is not limited to
  - Malicious text messages or emails
  - Rumors spread by email or posted on social networking sites
  - Spreading embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles. This can be authentic content or content that has been manipulated through Photoshop, deep fake video production, or other measures meant to deceive.

Ashley River Classical Academy may authorize suspensions for violations of the school's Code of Conduct that do not occur on educational property. Consequences for students violating the bullying policy will depend on the severity of the behavior and will be determined by the Dean of Lower School and/or Head of School.

### ***Discipline of Students with Disabilities***

Ashley River Classical Academy follows the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and the procedural safeguards provided under IDEA and State law for students with disabilities. In

disciplinary matters, this means that a student with disabilities may, based on the severity of the behavior, be moved to a temporary alternate placement determined by the IEP team or suspended for no more than ten consecutive school days (a student may be moved by a temporary administrative decision if there is a risk of serious bodily injury).

A student does not have to have an IEP in place to receive IDEA discipline protections. Protections are available as long as the school had knowledge that the student may have a disability before the misconduct occurred.

The ARCA may suspend a student with a disability for up to 10 days without a duty to continue to provide services from the IEP, review his or her Behavior Intervention Plan, or reconsider the Functional Behavior Assessment.

Suspending a student with disabilities for more than ten cumulative days in a single school year (even for separate incidents), however, constitutes a change of placement. In those cases, the student must continue to receive all services required by the IEP. If a student's behavior warrants in-school suspension, the Academy will provide services comparable to those in the student's IEP and that allow the student opportunities to participate in his or her general curriculum.

If a student with a disability is being considered for expulsion or a suspension that would result in more than 10 days (consecutive or cumulative of the school year), the Academy will conduct a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) hearing. At this hearing, a determination will be made regarding whether the behavior was caused by, or had a direct or substantial relationship to, the student's disability, or whether the conduct resulted from the school's failure to implement the IEP. Parents will be notified at least 24 hours prior to an MDR.

If the MDR results in a finding that the behavior was not a manifestation of the disability, then the Academy will take the same disciplinary action for the student with a disability that it would have for children without disabilities. As noted above, if a removal constitutes more than ten cumulative days during the school year, all required IEP services shall be provided. If necessary, the Academy may also perform a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and implement positive behavioral intervention services to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

If the MDR results in a finding that the behavior was a manifestation of the disability, or if the conduct was a direct result of the Academy's failure to implement the IEP, then the Academy will conduct an FBA or, following a review, modify any existing behavioral intervention plan as necessary. The student will be returned to the student's placement at the school (though the parents and the school may agree to a change of placement as part of modifications to the IEP or BIP).

Parents or the school may appeal an MDR determination. An appeal hearing must be held within 20 days of notice by the LEA representative. A decision shall be rendered within ten days. Disability services shall be provided during the appeal process. If the school believes continuing IEP services is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the school may appeal that decision.

School officials shall remove a student to an interim alternative setting for up to 45 school days, regardless of whether the conduct is a manifestation of the disability in the following three



situations: a student is found to have used or possessed illegal drugs, possessed a firearm on school grounds, or committed aggravated assault on a school employee.

In these cases, the student may be placed in an alternative education setting for up to 45 days. The Head of School will notify parents in writing of all matters related to the incident. Parents may bring an attorney or advocate to any related meetings.

Regardless of the determination following the MDR, the school will resume providing IEP services on the 11th day of suspension (if they were halted as part of the suspension).

Ashley River Classical Academy will consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement, consistent with the other requirements of South Carolina Department of Education Board of Education Regulations, is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct. All parental notifications related to disciplinary actions will be made as required by state and federal regulations.

### ***Corporal Punishment***

Corporal punishment is prohibited at Ashley River Classical Academy. Employees are specifically prohibited from shoving, striking, grabbing, shaking, or hitting a student. Throwing objects at a student, unreasonably restraining a student, or asking others to engage in any of these activities are also prohibited.

### ***Electronic Devices***

In compliance with the General Appropriations Bill, H. 5100 of 2024, Proviso 1.103, electronic devices are not allowed on campus. However, if a student must bring a device, it must remain powered off and may not be used during the academic school day, including during drop-off and pick-up. Students may not keep electronic devices on them during the academic school day. If a student must bring a cell phone or other electronic device to school, he or she must keep it in a locker or bookbag for the entire day, including during recess, lunch, passing periods, and study halls. Such devices include but are not limited to laptops, portable audio devices, head/earphones, hand-held video games, cell phones, and any other device or accessory with wireless or cellular capabilities, including but not limited to watches and eyewear. Exceptions will be made for necessary medical devices and at the Head of School's discretion.

Any student using a phone or other electronic device during the day will have that device confiscated until the end of the day. If there is reason to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation, the device may be powered on and searched.

Students who break this rule will receive a Level 2 Demerit and consequence.

Refusal to give up or turn in the cell phone will automatically result in a disciplinary action with possible out of school suspension due to disrespectful behavior and insubordination. If suspension is given a mandatory parent meeting will occur before the student returns to school.

Ashley River Classical Academy is not responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of these items.

## ***Lockers***

Ashley River Classical Academy provides lockers (as available) for students in the Upper School (Grades 6- 12). The lockers are school property. ARCA has the authority to search lockers when deemed necessary. No locks are permitted on the lockers.

ARCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Valuables should NOT be brought to school. Problems with lockers should be reported to the Dean of Lower School.

Students must observe the following rules:

- While students are allowed to decorate the inside of lockers, there may be no posters, pictures, or anything else which advertises sex, drugs, suicide, cults, alcohol, or promotes other negative or derogatory messages as determined by the Head of School.
- Lockers must be kept neat and orderly at all times. Locker checks will occur each semester.
- Lockers must be kept closed when not in use to maintain the integrity of the fire corridors and avoid careless accidents. Items left outside lockers or on the floor may be removed or disposed of.
- Students may not decorate the outside of their lockers. A student may be assessed a fine or asked to clean a locker that becomes dirty or damaged because of his or her use of it.

## **Medication and Medical Care**

### ***Administration of Medication***

Ashley River Classical Academy is committed to the health and safety of its students. Medication and/or medical procedures required by students should be administered by a parent/legal guardian at home. Under exceptional circumstances, prescribed medication and/or medical health-related procedures may be administered by the school Head of School, their designee, the school nurse, or self-administered by the student per written physician's orders and written parent/guardian authorization. The parent/guardian must complete and sign the Administration of Medication/Medical Procedure form to acknowledge that the school assumes no responsibility for medications or procedures that are self-administered. Office staff will make this form available to parents/guardians.

Students may not bring ANY medication to school. This includes cough drops, pain medication, etc. Students found to be in possession of medicine at school, without permission, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents/Guardians must bring medication to the office and sign a form authorizing ARCA to administer the medication here at school.

- All medicine must be in the original package with the full label.
- Only the dose listed on the package as appropriate will be given.
- A doctor's authorization may be required.

A doctor's written authorization is required for:

- Prescription medicine
- Emergency medicine such as bee sting kits and/or epi-pens.
- Self-administered medicine such as inhalers for asthma.

School nurses or other employees who are trained may administer auto-injectable epinephrine to students upon the occurrence of an actual or perceived anaphylactic adverse (allergic) reaction by the student, whether or not such student has a prescription for epinephrine. Any school employee who in good faith administers or chooses not to administer auto-injectable epinephrine to a student in such circumstances shall be immune from civil liability.

***Student medical records***

Student health records will be maintained in locked or password-protected files in order to maintain confidentiality. All health records will be managed by the Assistant Head of School and any appropriate, designated staff (such as the nurse) and will only be released to service providers as allowed and dictated by district and state regulations.

***Medical operations***

Ashley River Classical Academy will:

- Participate in workshops, in-services, and/or training offered by the South Carolina Department of Education’s Office of Coordinated School Health
- Use appropriate State forms for health services
- Require Head of School, or their designee, nurses, and volunteers to have completed training in CPR/first aid, diabetic education, medication administration, and AED training, as required.

Parents will be informed when a student reports to the office with a fever or has been injured seriously. If a parent cannot be reached, school personnel will determine what action needs to be taken. Any child with a temperature of 100°F or higher will not be allowed to remain in the classroom and must be picked up by a parent or designee. If a head injury is sustained or any injury requiring medical attention, the parent will be asked to come to school and determine what action should be taken. In case of more serious injuries, or in case the parent cannot be contacted, the school will immediately call 911 for emergency assistance.

Students who are sent home with a fever or vomiting may only return to school when they have been fever- or vomit-free for 24 consecutive hours.

***Medical records and enrollment***

In order to complete the enrollment process, parents shall submit all required immunization records and health forms.

***Parent/guardian obligations***

Parents shall, at all times, ensure that the school has updated medical information on file. It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to keep this information updated.

The parent must notify the office if a child has been injured at home and may need special considerations at school.

Parents/guardians must notify the school if a student has a contagious condition such as but not limited to: COVID, flu, chicken pox, head lice, or pink eye.

### ***Food allergies***

ARCA is not a peanut-free school. The school will, however, establish a table in the cafeteria for students with allergies, and teachers/monitors will ensure that this peanut-free zone is enforced.

### ***Sick students***

Sick children should not be in school. Any child with a fever or who is contagious (e.g., with pink eye, strep, or the flu) should be kept home. Before a student may return to school, fevers must be resolved, and the student must be symptom-free without medication for 24 hours.

### ***Lice Policy***

Lice is an extremely contagious issue that can easily spread through a school. Children suspected of lice (scratching heads, visible lice, or nits) will be checked by trained staff in the privacy of the clinic. Should lice be found, siblings may be checked as well. Children suspected of having head lice may not attend school. Parents will be notified of the situation and asked to pick up their child. ARCA's policy requires that no lice or nits (white eggs) be present when the child returns to school. Proof of treatment must be furnished before the child is readmitted to class. Students will be rechecked within 10 days of treatment to see if further treatment is necessary. If a head lice issue prevents a child from attending school, ARCA will provide missed work within 24 hours for the student to complete. Excused absences for lice treatment will be limited to two (2) consecutive days per occurrence. Two days is a reasonable length of time to correct the lice problem. Any length of time after two (2) days will be considered unexcused.

## **Student Fees and Supplies**

### ***Textbooks***

Ashley River Classical Academy provides all necessary textbooks to students in the lower school free of charge. These textbooks are the property of the school and must be returned at the end of the year in good condition.

Starting in 6th grade, ARCA provides students with paperback copies of some literature books. Students are encouraged to annotate these books as they read with the class. If you would like your student to keep these books for their home library after the class is finished, there is a \$60 fee to cover the cost of the books. This fee is required and ensures that your student can retain their annotated copies. If you have questions about whether a book is yours to keep after the school year, please ask your child's teacher.

ARCA values cultivating a love of reading and recognizes annotation as an important skill. By offering this option, we aim to make literature more accessible and engaging for our students.

Other textbooks, both in the lower school and upper school, remain the property of the school and are reused year after year. Students are issued these textbooks at the beginning of the year and are expected to keep them in good condition. Any textbooks that travel home with students should be carefully covered in paper (not cloth) and returned to the teacher when the class has concluded.

Students who do not return their textbooks or who return them damaged will be charged the replacement cost. If fees for lost or damaged materials are not paid, no further materials will be issued to that student until the past-due balance is cleared.

### ***Fees***

From time to time, the school may charge fees to its families for the purpose of funding expenses related to athletics, transportation, classroom supplies, band, orchestra, art, elective courses, activities, field trips, etc. All charges and fees must be authorized by the Head of School. All financial obligations must be rectified prior to registration for the upcoming school year. We appreciate your support of the education of all students at Ashley River Classical Academy and note that the fees you decide to pay are a gift rather than a required payment. We thank you for partnering with us to provide a strong classical education.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

We encourage students to participate in as many extra-curricular activities as they can reasonably manage, knowing that academics comes first. Every member of a club or team has a responsibility to his or her teammates to show up on time ready to participate, and to remain in good academic standing, and to display Ashley River Classical Academy's core virtues as ambassadors for the school. Extracurricular activities may charge a participation fee and athletic events may charge an attendance fee for spectators. These funds will be used to pay for uniforms, equipment, instruments, fees for invitationals, and other miscellaneous items.

Each coach or club leader will set rules by which each student must abide in order to participate.

### ***Eligibility***

Extracurriculars enrich a student's life at the school. Ashley River Classical Academy's goal is to encourage students to prioritize academics but also to provide meaningful opportunities to compete and flourish as young men and women. Participation in extracurricular activities, however, is a privilege that is contingent on school attendance, academic performance, and good behavior.

Only enrolled students may participate in ARCA extra-curricular activities, though the Head of School may grant exemptions in specific circumstances and for specific events (e.g., school dances).

Students participating in any school-sponsored event or extracurricular activity falling on a regular weekday must have been in attendance at school the day of the event, otherwise, they will be disallowed from participating in the event. Additionally, students who are considered truant based on this policy manual may be disallowed from participating in any extracurricular activities sponsored by the school.

Students with either two Ds or one F are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities. Grades are based upon regularly scheduled progress reports, which occur at the midpoint and end of each academic quarter. Ineligible students will not become eligible until the following progress report or later.

Student-athletes may still practice at the discretion of the coach if they are ineligible to compete.

Any student who receives three Level 1 or 2 demerits in a semester will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the semester. Any student who receives five Level 1 or 2 demerits in a year will be ineligible for participation in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the year.

Ultimate discretion on eligibility is the responsibility of the Head of School.

### ***Clubs***

The school will sponsor a number of student clubs that enhance the curriculum of the school and are in keeping with the school's mission. The school will not sponsor clubs that are open to only part of the student body, including clubs for students with particular religious or political views. All clubs must be approved by the Head of School and have an active faculty sponsor.

### ***Special Events***

Special events or parties held during a significant part of the school day must be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum.

Any special event or party must be approved by the Head of School a minimum of 3 weeks prior to its scheduled date. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next.

The school will host various social events, including dances, in the course of a regular school year. Students are expected to follow School rules and the Honor Code at these events, and attending students are subject to school disciplinary procedures. Eligibility to attend these events is based upon the same guidance given for all extracurricular activities, though the Head of School may make specific exceptions.

### ***Sports***

All student-athletes will need to complete a physical and sign a release form before they will be allowed to participate in any school-sanctioned sports activity, including practice. These forms are available in the front office and on the school website.

ARCA encourages students to participate in sports outside of the school day, whether at Ashley River Classical Academy or at another school if we do not offer the sport in question. In all cases, a student's academic needs and performance are the foremost priority and take precedence over athletics. Similarly, disciplinary consequences will take precedence over athletics.

Ashley River Classical Academy will make every effort to develop a modest athletics program that focuses on sportsmanship and the school's core virtues. The school will consider adding new sports

by weighing student interest, the number of potential participants, the school's general capacity to support new sports and teams, and the likelihood of a sport's longevity in the culture of the school.

### ***Student Publications***

Student publications must uphold ACA's mission, philosophy, core virtues, and policies. The purpose of such publications is to inform the Ashley River Classical Academy community of school-related events, achievements, and business. In addition, student publications are a way for students to learn and to practice responsible writing and journalism. Student editorials are permitted, subject to prior review by the Head of School. Employees of the school or parents may not use student media to proselytize their own views on controversial issues. The Head of School acts as the final editor in all cases.

### ***Volunteers***

Ashley River Classical Academy rests on a partnership between the school and families who choose to enroll their students. Volunteering is a crucial element in that partnership. ARCA relies on volunteers during carlines, at lunch and recess, in the classroom, and in other events sponsored by the school.

The classical model of education prioritizes the role of the teacher in the classroom, direct instruction, and Socratic conversation. For these reasons, the school's volunteering needs are primarily in assisting teachers in their administrative and supervisory tasks.

The school also seeks qualified and interested parents to help with clubs, chaperone activities, and assist the school in developing a culture of respect and responsibility.

### ***Volunteer Background Checks***

If an adult plans to volunteer with students (such as coaching, field trip chaperones, student tutoring, etc.) the individual must complete a volunteer registration form. If the adult will be responsible for student supervision, the parent must go through an additional background check, the cost of which the parent is responsible for paying. The school conducts the complete background check to ensure the individual is clear of anything in their past that would prevent them from working with children.

### ***Volunteer Confidentiality***

Volunteers often inadvertently have access to sensitive information. Any information about students, grades, faculty, etc. is to remain confidential. Volunteers may observe situations of a sensitive nature. These are also to remain confidential.

If a volunteer has a concern involving something that is witnessed, observed, or overheard it may only be discussed with the faculty members involved or the Head of School. The matter may also be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors by following the grievance policy explained in this manual. Under no circumstance is it acceptable for a volunteer to confront a teacher about an issue when students are present.

If a volunteer disregards the confidentiality policy, the privilege of volunteering may be revoked.

### ***Visitors Sign-In***

ARCA has a mandatory sign-in procedure for all visitors on campus, including parents. Any visitor to campus between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. must first report to the school office and will be required to show a U.S. federal or state-issued photo ID. The visitor's information will be stored in an electronic database to document visitors to the school. Information stored in the electronic database may be used only for the purpose of school security, and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose.

Visitors must check in with the front office and provide identification each time they visit the school, not just the first. A visitor badge will be issued to the visitor and displayed conspicuously during the visit.

In the unlikely event that a registered sex offender attempts to gain access to the school, the authorities will be notified immediately. If a person who is a registered sex offender is visiting the school because he or she has a child enrolled at ACA, that person will be supervised by school staff at all times during a school visit and will not have access to children without direct supervision.

### ***Parent Visits***

Classrooms, the lunchroom, and the recess areas are closed to parents during the school day except for school volunteers or parents who have scheduled a formal observation. Parents and family members are welcome to join their child for lunch. Please sign in at the office to obtain a badge prior to joining your student in the lunchroom.

During the school day, it may be necessary for a parent to drop off lunch or a forgotten item. Parents making deliveries should stop by the front office. One of the office staff members will be happy to deliver the item.

All of our teachers welcome parent/teacher conferences as long as they are scheduled in advance and on their calendars. To schedule a meeting with a teacher, please contact him or her via email.

### ***Classroom Observations***

We encourage parents to visit our classrooms to learn more about classical education and discover ways to contribute to their children's education at home. Beginning October 1 of each school year, classroom visits are available to parents by appointment.

Parents may schedule a formal observation of a student's class with the front office and check in at the office before the observation begins. A normal parent observation will last for one period, or, in K-6, two subjects at a time.



## **Inclement Weather**

When weather threatens a school closing, you may tune into one of the local news stations to find out if ARCA will be closing. We will follow the decisions of the Charleston County School District when making our decision. If you see that the district schools are closed, then so are we. If the local district has a delayed opening then so do we. Please stay informed of the weather conditions and do not bring your child to school unnecessarily. If the school is closed there will not be a school employee on campus. As possible, ARCA will also notify parents of school closures by email and other electronic methods.

## **Withdrawals**

We are always sorry to have a student move from ARCA. To facilitate the withdrawal of students from School, we ask that parents advise the School office of an intended withdrawal three days prior to leaving. A parent is required to meet with the Registrar to sign the withdrawal paperwork prior to the student's departure. This will provide adequate time for contacting teachers, closing the student's records, and preparing transfer documents. All debts must be paid prior to withdrawal, and textbooks must be returned.

## **SECTION 2: ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Curriculum Introduction**

The curriculum of Ashley River Classical Academy is based on the curriculum scope and sequence offered by Hillsdale College. This curriculum is used throughout the network of Hillsdale-affiliated schools, of which Ashley River Classical Academy is an affiliate. While ARCA has and will continue to make curricular adjustments in order to reflect local circumstances and requirements, our School has committed to embrace and uphold the following key characteristics:

1. The centrality of the Western tradition in the study of history, literature, philosophy, and fine arts;
2. A rich and recurring examination of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions;
3. The use of explicit phonics instruction leading to reading fluency, and the use of explicit grammar instruction leading to English language mastery;
4. The teaching of Latin;
5. The acknowledgment of objective standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth intrinsic to the liberal arts;
6. A culture demanding moral virtue, decorum, respect, discipline, and studiousness among the students and faculty;
7. A curriculum that is content-rich, balanced, and strong across the four core disciplines of math, science, literature, and history;
8. A faculty where well-educated and articulate teachers convey real knowledge using traditional teaching methods rather than “student-centered learning” methods;
9. The effective use of technology without diminishing the faculty leadership that is crucial to academic achievement; and
10. A plan to serve grades K through 12.

### **Homework**

Homework is an important part of classical education. Students who do not actively and consistently contribute to their own education, both in class and at home, will fall behind and sell themselves short. Homework takes place in the home, with all of the distractions that come with it. We encourage parents to provide a calm, quiet place for their children to complete their work. Television, music, movies, and video games seldom contribute to real learning, and we suggest that these be restricted while students are studying. At best this will extend homework time beyond what one would typically need and at worst will hinder real learning.

Every student will have some homework every day. Students in grades K-6 should spend 15- 40 minutes every evening reading, whether or not reading homework is assigned. We encourage you to choose a book to read as a family and make a little progress on it every night.

As a general rule, a student can expect 10 minutes of homework per grade level plus additional time for reading. So, a 1st grader will have approximately 10 minutes of homework per night (plus reading

time) and a 6th grader will have approximately 60 minutes. In the Upper School, students can expect to have 70-120 minutes of homework per night plus reading time of 30-40 minutes.

The designated times serve as guidelines and may vary depending on the work assigned on a given day, the schedule, the student's organizational skills and study habits, the varying abilities of the students, and the nature of the assignments. Students are expected to learn how to use their time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. Parents are expected to support their children in this endeavor.

Advanced or honors classes may require additional homework time. It is generally understood that writing papers and studying for exams take more time than regular classroom assignments. For that reason, the end of a term does result in a peak in the homework load. Nonetheless, teachers will make every effort to give assignments well in advance, and students will be encouraged to work on those longer assignments steadily, so that students are able to manage their homework along with other activities and adequate sleep. In the upper school, students will often have the opportunity to take a study hall, thus reducing the amount of time at home that must be devoted to homework.

For poor or uncompleted work, teachers may require students to redo an assignment. Whether such work is given any credit is left to the discretion of the teacher. Students are expected to complete all their homework.

### ***Late Homework***

One of the responsibilities of homework is to teach students responsibility and accountability. In order to accomplish this, and to ensure students do not fall behind on their school work, it is essential that students complete their work on time. Students who have an excused absence will have the number of days equal to the number of days absent to make up class and homework without penalty up to 7 days.

Homework will not be sent home nor will credit be awarded for any work done during periods of unexcused absence.

In grades 3-12, homework submitted one day late will receive 75% credit, and two days late will receive 50% credit. Homework submitted more than two days late will not receive credit. In grades K-2, late homework will be treated as an in-class discipline issue, and students may be required to serve lunchtime or recess detention in order to complete assignments.

### **Grading**

Grading is not the be-all and end-all of education. If anything, some students put more emphasis on grades than their teachers do. The grade a student receives in a class is subordinate to the knowledge the student acquires. Still, grades are a useful tool to evaluate the extent to which a student has mastered a particular subject. Therefore, grades will be assigned in all classes and subjects. Ashley River Classical Academy will assign grades in order to accurately reflect the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge of a subject. Grade inflation will be discouraged.

In Kindergarten and 1st grade, we will use the following marks:

E = Excellent performance

S = Satisfactory performance

N = Performance needs improvement

U = Unsatisfactory performance

Beginning in 2nd Grade, the following grading scale is used:

A = 90 - 100 %

B = 80 - 89%

C = 70 - 79 %

D = 60 - 69%

F= 0 - 59%

<b>Numerical Average</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>College Prep Weighting</b>	<b>Honors Weighting</b>	<b>AP/IB/Dual Credit Weighting</b>
100	A	5.000	5.500	6.000
99	A	4.900	5.400	5.900
98	A	4.800	5.300	5.800
97	A	4.700	5.200	5.700
96	A	4.600	5.100	5.600
95	A	4.500	5.000	5.500
94	A	4.400	4.900	5.400
93	A	4.300	4.800	5.300
92	A	4.200	4.700	5.200
91	A	4.100	4.600	5.100
90	A	4.000	4.500	5.000
89	B	3.900	4.400	4.900
88	B	3.800	4.300	4.800
87	B	3.700	4.200	4.700
86	B	3.600	4.100	4.600
85	B	3.500	4.000	4.500

84	B	3.400	3.900	4.400
83	B	3.300	3.800	4.300
82	B	3.200	3.700	4.200
81	B	3.100	3.600	4.100
80	B	3.000	3.500	4.000
79	C	2.900	3.400	3.900
78	C	2.800	3.300	3.800
77	C	2.700	3.200	3.700
76	C	2.600	3.100	3.600
75	C	2.500	3.000	3.500
74	C	2.400	2.900	3.400
73	C	2.300	2.800	3.300
72	C	2.200	2.700	3.200
71	C	2.100	2.600	3.100
70	C	2.000	2.500	3.000
69	D	1.900	2.400	2.900
68	D	1.800	2.300	2.800
67	D	1.700	2.200	2.700
66	D	1.600	2.100	2.600
65	D	1.500	2.000	2.500
64	D	1.400	1.900	2.400
63	D	1.300	1.800	2.300
62	D	1.200	1.700	2.200
61	D	1.100	1.600	2.100
60	D	1.000	1.500	2.000
59	F	0.900	1.400	1.900
58	F	0.800	1.300	1.800
57	F	0.700	1.200	1.700
56	F	0.600	1.100	1.600
55	F	0.500	1.000	1.500

54	F	0.400	0.900	1.400
53	F	0.300	0.800	1.300
52	F	0.200	0.700	1.200
51	F	0.100	0.600	1.100

Students will receive report cards every 9 weeks. Only semester grades will count toward a student's grade point average in the Upper School (grades 7-12). A semester grade for a class is the average (rounded to a tenth) of the numeric grades (percentages) from the two quarters in that semester.

In order to calculate a GPA, numeric grades are converted into points based on the grading scales above. Points are awarded for each class at the end of a semester. The semester GPA is calculated by totaling those points and averaging them by the number of classes taken that semester. A final GPA is determined by adding all the points from each semester and averaging them. GPAs are rounded to a hundredth. See below for further information about calculating GPA for ranking purposes in high school.

### ***Weighted GPA and HS Transcripts***

In order to maintain the integrity of our classrooms while recognizing the pressures of the broader academic world, ARCA will follow the state adopted weighted grading policy above.

For report cards, retention and promotion decisions, club and athletic eligibility, honor roll designations, eligibility for in-school honors, and for all other purposes, the standard point scale applies.

Students completing high school level courses in grade levels 6th-8th are awarded high school credit. The final semester grades and credits are reported on the student's transcript, however, any high school level courses completed in grade levels 6th-8th grade will not be factored into a student's cumulative GPA.

Because weighting procedures and level of rigor vary greatly from institution to institution, the final GPA reported on the transcript is based on courses taken at ARCA only. Courses and final grades earned outside of ARCA are listed on the transcript. For college applications, students may choose to provide a transcript from their previous high school if they believe it will strengthen their application.

### ***Reporting Student Progress***

For students to be successful, both they and their parents should be informed of their standing in class. In addition to the regular grading of assignments, the school will inform parents of their student's academic progress in the following ways:

- If a student is determined to be significantly below grade level, a meeting will be scheduled with a parent, the teacher, and other faculty as deemed appropriate.

- Progress reports will be available at the midpoint of the quarter and sent home if a student has earned a D in two or more classes or earned an F in one or more classes. In such cases, a student will be ineligible for extracurricular activities.
- Report cards will be mailed or sent home quarterly.
- At least once a semester, parent-teacher conferences will occur to discuss the student's academic progress.
- Parents have the ability to review student progress via online access to Ashley River Classical Academy's teachers' grade books through PowerSchool.

Generally, grades will be posted within seven business days after the due date unless otherwise notified by the teacher on the syllabus. Written assignments in the Upper School and labs may take longer to grade due to the kind and amount of feedback. Parents can monitor missing assignments online. Parents are encouraged to notify the teacher and the Head of School if there is no assignment/grade information for a particular academic subject or course.

### ***Teacher Conferences:***

Parent-teacher conferences happen at the end of the first and third quarters. At the end of the second and fourth quarters, teachers provide extensive comments on students' report cards. During the school year, a parent/teacher conference may be scheduled at any time a parent or the teacher thinks one is necessary. To schedule a conference with a teacher, please contact him or her via email.

### **Student Placement**

For students to thrive in school, they must master the fundamentals. The grade-level placement policy is designed to promote educational excellence and fairness by placing students at the most appropriate level for instruction. Ashley River Classical Academy will respect the promotion and retention decisions of the school from which a student transfers.

If students new to the school are found to be reading more than one grade level behind their existing peer group, they may be asked to enroll in the grade level deemed appropriate by the teacher and Head of School. If the parent chooses that the student be placed at the grade level in which the student originally enrolled against the advice of the teacher and Head of School, a signed document of this choice will become part of the student's permanent file.

High school transfer students will be placed based on their state-recognized credit hours; however, transfer students may require additional time in order to meet ACA's graduation requirements.

### **Promotion & Retention**

The purpose of promotion and retention is to provide maximum consideration for the long-range welfare of the student and to provide an opportunity for each student to progress through school according to his/her own needs and abilities.

It is expected that most students will be promoted annually from one grade level to another upon completion of satisfactory work. However, a student may be retained when his/her standards of achievement or social, emotional, mental, or physical development would not allow satisfactory

progress in the next higher grade. In certain cases—especially the academic cases detailed below—school administration may recommend or require that a student be retained.

### ***Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> Grade:***

A student will be considered for promotion only if he or she can read just above grade level and is competent in the other core subjects (English, Math, History, Science, and in sixth grade, Latin). Students in Kindergarten through second grade must achieve minimum levels of mastery of the English phonograms taught in the ARCA phonics and literacy curriculum.

ARCA complies with the South Carolina Read to Succeed Act with regards to promotion requirements for 3rd graders. Read to Succeed legislation requires that a student must be retained in the third grade if the student fails to meet the achievement level on the SC Ready state reading assessment.

Students who fail end of year assessments in reading or math may be retained.

### ***6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade***

#### **Automatic Promotion**

A student is eligible for automatic promotion if they meet the following criteria:

- Earn a 70% or higher in all core academic classes, including Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies.
- Maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 across all core academic classes.

#### **Promotion with Academic Deficiencies**

A student may be promoted with academic deficiencies if they meet the following criteria:

- Earn a **65% or higher** in at least **2 core academic classes**.
- **One of the two passing classes must be either English Language Arts or Mathematics.**
- Earn at least a **60%** in the remaining 2 classes that they did not pass.
- Maintain a **minimum GPA of 1.5**.
- Students passed end-of-course exams in reading or math.

If a student is promoted with academic deficiencies, school administration will conference with the parent/guardian(s), student, and grade-level teacher(s) to develop a success plan for the upcoming school year. This plan may include, but is not limited to:

- Required student check-ins with a school personnel mentor.
- Intervention services.
- After-school tutoring.
- Summer School
- An academic probation contract.

#### **Promotion with Administrative Approval**

A student may be considered for promotion with administrative approval if they meet one of the following conditions:



- Earn less than **70%** in **2 core academic classes** but no lower than **65%** in any core academic class.
- Earn less than **70%** in **3 or more classes**, but no lower than **60%** in any of those classes.

Promotion with administrative approval requires the Head of School to review and reference student data when drafting written documentation to support the decision. The Head of School may consider the following information:

- Progress monitor scores.
- SCREADY and SCPASS scores.
- Previous referrals to the Intervention Team.
- Participation in intervention services.
- Retention history.

If a student is promoted with administrative approval, school administration will conference with the parent/guardian(s), student, and grade-level teacher(s) to develop a success plan for the upcoming school year. This plan may include, but is not limited to:

- Required student check-ins with a school personnel mentor.
- Intervention services.
- Summer School
- Required after-school tutoring for a finite period.
- An academic probation contract.

### **Student Retention**

A student will be retained if they meet the following conditions:

- Earn less than **57%** in **2 or more core academic classes**; and
- Student data does not support promotion with administrative approval.
- Students who fail end-of-course exams in reading or math may be retained.
- If a student does not earn 65% or above in any semester of a high school credit course (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Latin I-III), then the student must retake the course in order to receive credit..

A student will be retained only after thorough communication and consultation with the student's family and extensive consideration by professional school personnel. Retention decisions are made based on sufficient academic evidence demonstrating that the student has not met appropriate grade-level competencies. The final decision to retain a student is made by the Head of School and is based on the student's best academic interests. Retention will be implemented to ensure the student receives additional support and time to master the foundational skills necessary for academic success. Students identified as English Learners (EL) will not be retained due to their proficiency in the English language.

If retention is finalized, the parent/guardian will be invited to a meeting to review a detailed success plan for their student in the retained grade level.

## ***9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade***

Students must earn an average grade of 65% or above in both semesters to earn full credit for a high school credit course. In cases where a student fails a state-required end-of-course assessment, the student may be required to retake the course. Students can either retake courses the following year if the schedule allows or earn credit through another suitable program approved in advance by the Head of School.

Grade-level classification of students comprises two requirements:

1. Units of credit for each grade, and
2. The sequence of courses for each grade and prerequisites for each course.

Grade level classification is based on these units of credit earned:

- Freshman: Must have met the requirements and be promoted from the 8th grade.
- Sophomore: 6 units of credit
- Junior: 12 units of credit
- Senior: 18 units of credit

### **High School Graduation Requirements**

English 4.0 credits

Core courses:

Classical Literature (2 semesters),

British Literature (2 semesters),

American Literature (2 semesters),

Modern Literature (2 semesters)

4.0 credits

Math

In addition to meeting the credit requirement, students must successfully complete

Geometry (2 semesters) and

Algebra II (2 semesters).

Science

3.0 credits

In addition to meeting the credit requirement, students must successfully complete

Biology (2 semesters),

Chemistry (2 semesters), and

Physics (2 semesters).

History

1.0 credits

Core courses:

Ancient World History (2 semesters),

European History 500-1815 (2 semesters),

American History (2 semesters),

Modern World History (2 semesters)

Government Core course: American Government and Politics (2 semesters)	0.5 credit
Economics Core course: Economics (1 semester)	0.5 credits
Foreign Language Students who begin Latin in grade 6 must successfully complete Latin through 9th grade. Students who begin Latin in grades 7, 8, or 9 must successfully complete Latin through 10th Grade. Additional courses in Latin, French, and Spanish are offered to allow students to fulfill the six-semester language requirement.	3.0 credits
Composition, Logic, and Rhetoric Core Courses: Logic OR Composition (1 semester) and Rhetoric (1 semester)	1.0 credit
Philosophy Core courses: Introduction to Moral and Political Philosophy (1 semester) and Moral and Political Philosophy (1 semester)	1.0 credit
Senior Thesis	1.0 credit
Electives Core courses: Fine Arts and P.E. (1 semester of each), additional courses will be offered.	6.5 credits
Personal Finance	0.5 credits
Computer Science	1.0 credits

All students are required to complete the core courses. If a student fails a course, the course must be re-taken in lieu of an elective, provided the total number of credits earned during the student's high school tenure does not fall below the state minimum credit requirement for graduation

At the discretion of the Head of School, a student may be required to complete remedial courses in order to graduate. The Head of School has the authority to waive any graduation requirement except those meeting the state requirements.

Once enrolled full-time, a student will not receive credit from any other institution without the prior approval of the Head of School.

### ***Mathematics***

All students are required to follow the mathematics course sequence through Pre-Calculus. After successful completion of Pre-Calculus, students will be placed into Calculus or another advanced math course based on the recommendations of the Pre-Calculus teacher and by approval of the Head of School and Dean of Curriculum and Instruction.

### ***Senior Thesis***

The senior thesis is the culmination of a student's classical education and a rite of passage to a life of virtue and self-government. The student's thesis may concentrate on books, events, or themes that draw upon any of the core courses and should serve as a capstone project, one that brings together the things a student has learned during his or her time at the school.

Every senior will write, orally deliver and defend a thesis on a topic of his or her choosing that emerges from the curriculum. Each student will adapt his or her paper into a speech which will be delivered publicly and then defended to a panel of faculty members. A satisfactory performance on the writing and presentation of the thesis is required for graduation.

Students must complete a senior thesis and present that thesis in a formal setting to graduate from high school.

### **Academic Honesty**

#### ***Plagiarism***

Plagiarism will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. The entire system of assessment rests on the assumption that the work a student turns in is his or her own. Plagiarism compromises this system, is unfair to other students in the class who do their work, and constitutes a form of theft of others' ideas and labor. Plagiarism is defined as the appropriation of another's ideas or words in order to present them as one's own. An instance of plagiarism can be as long as a term paper or as short as a sentence. Simply rephrasing an author's words can also constitute plagiarism. The words of authors can only be used when properly quoted and cited. Teachers will provide guidelines on acceptable citations. When in doubt, the student has the responsibility to ask how an author should be used in an assignment.

Whenever a student has been caught plagiarizing, the following process will be followed.

- The teacher will keep a copy of the student's assignment and, whenever possible, a copy of the plagiarized work.
- The teacher will discuss the matter with the student.
- The teacher will inform the Dean of Lower School Head of School of the plagiarism.
- A disciplinary referral will be issued.
- The teacher, Dean of Lower School, or Head of School will inform the student's parents of the plagiarism.
- The student will receive an F (an automatic zero) on the assignment if it is the first offense.
- For a second offense, the student will fail the entire course, and further disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, may be instituted.
- High school students found guilty of academic dishonesty or similar serious offenses may, if applicable, lose the status of valedictorian or salutatorian.
- Instances of plagiarism may be placed in the student's permanent record.

## ***Cheating***

Like plagiarism, cheating will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. Cheating occurs when a student uses someone else's work or a prohibited source of information in order to gain an unfair advantage on a test or an assignment and to avoid doing his own work. Cheating comes in many forms. One student copying off another, a student using a "cheat sheet" to answer questions on a test, and a student trying to pass off another student's work as his own are examples of cheating. The same process outlined for plagiarism will be followed for instances of cheating, including that students caught cheating will fail the assignment. A student who allows others to copy his work will also be held accountable in the same fashion.

A Level 2 Demerit will be issued if cheating has occurred. High school students found guilty of academic dishonesty or similar serious offenses may, when applicable, lose their status as valedictorian or salutatorian.

## ***Student Services***

In furtherance of our mission, Ashley River Classical Academy admits all students, based on available seats, without knowing the special needs of any student before a seat is offered.

ARCA will offer a continuum of special education services and placements for students with special needs.

ARCA provides in-class accommodations, pull-out tutoring, and resource time for students with special needs. We also contract with providers for therapeutic services (occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, counseling) that the school cannot offer on its own.

When a child with special needs is accepted into ARCA, the family will be informed of the services and staffing levels provided by the school. If a child has special needs that the ARCA staff cannot adequately address with the current staffing and services, the school will convene an IEP meeting to discuss the provision of comparable services and/or other appropriate school placement and services.

ACA's Student Services program rests on three pillars of instruction: explicit phonics instruction, arithmetic skills, and organization. Since classroom time is crucial for all students to develop these skills, Student Services will create and lead resource class time for students who need extra help. The goal is to reinforce what is learned in the classroom and to help the student develop independence.

## ***State Assessments***

The state of South Carolina requires standardized testing through the SC READY Assessment in reading, math, and writing for Grades 3-8, as well as science for Grades 4 and 6. South Carolina also requires exams in high-school subjects, called "end of course" exams or "EOCs." While we are required to participate in these exams and will take them seriously when they arrive in the spring, our approach differs from that in many public schools.

Our curriculum is not designed around the state assessments, and our teachers do not "teach to the test." We do dedicate some time to test preparation, but to do so excessively would detract from the

classical course of study that ARCA provides. Test preparation has less to do with content than it does with the form and manner in which test questions are written, as well as the order in which certain subjects are placed in the general state curriculum. Our curriculum in Grammar School math, for instance, follows a rational order that deepens and broadens student knowledge, but not in an order that aligns perfectly with the math subjects in the state exams. In order to do well on these assessments, we will supplement our curriculum where necessary.

Please consult the school calendar for the testing schedule. On state testing dates, the campus is closed and students may not be picked up early from school. Please plan accordingly.

### ***Controversial subjects***

Controversial subjects are defined as contemporary problems, issues, or questions of a political or social nature where there are entrenched differences of opinion and passions run high. Controversial issues will be explored only when emanating from some part of the curriculum in grades 9 through 12. When these subjects come up, teachers will present an impartial view of all sides of the issue without proselytizing. Contemporary controversial issues will not be discussed in the elementary school without the Head of School's approval.

Guest Speakers who cover controversial topics must be screened by the Head of School. The screening may include an interview of the guest by the Head of School or designee. Parents must be notified prior to guest speaker presentations on controversial issues, including religions covered in the academic sequence. Parents may have students excused from such presentations and understand that the students will be supervised in a silent study hall. Teachers will provide permission slips to parents as notification of a guest speaker covering controversial issues and indicate an option on the permission slip for students to be excused.

### ***Religion***

Western civilization has had and continues to have an ongoing, vigorous, and thoughtful conversation concerning the place of religion in human life. We will encourage such discussions as they arise from the material that students engage in and will respect the diverse viewpoints that such a topic elicits, so long as those views are offered respectfully and with the solemnity they merit.

In the course of history and literature classes, the ARCA curriculum will include texts, stories, histories, and beliefs connected to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Knowledge of these topics is crucial to understanding the modern world and much of our own history. Teachers will address these topics without either advocating or undermining religion in general or any specific faith.

### ***Evolution***

ARCA embraces a rigorous program in the natural sciences. In biology, the school will teach the theory of evolution as found in the standard high-school biology textbooks and has also taught at the college level in both secular and many religious colleges.

Much of what constitutes the teaching of evolution concerns the adaptation of species to their environment and changes over time. A great many of these phenomena are observable. A very small

percentage of evolutionary theory deals with the more controversial issue of the origins of life. This latter aspect of evolution, to the extent it is taught, will be introduced to students briefly with a great deal of circumspection; it is not a central part of the theory. Furthermore, the study of science will be confined to the investigation of the physical world. It is not the place of science to make metaphysical claims nor to confirm or deny the validity of religion or the existence of God.

ARCA recognizes a clear distinction between science and scientism. Science is the continued research into the natural world in order to find the most plausible explanations for natural phenomena. Scientism is the belief—and it is a belief—that science is the only means of understanding our world, thus excluding other ways of interpreting the world, such as through literature or religion. Keeping in mind this distinction, the teachers at ARCA will leave matters of faith up to students and their parents. The role of a teacher in a public school is neither that of a preacher nor of a skeptic. Science teachers will teach science without comment on religion. Teachers, students, and parents must realize that a biology class has a particular purpose and is not the proper venue for a philosophical or theological discussion on the existence of God or claims relating to the activity of God or the absence thereof in the natural world.

### ***Human Sexuality***

At ARCA, we believe parents own the fundamental responsibility for their children's education, which includes the areas of morality and sexuality. The school's role, at most, should be viewed as a supportive one. It is apparent that sexuality is more than biology and physiology. It also encompasses morality, spirituality, and emotions. Because it is a part of the whole human experience, it must be taught with circumspection and sensitivity.

We believe children are naturally modest concerning their bodies and are not ready to learn everything at once. They are naturally curious, however, and need to get answers to their questions in a way appropriate to their stage of development. In teaching this topic, we want to minimize the embarrassment associated with it.

In the course of our usual science curriculum, 5th-grade students will learn about human reproductive organs, reproduction, and the menstrual cycle. The class will be taught in a gender-separated environment. Parents will have the opportunity to preview the materials the class will be reading. Parents will also have the opportunity to attend a meeting with the teacher(s) prior to the section on sexuality. Sexual intercourse will only be discussed in the context of a monogamous relationship between two people of opposite sexes. Parents will have the choice of having their children opt out of this portion of the class, which will be taught during the regular science time.

In the upper school, themes that deal with sexuality may emerge from the reading of a serious text, such as *Brave New World* or *The Scarlet Letter*. When these topics emerge from the curriculum itself, teachers will engage the material in a serious way. Upper school students may be involved in discussions concerning sexuality and sexual restraint as these issues affect their living a moral and responsible life. Such discussions will always be led by the Administration or a faculty member who has the full confidence of the Head of School in these matters.

In addition, as mandated by the state, sex education will be taught in upper school in the context of human health. Sex education via the health class will be taught in a gender-separated environment.

Character education is an integral part of our program. Sexuality involves serious moral decision-making. It is important to help children build the capacity to make and abide by sound moral choices. We would like our teaching of human reproduction to be a springboard to initiate and facilitate discussions between parents and children on this sensitive subject.

Employees will not discuss their personal lives on such matters with students.

### ***Videos in the Classroom***

From time to time, videos or other media may be used to support a classroom lesson. To be used in class they must meet a specific curricular objective and will not have profane language or sexually explicit material. Teachers must receive prior approval from the Head of School to show a video more than 15 minutes in length.

## **SECTION 3: ADDITIONAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Admissions and Enrollment**

For current enrollment information, including grades offered, class sizes, admissions deadlines, and enrollment lotteries, please visit the school's website.

#### ***Admissions Eligibility***

Ashley River Classical Academy is open to all students who reside within the school district, subject to availability. At the time of enrollment and re-enrollment, students will be required to demonstrate permanent residency within the school district. Students whose residence is not fixed or regular will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in keeping with governing state and federal laws.

ARCA will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, sexuality, national origin, gender, or disability in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, athletics, and other school-administered programs.

Admission forms and deadlines will be available in the school office and online.

#### ***Limited Availability***

ARCA will determine the number of seats to be offered in each grade on an annual basis. While it is our expectation that such numbers will be determined prior to the Open Enrollment period, the school may decide to revise these numbers prior to the beginning of the new school year. Open Enrollment will be held during the spring semester each year; exact dates will be posted online and available in the school office. Families of enrolled students who wish to re-enroll will be required to submit a re-enrollment form for each student prior to or during the open enrollment period in order to secure each seat.

At the end of the Open Enrollment period, the school will admit students in the following order:



1. Current students who have submitted re-enrollment forms.
2. Children of teachers, staff, or board members.
3. Applicants who have siblings already admitted to the school.
4. All other applicants residing within Charleston County.
5. All other applicants.

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats in any grade, a random lottery process will be used to select admitted students from the pool of applicants. The lottery will also establish the order of the waitlist.

The school may, by direction of the Head of School, establish more seats in any grade in order to accommodate applicants who are next-of-kin to any teachers, staff, or board members.

Once students are admitted at the end of the open enrollment period, families will receive notice via mail and, if possible, via phone and/or electronic communication. Families will have three weeks from the date on which notices are mailed to submit enrollment paperwork. If families do not submit enrollment paperwork by the due date, then they forfeit the offered seat. Seats that become available after the enrollment period will go first to waitlisted students—in the order established by the lottery—and will then become available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The school will allow enrollment for open seats after the start of each school year, but only until such date as is determined by the Board of Directors.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips should be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum. Field trips must be approved by the Head of School at least two weeks prior to their proposed date. The field trip planner will work with the administration to ensure that all procedures are followed.

A permission slip must be signed and returned to the teacher by the parent/guardian of each student prior to the field trip. Students may be asked to pay a fee to attend field trips. School uniforms are required on all field trips unless specifically noted otherwise and approved by the Head of School. Students who have received 4 or more Level 1 or 2 Demerits may not attend field trips without an accompanying parent.

### ***Extended Field Trips***

An extended field trip is one that requires an overnight stay. All extended field trips require individual Board approval a minimum of 90 days (180 days outside the US) prior to the proposed trip. All students attending the extended field trip must have the Head of School approval. For Upper School students, the trip must include coursework and/or lesson plans and all students must be awarded credit and a letter grade, which will be based on the accompanying coursework as well as their behavior on the trip. All extended field trips must have liability insurance protecting all the trip attendees and the school. Any liability insurance not covered by the school's policy must be paid for by the fees charged to trip participants. Any increases in the costs of extended field trips (due to

inflation, changes in exchange rates, etc) must be paid for by increases in fees by trip participants. All adults attending the field trip are required to be currently registered volunteers. The field trip planner will work with the administration to ensure that all procedures are followed.

## **School Communication Procedures**

### ***Parent Communications to Administration, Faculty, and Staff***

Ashley River Classical Academy values the conversation that takes place between parents and teachers about the education of children. Nonetheless, this conversation must follow certain guidelines in order to be fruitful and to allow teachers to devote themselves to their classes during the day. Parents may use any of the following ways to contact or communicate with the Administration, Faculty, and Staff:

- Scheduled face-to-face meeting
- Scheduled phone call
- Message (given to the front office)
- Voice Mail
- Email

ARCA employees will not use social media to communicate with parents or students.

During the school day and both immediately before and after school, teachers have their minds on teaching or imminent meetings and extracurricular activities. Parents should schedule in advance a phone call or meeting with a teacher rather than try to communicate through an impromptu conversation. Parents who are in the building for another reason should not use their access to faculty to circumvent the normal means of contacting a teacher unless that teacher clearly invites such a conversation. This policy applies to parents who are themselves teachers or other employees at the school.

ARCA teachers and administrators will respond to parents as quickly as possible. In general, parents should expect to hear from a teacher or staff member within twenty-four hours of contacting the school, barring weekends and holidays. While a teacher's schedule may not permit an actual meeting within that time, the teacher will attempt to make contact in some way. During busy periods, the Head of School may require an extra day to respond to correspondence.

### ***General Communication with the School Community***

The Head of School must approve all letters and bulletins, including e-mail (excluding class assignments or bulletins by teachers to their classes) from teachers' parents or other parties to the entire school community.

We ask parents to be responsible in sharing information about the school and to consult the school website and school staff when asking questions or raising concerns. We also ask that parents be responsible when seeking out information about the school, especially online.

The official outlets for school information are limited to the following:

1. The school website, [www.ashleyriverclassical.org](http://www.ashleyriverclassical.org)
2. The official weekly newsletter
3. The official Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/AshleyRiverClassical](http://www.facebook.com/AshleyRiverClassical)
4. The Ashley River Classical Academy Official Parent Group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/808425031188970>
5. Correspondence from school administration, including emails and postal correspondence
6. Notices are sent home with students and/or distributed by the school office

The school disclaims any responsibility for information from third-party websites, social media pages, or entities outside the school.

### ***Social Media***

ARCA recognizes the utility and necessity of maintaining a social media presence and therefore regularly updates its official Facebook page at [facebook.com/AshleyRiverClassical](http://facebook.com/AshleyRiverClassical). This page is intended to provide regular communication with the school community and beyond as we share information, celebrate our successes, and tell our stories. We invite parents to “like” or “follow” our page to receive updates. Any important notifications from ARCA that are posted on our Facebook page will also be provided to parents by some other timely means of communication.

In the interest of privacy, ARCA will limit the sharing of personal information about students on our Facebook page, and ARCA staff and faculty will not discuss a student’s personal record in any format on social media, including direct messages.

In the interest of clarity and prudence, ARCA will avoid lengthy or controversial replies to comments on our Facebook page. It will be the usual practice of ARCA to invite questions and grievances posted on our official Facebook page to be brought to the school through our direct channels. ARCA reserves the right to delete comments that are inappropriate, quarrelsome, or out of place.

While ARCA is aware that other social media pages connected to the school community exist or may exist, we disclaim any authority or responsibility for these pages or the content posted therein. Furthermore, we encourage parents and other members of the school community to use social media for the positive support of the school and avoid using it for fomenting a culture of dissent. The ARCA administration does not review independent pages and will not recognize complaints until they are registered through formal channels.

ARCA retains the right to enforce school policies and commitments insofar as these are implicated on social media and in the social media use of parents, students, teachers, and staff.

### ***Communicating with Parents with Joint Custody***

The school will recognize and communicate with parents with joint custody upon written request, signed by both parents, or a court order. In the case of school forms, the school encourages one of the parents to complete the forms so that the school does not receive conflicting information.

### ***Student Network Use***

Students at Ashley River Classical Academy shall not have access to the internet without staff supervision and will not have network or wireless passwords.

We also recognize the need for supervision to protect our students. It is our goal to provide these services in as safe an environment as possible. Network access is a privilege, and all students are expected to practice proper and ethical use of these systems.

The use of these systems is monitored, without an expectation of privacy, and is subject to administrative review at any time. It is intended that these resources will be used to pursue intellectual activities in support of research and education.

ARCA does not assume responsibility for system failures that could result in the loss of data. It is the policy of ARCA to (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via the Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act.

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

### ***Security Checks***

The school may exercise its right to inspect all backpacks, packages, parcels, and closed containers entering and leaving the premises. School lockers are school property and may be subjected to searches at any time, with or without cause.

### ***Emergency Policy***

The Administration shall maintain a stand-alone Emergency Operations Plan, which shall be available for reference in the School office.

### ***Student Drivers and Parking***

Being able to bring a vehicle on campus is a privilege. The school is not responsible for damage to a vehicle that occurs while it is on campus. A student has full responsibility for the security of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others.

Permission is required for any student who finds it necessary to go to his or her vehicle during the school day.

Vehicles parked on campus are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle at any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the presence of the student. A

copy of a student's driver's license and insurance must be on file in the school office. Students who have received a driver's license and are in good standing may drive to school and park in designated parking spaces. Students must maintain a 1.5 GPA in order to drive to or from school. The school will check a student driver's GPA a semester, and falling below the 1.5 threshold will revoke driving privileges for the following semester.

Students must receive a parking pass in order to park on campus. Due to limited space on campus, passes will be distributed first to seniors, then to juniors, and then to sophomores, through a lottery process as established by the school administration. Students who receive their driver's license during the course of the school year may apply for a parking permit if spaces are available.

The school shall not issue more than one parking pass per family.

The school will set the fee for a parking pass each year before the start of school.

Student passengers must have parent permission to be in other students' vehicles, other than siblings.

### ***Facility Use***

The Head of School will be the approving authority for all outside uses of the school fields, building, and facilities. All users will be required to carry insurance and appoint a representative acceptable to the Administration who is capable of executing the school's emergency and security procedures.

### ***Parent Service Organization***

Ashley River Classical Academy's Board establishes the Parent Service Organization (PSO) to support the school's mission. PSO teams and activities will be designed to help the school flourish in and beyond the classroom. Largely, the PSO consists of a series of task-oriented teams whose purpose is to marshal parent volunteerism in achieving defined goals that improve the life of the school.

All parents, adult family members, teachers, staff, and community members are encouraged to volunteer on a team and attend regular meetings. PSO meetings are an excellent opportunity to obtain information and engage in discussions about the school.

The PSO may serve as a fundraising arm of the school, but it will not be a stand-alone, tax-exempt, non-profit organization. ARCA is itself a non-profit organization with 501(c)3 status.

The Head of School reserves the right to create, remove, or dissolve PSO teams and leadership in accordance with immediate priorities and the long-term flourishing of the school.

## **SECTION 4: GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**

### **Board of Directors**

Ashley River Classical Academy (the "School") is a subsidiary of South Carolina Classical Academy, a non-profit corporation recognized as a 501(c)3 organization by the Internal Revenue Service. The corporation is governed by its Board of Directors (the "Board"). The Board operates in accordance

with its bylaws and using the principles of policy governance. The Board has entered into a Charter Agreement with Charter Institute at Erskine. The bylaws and Charter Agreement are available on the School's website, [www.ashleyriverclassical.org](http://www.ashleyriverclassical.org).

### **Board Responsibilities and Obligations**

The Board is the governing body of the school and is responsible for overseeing the effective, faithful execution of the mission. The Board created Ashley River Classical Academy specifically to implement a traditional, classical, liberal arts education guided by the following mission:

To train the minds and hearts of our students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with a focus on fostering moral character and civic virtue.

The Board oversees budgeting and spending, community outreach, charter fidelity, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and development to support the program.

### ***Board Meetings***

In compliance with the state's Open Meetings Laws, the Board will:

- Establish a set schedule of meetings;
- Post meeting dates in a conspicuous location, including the School website (date, time, location);
- Post agendas at least 24-hours before a meeting;
- Post and place a 24-hour notice for emergency called meetings and state the reason for the emergency meeting in the notice;
- Provide specific agendas for meetings to advise the public of the matters expected to come before the Board. Matters not on the agenda can be addressed if not anticipated before the meeting by amending the agenda.
- Keep minutes of all Board Meetings, including members present, description of motions or proposals, and a record of votes.

### ***Communication to the Board***

Members of the ARCA community must refrain from approaching individual Board Directors with concerns or grievances that should be brought to a specific teacher, the Head of School, or the whole Board. Any communication to the Board should follow the Grievance Policy detailed below.

### **Role of the Head of School**

The Head of School will implement a traditional, classical, liberal arts curriculum. The Head of School makes final decisions on curriculum, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. The Head of School, while chiefly the academic leader, is also responsible for the discipline, moral culture, operations, and financial priorities of the school.

### ***Internal Communication Procedure***

The Board has established an internal communication procedure whereby all authority for the management of the school rests with the Head of School, and she/he has the sole responsibility of reporting to the Board and managing the operations of the School. It is the expectation of the Board that the Head of School will establish an internal communication procedure within the School to assist him with its operations.

In all communication with the School, the Board expects the ARCA community to observe the internal communication procedure and direct communication accordingly. The practice of following the internal communication procedure in communications with the school on matters concerning particular students encompasses far more than grievances. It refers to parents' communication of any kind that seeks or requires an action on the part of the school regarding their students. ARCA understands that parents will have questions, opinions, and comments that need to be expressed concerning their children's education. Such communication can be very helpful to the running of the school.

Our preference is that such communication be expressed initially to the teacher or teachers of the child. If further communication is warranted, the parent should consult the appropriate administrator. If further communication is warranted after speaking with the Head of School, then the parent should refer the matter to the Board, as needed.

The Board is not the first point of contact and, therefore will refer communications that seek response or action to the appropriate members of the Administration.

The reason for this internal communication procedure is that the teacher invariably has the most direct knowledge of the child and can usually do more to remedy or alleviate a situation than an administrator or board member. We understand that some parents are "conflict-averse" and do not want to discuss a potentially difficult issue with a teacher. Nonetheless, the teachers are eager to help each child in whatever way possible.

Some situations, admittedly, seem by their very nature to warrant a discussion with the Head of School initially. For example, parents may have questions or concerns about the overall homework load or a particular way of teaching, such as the Socratic method. As a result, it is easier and more expedient to speak to the Head of School first. In these cases, however, it is always better for the parent to have as much specific information as possible so the Head of School can act on that information.

### **Grievance Policy**

#### ***Grievance Related to the Classroom***

ARCA firmly believes that adults must be models of good character even in the most difficult situations. Should a parent have a grievance concerning a particular class or the Administration of the school, that grievance should be resolved using the following internal communication procedure. Issues that arise in a particular classroom should always be addressed to the teacher first since the teacher always has more direct knowledge of the student than anyone else.

- The Teacher: Parents should schedule a meeting with the teacher through the office. Under no circumstance is it ever acceptable for a parent to confront a teacher about an issue with students present, including his/her own.
- The Head of School: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent should discuss the matter with the Head of School.
- The Board: If the grievance cannot be resolved with the Head of School, the parent should refer the matter to the Board, preferably in writing.

### ***Grievance Related to Administration***

For grievances regarding an administrator who reports to the Head of School, the grievance should be directed to the individual first, then the Head of School. If necessary, grievances left unresolved by the Head of School should be submitted in writing to the Board. Grievances regarding the Head of School should be directed to the individual first, then in writing to the Board at [board@ashleyriverclassical.org](mailto:board@ashleyriverclassical.org)

### **Records Requests**

South Carolina citizens wishing to view or receive copies of public records maintained by Ashley River Classical Academy may submit a records request using a form on the Academy's website. Individuals will need to provide a detailed description of the record(s) requested and whether they would like to view or receive copies of the record(s). The Academy's records custodian will respond to each request within seven days in one of the following ways:

- By providing access to view the record or by providing the actual record,
- Providing an estimate of how much longer it will take to complete the request,
- Requesting additional information to complete the request, or
- Denying the request with a citation to the reason for the denial.

## **SECTION 5: PRIVACY**

### **Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to a student's education records. These rights include the following:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives the request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school Head of School or appropriate school official a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to



the school Head of School or appropriate official, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605

### **Student Information**

Students' names, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and other similar information may be released without parental consent unless the parent notifies the school.

Classroom activities and events sponsored by the school are occasionally photographed or video-taped for use by the school, by the media, or by other organizations operating with approval from the school Head of School. Photos and videos help the school to share information within the school community and our mission beyond our immediate community. We request that all parents sign the ARCA photo/video release waiver included with ARCA enrollment paperwork, but we respect the rights of parents who do not wish for photos and videos of their students to be shared.

Student names will not be listed alongside their pictures on the school website or in ARCA advertising publications.

## **APPENDIX**

### *Change Log*

This is version 1.0 of the ARCA Family Handbook. The handbook and the policies herein were adopted for use by the ARCA Board of Directors for use during the 2025-26 school year on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Future changes to the handbook and policies contained herein will be noted in this appendix.

## PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_(printed name of parent), do hereby recognize receipt and review of the Ashley River Classical Academy Family Handbook, 2025-26. As a parent of a child enrolled in ARCA, I agree to abide by these terms and support the mission and operations of the school.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Honor Code*

An Ashley River Classical Academy student is honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. The student aspires to excellence in prudence, justice, moderation, courage, and wisdom.

### *Parent Pledge*

I have carefully discussed the ARCA Honor Code with my child and he/she understands what it means. I pledge to encourage my child to be honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. I will help my child aspire to excellence in prudence, justice, moderation, courage, and wisdom.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Student Pledge—To be signed by all students in grades 5-12*

I understand the ARCA Honor Code and have discussed it with my parent(s). I pledge to be honest in word and deed, dutiful in study and service, and respectful and kind to others. I will aspire to excellence in prudence, justice, moderation, courage, and wisdom.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_