



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL
OF ABU DHABI *SINCE 1972*

MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT - PARENT HANDBOOK

2021-2022



P.O. BOX 42114, ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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ACS.SCH.AE

ACS Mission

The American Community School of Abu Dhabi provides a balanced learning program to foster excellence in academics, the arts, and athletics. In partnership with parents, we empower all students to define and shape their futures. Our dynamic and challenging educational program prepares a culturally diverse student body for learning, service, and global citizenship.

ACS Core Values

- **Courage:** Having the confidence to take risks and do the right thing.
- **Curiosity:** Being eager to learn and explore to gain a deeper understanding through inquiry and critical questioning.
- **Compassion:** Taking actions to understand how others think and feel and appreciating the value of difference.
- **Integrity:** Being honest, fair and responsible in words and actions, and staying true to one's principles.

Core Beliefs

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

Profile of Learners

ACS engages, prepares, and inspires its community to be:

Collaborative team members who...

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

Responsible people who...

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

Self-directed learners who...

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

Global citizens who...

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



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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Middle School community members,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year at the American Community School. As we come back together this year, there will be many opportunities, and we hope that the things that you choose to do this year will help you become better physically, socially, and better in other ways too. You have the power to make your year the very best it can be. Take a risk, find your voice, collaborate with others, embrace challenges and get involved. It takes honest reflection, thoughtful intention and respectful action. This is a safe place to do this and there is a lot of support for you.

Please take the time to read through our Middle School handbook. It is written for all those in our community – students, teachers and parents. It is a guide to help you successfully navigate the dynamics of our time together this year. Within these pages, you will learn about all that we have to offer, as well as the expectations and responsibilities for behaviors and for learning. It describes our community beliefs, our commitments, our systems, our policies and practices. As it is a living document, updates will occur from time to time. We will ensure that any changes are communicated in a timely manner.

More than anything, your task again this year is to engage and connect – not only with your academics, but with those around you. Relationships are key in your education, so choose to be respectful, responsible, balanced and inclusive. On behalf of your teachers, we wish you a successful year full of engagement, connections, inspirations and growth.

Sincerely,

Karl Poulin
Middle School Principal
karlpoulin@acs.sch.ae

Rob Desormeau
Middle School Assistant Principal
robdesormeau@acs.sch.ae



Karl Poulin
Middle School Principal



Rob Desormeau
Middle School Assistant Principal

MIDDLE SCHOOL BELIEFS

Our ACS Middle School beliefs stem from our school's mission statement and core values and are formulated with an understanding of the educational needs of young adolescents. We believe that our MS should be firmly grounded in the reality of today's students. We endeavor to role model risk-taking while at the same time creating an inviting, safe environment for learning. We recognize that working with MS adolescents requires hard work and a good sense of humor.

Our Beliefs can be summarized as follows:

Balanced Education for the Whole Child

We believe in assisting students to develop:

- healthy habits of the mind and body
- an appreciation of the arts
- a love of learning
- strategies for individual learning styles
- the skills necessary for success across curricular and co-curricular areas
- a positive sense of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness

Importance of Environment

We believe that children thrive in an environment in which:

- people celebrate the diversity of our international community
- learning is made engaging
- safe, caring and nurturing behaviors are modeled
- positive attitudes and consistency in behavior are encouraged
- cooperation builds connections among students, parents, and teachers
- people demonstrate concern for others

Responsibility

We believe in assisting students to:

- understand and accept responsibility and accountability for their actions
- move towards greater independence as learners
- model our school's core values

Scholarship

We believe in assisting students to:

- commit to a high standard of learning and academic achievement
- achieve their highest potential by establishing meaningful and challenging goals
- think analytically, critically and creatively
- make informed and reasoned judgments
- take risks and experiment with new skills

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

As an independent international community school, we encourage parent participation in all facets of school life. This agreement aims to help families understand the importance of parent involvement in the ACS experience.

The School's Commitment:

- We will do everything possible to fulfill the mission of the school and live the school's values. ACS offers a not-for-profit, college-preparatory, American-based curriculum. We promote excellence in the arts, academics and athletics, as well as strong commitment to service and experiential learning.
- We are committed to providing a safe and secure place of learning for all our students, staff, and community members.
- We are cognizant of child development as we provide instruction and learning experiences for our students. We look to foster growth in the whole child. We make every effort to provide support for all students, including remediation and extension when necessary. We do not place students beyond their age-appropriate grade level. Our focus is on development and growth.
- In the spirit of true partnership, all staff members of the school – most notably the teachers who work directly with your child – share responsibility with you for your child's success. By subscribing to the ideas outlined in this partnership agreement, you will help your child succeed at ACS. Positive parent partnership cannot be understated, and your cooperation with the agreement is essential, and enrollment and re-enrollment of your child is dependent on this parent partnership.

Our Parents' Commitment:

- To talk to my child often about school life, demonstrating my interest in helping the school equip my child with the ability to inquire, interact, and accept constructive criticism.
- To help my child learn from mistakes and to benefit from suggestions for improvement.
- To ensure that my child has ample scheduled time and quiet surroundings for home study and to reinforce my child's use of homework, especially as my child progresses into higher grades that require more homework.
- To ensure that my child has proper rest, nutrition and recreation.
- To understand our school curriculum and to realize what is offered and what is not offered. ACS is limited in its ability to offer special needs and/or gifted instruction. Most differentiation happens within the ability of the classroom teacher.
- To attend orientations, back to school nights, parent conferences, and be an active participant in school functions.
- To be informed with regards to school communication – to read emails and newsletters, to view the school's website and calendar, to update contact and health

information, to communicate when something is unclear, and to provide feedback and participate in surveys, etc.

- To help my child accept and comply with the student dress code, and as parents to dress appropriately on campus, taking into consideration the modest local culture.
- To practice and model effective conflict resolution by handling concerns appropriately, directly, and honestly, only with those involved.
- To ensure that my child arrives on time and remains for the full length of the school day.
- To comply with the school calendar for vacations.
- To make tuition payments and other fees on time so that ACS can continue to be a financially stable non-profit organization.
- Balance activities outside of school and school responsibilities.
- To permit and encourage my child to attend grade level and experiential field trips, acknowledging that they are an integral part of the curriculum.

In order to effectively pursue our mission, it is important that the school and parents partner together to instill pride, self-worth, and a passion [for learning in our students. Parents can play an integral role in the program.](#)

Contact Details

Parents must inform the school promptly of a new address, telephone number, and/or email address. Notification can be given via email to the [Middle School Office](#).

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Days: Sunday-Thursday
 School Hours: 8:30am – 3:00pm
 Early Release Tuesdays - 8:30am - 2:00pm
 MS School Phone: +971 2 681 5115 Ext. 800
 School Fax: +971 2 681 6006
 Library Media Center Hours: 8:15am - 4:00pm
 Viper Pit Store Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays / 2:00 - 4:00pm
 Closed on Thursdays viperpit@acs.sch.ae

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Role	Email
Jacquie Thorstad	MS Executive Assistant	jacquiethorstad@acs.sch.ae
Karl Poulin	Middle School Principal	karlpoulin@acs.sch.ae
Rob Desormeau	Middle School Assistant Principal	robdesormeau@acs.sch.ae
Priscilla Base-White	MS Counselor (Grades 6-7)	priscillabadewhite@acs.sch.ae
Brian Cadogan	MS Counselor (Grades 8-9)	briancadogan@acs.sch.ae
Christine Bates	Grade 6 Team Leader	christinebates@acs.sch.ae
Laura Silverman	Grade 7 Team Leader	laurasilverman@acs.sch.ae
Chantelle Dreyer	Grade 8 Team Leader	chantelledreyer@acs.sch.ae
Laurie Hawkins	Director of Student Support Services	lauriehawkins@acs.sch.ae
Mary Lawson	6-12 School Librarian	marylawson@acs.sch.ae
Mel Pubil	Service Learning Coordinator	melpubil@acs.sch.ae
Naveen Jamal	MS FAS Activities Coordinator	naveenjamal@acs.sch.ae
Kenneth A. Macaulay	Director of Athletics and Activities	kennymacaulay@acs.sch.ae
Shaun Dreyer	Athletics & Activities Executive Assistant	shaundreyer@acs.sch.ae
Christina Devitt	Director of Learning Innovation and eLearning	christinadevitt@acs.sch.ae
Fiona Kellaway	School Nurse	fionakellaway@acs.sch.ae
Victor Guthrie	Assistant Superintendent	victorguthrie@acs.sch.ae
Monique Flickinger	School Superintendent	moniqueflickinger@acs.sch.ae

MIDDLE SCHOOL BASICS

School Year Calendar



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL
OF ABU DHABI SINCE 1972

2021-2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR

JULY 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

AUGUST 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JULY

July 19-22 Eid Al Adha

AUGUST

August 12 Islamic New Year
August 17-19, 22 Professional Learning Day
August 23 First Day of Classes

SEPTEMBER

September 1 2nd Tuition Payment Due
September 26 Professional Learning Day

OCTOBER

October 20-21 School Holiday
October 21 Prophet's Birthday

NOVEMBER

November 25 Early Release Day

DECEMBER

December 1-2 Martyr's Day / UAE National Day /
3rd Tuition Payment Due
December 16 Last Day of Classes / Early Release Day
December 19-January 6 Winter Break

JANUARY

January 9 Professional Learning Day
January 10 First Day of Classes

FEBRUARY

February 13-14 School Holiday
February 27 Professional Learning Day

MARCH

March 27-April 7 Spring Break

APRIL

April 3-30 Ramadan

MAY

May 1-4 Eid Al Fitr

JUNE

June 1 1st Tuition Payment Due (2022-23)
June 16 Last Day of Classes

SEPTEMBER 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

OCTOBER 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

NOVEMBER 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

DECEMBER 2021

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JANUARY 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

FEBRUARY 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

MARCH 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

APRIL 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

MAY 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JUNE 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Color Key

- First Day of Classes
- Last Day of Classes
- School Holiday (school closed)
- Professional Learning (school closed)
- Religious/National Holiday (subject to change)
- Early Release Day
- Ramadan (subject to change)
- Tuition Payment Due

The School Day

Addendum Update: *At this point in time (August 2021), students will not be using lockers.*

Students are expected to arrive to school between 8:15 and report to their first class by 8:30am (see addendum above). Once the National Anthem plays at 8:30am the student is considered tardy. On early release Tuesdays, classes end at 2:00pm.

Students who arrive late to school and miss part or all of the first instructional period will be considered tardy and must report to the office prior to attending classes. Students are dismissed at 3:00pm.

There are after-school activities that take place most days of the week, with the exception of Tuesday when teachers are engaged in their own professional learning. Most activities (including athletics) typically end by 4:30pm, though some may go later (please check with your activity sponsor/coach). All Fun After School Activities (FAS) end at 4:00pm or 4:30, depending whether they are offered face-to-face or virtually.

In order to ensure proper supervision of students and student safety, students not participating in after-school activities must leave school by 3:00 pm unless they are attending Office Hours until 3:30 pm. MS students may not stay after school, unless they remain in areas that are supervised, either in a classroom with a teacher or in the library. Unsupervised areas include classrooms where there is not a teacher supervisor, playgrounds, outdoor fields, MS/HS courtyards, the gym or cafeteria.

All students must leave the school grounds by 3:00pm unless they are directly supervised (2:00 pm on Tuesdays).

MS Schedule

During this school year, students have 8 blocks of classes, and four of those classes each day. Any changes to the schedule will be communicated via our Middle School Parent Newsletter.

Lunch and Breaks

Addendum Update: *At this point in time (August, 2021), students will have breaks/lunch in the classrooms. At this time, Food services are permitted to resume, and once we are ready for this, we will communicate the update. Until then all students will bring a packed lunch from home that can be eaten without the use of refrigeration or microwave.*

Food Services

ACS has three food service outlets:

- The first is the cafeteria, located adjacent to Cramer Field. The cafeteria serves hot whole food, and a variety of cold salad options.
- The second is the kiosk, located in the HS Courtyard. The kiosk serves pre-prepared and freshly prepared grab-and-go food options.
- The third food outlet is the Nectar bar, located in the MS Courtyard. The Nectar bar offers specialty/healthy food and beverage options.

Remember to wash your hands before you eat. Be sure to use good manners and remember to put your own tray back to the area where you will clean your plate and return your utensils. You are responsible for cleaning up your own area, whether you choose to eat indoors or outdoors.

During the morning, a scheduled break allows students to get a snack. There are snacks, sandwiches and wraps available for sale in the Kiosk and Nectar also has many healthy drinks and yogurt for sale. Students may also bring their healthy snacks from home.

The cafeteria is open for lunch, and Sodexo publishes a weekly menu. Those who wish to do so may purchase lunch in the cafeteria. Students are expected to assist in keeping the cafeteria clean and tidy.

Lockers

Addendum Update: *At this point in time (August, 2020), students will not be using lockers.*

All students have the privilege of a clean, workable locker so that they have a safe, convenient spot to store your belongings throughout the day (there's even a shelf to put away their computers!). It is the school's expectation that students:

- Lock their lockers
- Keep their lockers clean and organized
- Use only the locker that is assigned to them
- Do not write on lockers or place stickers on the locker
- Should not share their combination numbers with others
- Take home leftover food and sweaty clothing on a daily basis
- Don't bring valuables to school. If you are worried about losing something, leave it at home.

The school reserves the right to inspect lockers should the need arise. All books and other items left carelessly in the locker areas will be gathered daily and placed in the lost and found box.

Emergency Contacts

It is essential that we can contact parents in the event of an emergency. Please check your contact information on Veracross to make sure that it is correct, and that you have the right people listed as Emergency contacts. Students are only permitted to leave the school campus during the school day with an adult listed as an emergency contact with permission to pick up.

Students Leaving Campus

Student safety is our priority. All MS students leaving campus during the school day must be accompanied by a parent or an adult who has been listed on Veracross as an Emergency contact with permission to pick the child up.

In the event that a non-registered adult comes to pick up a child, the parent will be contacted and a request for an email stating the name of the person given permission to take the child. Therefore students;

- must have permission from parents, principal and/or nurse
- who are ill must first see the school nurse, who will in turn contact parents
- must meet parents/guardian in the MS office and collect a pass to leave campus
- must have a pass written by the MS office or the nurse to give to guards prior upon exiting
- returning to school must sign in at the MS office and collect a class entrance pass

When leaving campus for a school-sponsored activity students must complete a planned absence form and return it to the MS office with all the appropriate signatures.

Student Transportation

Parents are responsible for student transportation to and from campus. Limited parking is provided in front of the school. There is a 10-minute difference between elementary school dismissal and MS dismissal, which should ease congestion somewhat. Parents or drivers waiting for MS students should not arrive for pick-up prior to 3:15.

Patience and care are needed when picking up or dropping off students. Since ACS has children as young as four years old, cautious driving by everyone is imperative. Details of traffic flow are published to parents at the beginning of each school year and are available to new parents in the front office throughout the year.

Campus Guests and Visitors

All guests, including alumni, must check in the main gate to pick up a visitor's pass. A valid photo ID must be presented and left. Visitors must then report to the MS office. Once the MS principal grants permission to visit, alumni may visit during MS lunch hours. To minimize class disruptions, visitors are limited to a one day visit and they are unable to attend classes

Student & Parent ID Cards

All students and parents must obtain an ACS ID card. Students must have their ID to enter the school and will need it throughout the school day for printing access and more. For parents, IDs must always be worn while on campus. Replacement cards are available for a fee.

Emergency Drills

Emergency evacuation drills are scheduled at intervals throughout the school year. Classroom teachers will give their classes specific instructions. Each classroom has an evacuation plan posted near the exit door. Teachers will ensure that all students are familiar with proper evacuation procedures.



COMMUNICATION

Channels of Communication

As partners in your child's education we value open lines of communication. The school will communicate with parents through the weekly MS Parent Newsletter; via scheduled Parent Coffee events, Veracross, scheduled student-parent conferences, report cards, topic specific emails, the ACS website, and at PTA meetings. Students and parents are expected to follow the appropriate lines of communication when faced with an issue or concern.

1. Student → Teacher
2. Student → Principal
3. Parent → Teacher
4. Parent → Principal
5. Parent → Director
6. Parent → Board

Messages for Students and Outside Communication

We make a commitment to be present and engaged in our learning and socially with our peers. Therefore, students are not permitted to use their mobile phones while in class, without the teacher's permission. **Please do not contact your son or daughter on their mobile phones during the school day.** Our school day ends at 3:00 pm. If parents have messages for students, they should contact the Middle School office and the message will be relayed through the school office.

Parent Newsletter

Each Thursday the principal sends an e-newsletter via e-mail. This is the primary source of information for parents from the school, and it is important that parents take the time to read it each week.

Gmail and Google Apps

All students are set up with a school Google Apps account so they can communicate via email using Gmail. Students are responsible for making sure their Google Apps password is kept private and that they check their email at least once a day.

Staying Connected via Veracross

Veracross is an online tool available for students and their parents. It can be accessed regularly to check student's progress, weekly learning targets, student resources, homework tasks, and upcoming assessments.

You can expect that every teacher will post the learning targets, home learning information and dates of major assessments. Veracross is not a substitute for the student planner. Teachers expect students to write their daily homework in their student planner that they carry to each class.

Parents and students are assigned a login and password unique to them for access throughout their career at ACS. If students or parents have any difficulty accessing the site, they should contact Sandra Sfeirova (sandrasfeirova@acs.sch.ae).

Viper News

Viper News is the bulletin, accessible to both teachers and students through Google Classroom. Viper News is viewed at the beginning of the first period of the day to allow students to review the announcements and, when necessary, discuss upcoming events with

teachers. Any student interested in posting information on Viper News must send an email request to [Karl Poulin](#), the Middle School Principal.

Social Media Channels

ACS uses a variety of social media channels to help MS students and parents stay connected. Please follow us on Instagram (@acsadmiddleschool), Facebook (ACS Abu Dhabi Middle School), or Twitter ([@ACSAbuDhabi](#))

The ACS Yearbook

The ACS Yearbook is published and available for purchase annually in May/June, and is a summary of the year's events.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Academic Program The middle school academic program focuses on the whole child's educational experience. Student schedules are balanced between core curriculum and encore/electives, which include opportunities to try new experiences or to build on areas of interest. Below is just a brief overview of the required areas of study. Please refer to the Middle School Course Description Handbook on the ACS website for more information about academic courses and encores/electives in middle school.

Core Courses

MS students are offered a variety of courses. Core courses consist of subjects which students must take during each academic year. The core subjects required in Grades 6, 7, and 8 include Humanities, Math, Science, Physical Education, Wellness, and a World Language.

Encore

Encore classes are offered so students may experience and understand the importance of learning through a variety of mediums. Encore course choices vary per grade level and may include Exploring Technology, Drama, Art, Band and Choir.

World Languages

MS students are required to take a World Language. Currently we offer Spanish, French, Arabic as a Native Language and Arabic as a Second Language. Students with native language background in Spanish or French may be placed in a different world language course. Students holding passports from Arab countries are required by the U.A.E. Ministry of Education to enroll in Arabic as a Native Language. A new World Language may be taken once the student has entered high school. Students who are enrolled in Arabic as a Native Language in elementary school should continue with Arabic as a Native Language in MS.

Physical Education (PE)

Addendum Update: All students in PE are required to take part in scheduled class activities and to be appropriately dressed. For Physical Education classes, students are required to wear tennis shoes, socks, and the ACS PE uniform (available for purchase online and from the Viper Pit store).

For reasons of illness or injury, students may be excused from PE class activities. The following will be honored:

- Notes from parents requesting an excuse from class for up to two consecutive PE days.
- An excuse written by a physician that includes the reason for the excuse and beginning and ending dates. Not being dressed in appropriate attire is not an excuse for non-participation in PE.

All students are required to wear the prescribed PE uniform.

The school is not responsible for items lost, stolen or misplaced. **Please label your child's PE uniform.**

Students are given time to change back into school uniform after each PE class. Uniforms, socks and towels should be taken home and washed between PE classes.

Changing Class Schedules

Drop/Add for courses must take place within the first four days of the semester. Students who enroll after the first week of the semester will only have two days to request a change of class. All changes must be approved by the MS Counselor, in coordination with the divisional Principals.



ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Definition & Purpose

Assessment is a systematic process for gathering information in a variety of forms related to what students know, understand, and are able to do. The primary purpose of assessment is to provide meaningful feedback for improved student achievement. As an ongoing interaction between teachers and students, assessment serves to deepen student understanding and enhance teaching.

Assessment System Components

1. Achievement levels measured by formative and summative assessments
2. Behavior and dispositions measured by Approaches to Learning Rubric

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is ongoing and happens in many different ways every day. The general goal of formative assessment is assessment for learning. Formative assessment is timely and based on the same knowledge and skills (learning goals) being assessed on the summative.

The formative assessment process is:

- For student and teacher learning
- Ongoing and frequent
- Varied in strategy and method, allowing for practice in multiple formats
- Aligned to standards and learning outcomes
- Directly aligned to summative assessments
- Always with specific feedback and proficiency standards
- Interactive with students
- Valuable when used as data for collaborative analysis of student progress

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments evaluate learning progress and achievement at the conclusion of a specific instructional period – usually at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year. In the MS, students receive an achievement score on their summative assessments.

Summative assessments are:

- For evaluating and judging student performance at a particular time
- Important for providing student feedback
- Administered regularly
- Varied in strategy and method
- Aligned to standards, (which are made clear through the use of rubrics, exemplars and models)
- Aligned and tightly connected to previous formative practice
- Graded using descriptors and grading scale
- Representative of depth and application as opposed to recall and basic comprehension
- Common across grade levels and/or courses
- Moderated by teachers for consistency
- Valuable when used as data for collaborative analysis of student progress

Summative assessments evaluate learning progress and achievement at the conclusion of a specific instructional period – usually at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year.

Standardized Testing

All students in the MS complete standardized tests annually. Students take the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test, and the ACTFL Assessment of Performance towards Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL).

Standardized testing provides another data point and:

- Helps teachers as they plan instruction for individual students
- Provides teachers and parents an additional insight to their child's learning
- Provides information on our curriculum
- Prepares students for more traditional assessments at a later age
- Helps us see how our students are performing when compared with peers outside ACS

Proficiency Levels and Descriptors

The cumulative achievement levels assigned in January and June are based on teachers' **professional judgment**. Teachers carefully consider the **body of evidence** (all summative assessment scores), students' **most consistent** level of **performance and proficiency levels** and **descriptors** in the chart below.

Proficiency Level	Emerging Proficiency	Developing Proficiency	Demonstrating Proficiency	Extending Proficiency
Descriptor	Student attempts to demonstrate understanding of the standard. Students are able to demonstrate skills in isolation of each other and are not yet making connections between the skills and concepts.	Students demonstrate partial and inconsistent understanding of the skills within the standard. Student may have some conceptual misunderstandings	Students demonstrate a thorough and consistent understanding of the standard.	Students demonstrate an exceptional and consistent understanding and/or the ability to transfer skills and concepts within the standard to a variety of contexts.

ACS K-12 Approaches to Learning (AtL)

We believe that **Approaches to Learning** (AtL) develop over time through purposeful modeling and guided practice. Approaches to Learning skills;

- help students prepare for, and demonstrate learning through, meaningful assessment
- can be learned and taught, improved with practice and developed incrementally
- provide a solid foundation for learning independently and with others
- provide a common language that students and teachers can use to reflect on the process of learning.

Students receive feedback and reflect on their AtL throughout their learning process. Teachers record evidence throughout the school year and are encouraged to ask students to frequently self-assess using a common rubric (Grades 6-12). Four AtL areas: collaboration, responsibility, self-directed learning, and citizenship are reported each quarter.

Approaches to Learning Rubric

Rarely (R)	Sometimes (S)	Consistently (Co)
When demonstration of the skill happens infrequently "I am still learning to do this"	When demonstration of the skill happens at certain times, but is inconsistent "I do this sometimes."	When demonstration of the skill is typical "I do this most of the time"

AtL Skill	Specific Performance Criteria
Collaboration <i>Collaborative skills that elevate the learning for oneself and for others</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to and works productively toward the shared goals of the group • Takes an active role without dominating the group • Engages in give-and-take dialogue to build on learning and ideas of others • Encourages others to share ideas
Responsibility <i>Responsible skills that maximize learning opportunities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comes to class prepared to learn • Uses time constructively • Listens actively • Sustains focus on tasks • Takes responsibility for actions and the consequences that accompany them
Self-Directed Learning <i>Reflective skills that lead to greater self-efficacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates self-awareness • Approaches mistakes and challenges as opportunities to grow • Seeks and uses feedback provided • Reflects on past and present learning • Adjusts thinking to new contexts
Citizenship <i>Respectful skills that demonstrate open-mindedness and global awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows respect • Demonstrates a consideration of multiple perspectives • Contributes to a positive learning environment and respects others' right to learn • Recognizes needs and actively responds

Assessment Conflicts

Students should not have more than two tests or other major assignments (not including quizzes) in core subjects (Humanities, Mathematics, Science, or World Language) on any given day. Students should attempt to resolve issues regarding three or more tests on one day as far in advance as possible. In general, unless some other compromise has been reached, the most recently announced and/or posted test will be rescheduled.

Homework and Assignments

Homework in MS serves as a basis of a follow-up to class discussions or reinforcement of information and ideas learned in class. If a teacher is using a flipped model of classroom instruction, homework may serve as preparation for an upcoming class. Homework also promotes individual responsibility, independent practice, and good work habits.

As a general guide, MS students can expect up to 60-80 minutes of homework daily, although homework may not be necessary each night. Knowing that homework may ebb and flow throughout the school year, up to two hours of homework is a reasonable

expectation at this level for the student who applies him or herself during the day. In the MS, homework on weekends will be kept to a minimum. Extended assignments and long-range projects will often require weekend work. Since tests may be given on Sunday, studying on Friday and Saturday could be necessary and expected. **No homework will be assigned during holidays. For families or students who wish to explore further learning, students may access the Middle School Independent Learning Site on the MS page of the ACS website.**

Assignments and tests will be posted on Veracross. This will allow students and parents to find out about upcoming assignments, and enable students to plan their study time accordingly. In addition, teachers will be better able to avoid overloading students with work at any one time.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

The assessment calendar is divided into two semesters, each approximately 19 weeks long. Report cards are provided at the end of each semester (end of Quarter 2 and 4). Progress Reports are given in the middle of each semester (end of Quarter 1 and 3).

The Middle School uses Veracross for the communication of academic reporting. When progress reports or report cards are published, parents can access their child's reports via the parent portal on Veracross. As no paper reports will be sent home, it is important that parents and students understand how to log in to access student progress reports and report cards.

Narrative Comments

Narrative comments are composed for all students in each subject at the end of the first and third reporting periods. These progress reports are posted on Veracross for students and parents to view.

Three-Way Conferences & Student Led Conferences

There are two times in the year (fall and spring) designated for Conferences. The fall Parent-Student-Teacher Conference (end of October/early November) follows the issuing of Quarter 1 Progress Reports. This meeting allows parents and students to visit with teachers to review and discuss academic progress, approaches to learning and establish goals for the next part of the year. Parents and students sign up online to arrange a time to meet with the teacher. Students are expected to attend these conferences along with their parents.

The **Student-Led Conference** is held in early spring. Student-led conferences are a student-focused alternative to traditional parent-teacher conferences. During the conference, students share a portfolio that they have created. This portfolio facilitates a discussion about their progress with personal goals, as well as academic achievement. Student-led conferences aim for students to:

- develop organizational, oral communication and leadership skills
- learn to evaluate their work honestly and fairly
- take ownership of their learning by being accountable for their work and behavior
- increase their self-confidence
- encourages them to engage in open and honest dialogue with their parents and teachers

As needed, other parent meetings are teacher initiated, meaning that the teacher requests a meeting with the student and parents. Typically these conferences are limited to students who:

- are performing well below grade level expectations;
- are in danger of not advancing to the next level (World Languages / Mathematics); and/or
- are not meeting expectations in regards to the Approaches to Learning Rubric.

Teachers will notify parents and students if a meeting is requested.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to demonstrate integrity by accepting responsibility for learning and for the accurate evidence of this learning. Academic dishonesty is defined as:

- presenting as one's own, the ideas of another;
- copying someone else's work or copying sections from textbooks, encyclopedias, or any other printed, published or digital materials without acknowledgment of the source;
- cheating on tests/exams; and/or
- knowingly permitting another student to copy homework or test answers

Each student is expected to complete assignments and assessments on their own. Learning to work on your own and with others are both important lifelong skills.

Homework, Formative and Summative Assessments

Students are expected to complete their assignments independently. While in some cases collaboration might be acceptable and even encouraged, in others it may be inappropriate and forbidden. Helping your friends is acceptable only if the teacher has indicated that this is appropriate for the particular assignment or activity. Copying another's homework is not acceptable, but helping someone understand how to do the work is appropriate. Allowing someone to copy homework assignments or information during tests and quizzes is considered academic dishonesty. In any case, students should assume they are to work independently unless informed otherwise by the teacher. If you are in doubt, ask the teacher.

Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Copying the work of others
- Allowing someone to copy your work
- Sharing (requesting/supplying information during tests or quizzes
- Possessing unauthorized materials during an assessment task
- Communicating the contents of an assessment task to other students

Plagiarism

Derived from the Latin word *plagiarius* ("kidnapper"), plagiarism refers to a form of academic dishonesty. To use another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarize. Plagiarism, then, constitutes intellectual theft.

You are plagiarizing if you:

- Present ideas as your own without citing the source
- Paraphrase without crediting the source
- Use direct quotes without the use of quotation marks, footnotes, or textual citation of the source
- Submit a paper or assignment for which you have received so much help that the writing is different from your own.

The principal will keep records on each incident of cheating or plagiarism. The consequences for cheating and plagiarism are cumulative throughout a student's MS years. The consequences are as follows:

1st offense

- Student's academic misconduct will be confidentially communicated to all of his/her teachers.
- The student will have to redo the assignment or complete an alternate one.
- The student may serve multiple detentions.
- The parents will be notified.
- The principal will be notified.

2nd offense

The above steps will be taken and additionally:

- A meeting will be held with the principal, parent and student.
- the student will serve a one day **in-school** suspension.
- A suspension letter will be placed in the student's permanent file.

3rd offense

The above steps will be taken and additionally:

- The student will serve a one day **out-of-school** suspension.
- The student and parents will sign a **binding Learning Support contract**.

4th offense

The above steps will be taken and additionally:

- The student will serve a **2 day out-of-school** suspension.
- The principal will be notified and an SST (student support team) meeting will be held.
- The student will be placed on social probation.
- Students and parents will sign a **last/revised binding Learning Support contract**.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Middle School Counselor

The Middle School Counselor provides valuable services to students, parents and staff at ACS.

The Counselor is available to parents who may have concerns regarding their child. Please contact the [MS office](#) to make an appointment to see the counselor.

The issue of confidentiality is paramount for effective counseling to occur. However, parents must realize that in a school, confidentiality is broken under these conditions: the child poses a threat to him/herself, or to others; someone else poses a threat to the child; or when the child gives permission for the Counselor to talk to a person mentioned in a counseling session. Counseling concerns are never mentioned in the students' records unless it is an admissions matter.

Middle School Student Transitions

In the Middle School, the Counselor helps to ease the transition for the new students through a variety of strategies including, but not limited to: screening admissions files; administering admissions screening tests; matching new students with buddies, meeting with new students in transition groups and offering parenting support groups. Our counselors also work on the transitions for students moving up from Grade 5 and for our students who transition to High School. We also offer extensive support for students who leave our community.

Middle School Oasis

In the middle school at ACS, Oasis serves as our advisory program.

Oasis is a developmentally responsive program that provides a continuity of care for all students. Each year, students will follow a pathway focused on critical thinking and reflective skills to enhance their understanding of self, connection to community, and our wider world. The purpose of our program is to foster an inclusive middle school community by building relationships and exploring identity.

Student Support Teams (SST)

In the Middle School special teams of school personnel (teachers, counselors and principals) are organized to support and assist students who experience difficulties in academic performance, behavior, or social interactions. These teams are known as the Student Support Teams (SST). Occasionally, parents are invited to meet with the SST in order to keep them actively involved in the aid of their child. Some strategies that are available to help a student may include testing by the Counselor, or School Psychologist, support services, counseling services, Veracross updates and weekly SST reports sent home.

Learning Support

The purpose of Student Support Services (SSS) is to work with students who are having difficulty meeting the academic requirements necessary to be successful or to identify students with disabilities and/or and to ensure that additional support is provided to those students. The aim is to identify these students early enough and to work as a team with parents to provide the necessary help for students to be academically successful at ACS. Support may be provided through the learning lab and/or coaching sessions with the

student support (SS) teacher after a referral has been submitted to our Student Support Team (SST.) SST will determine students' eligibility for services.

Parents will be informed by means of an email from the (SS) teacher that the student has been referred for Student Support Services (SSS) and will be informed of the recommended services and type of services that will be provided.

Health and Wellness Center

The health office is open 07.30-16.30 Sunday to Thursday and is staffed by two HAAD licensed School Nurses. They support the health and well-being needs of the school population through delivery of the HAAD (Health Authority Abu Dhabi) School Health Program. This includes responding to minor injuries on the campus, prevention of ill health through monitoring communicable diseases, undertaking the School Health Screening for grades 1-12 (see school policies), childhood immunizations programs (G1+G11), health promotion campaigns, and working to HAAD standards of practice to ensure the safety and well-being of all our students.

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

- If a student requires a course of medication through the school day, parents are required to complete the relevant consent form ([downloadable form from our webpage](#))
- If a student becomes unwell during the school day they are to attend the Health & Wellness Center where the nurses will document and assess if they need to go home.
- Students who have a fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting need to be free of symptoms at least 24 hours without medication prior to returning to school per Health Authority directive, even if they feel well enough to attend school. This reduces the risk of infectious diseases/ill health to our students and staff.

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

STUDENT LIFE

Activity Nights

ACS will host Activity Nights throughout the year which are organized by the student groups, ACS Parents or a high school organization. Some events involve all MS students and some are grade-level events. All events held at school are supervised and chaperoned by school personnel and/or parents.

Regular school rules and expectations apply during these events, and the following special rules also apply:

- **Only current** ACS students are eligible to attend. A student must have attended a full day of school the day of the event.
- Students attending the event must arrive within the first part of the event (usually within one hour). Students **may not leave** the event before the established finishing time.
- Students must wear appropriate dress. This will vary with the different themes of the events and will be published by the sponsoring organization.
- Students must behave appropriately for the social activity as determined by the chaperones for the activity.
- Students need to be picked up on time at the end time of the event, as there will not be any supervision after the activity is complete.

Fun After School (FAS)

The Middle School Fun After School (FAS) program is a coeducational after school program designed to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a number of non-competitive sports and activities throughout the school year. While students are engaged in the FAS program they will be encouraged to identify with the ACS core values of curiosity, compassion, courage and integrity. It is the intent of this program to provide a wide variety of opportunities for MS students to improve familiar talents, expand upon existing interests and explore altogether new arenas of ability. Deciding to sign-up for a program is a commitment and **attendance is monitored**. Students are to inform the supervisors if they are unable to attend.

Sports Teams

Sports teams are active throughout the year at ACS. We have an active Under 14 (U14) program, which is divided into three seasons – fall, winter, and spring. We also have a Grade 6 league, with two seasons – one in the fall (soccer) and one in the spring (basketball). In addition to the U14 program, many Grade 8 athletes participate in Junior Varsity (JV) teams, consisting mainly of high school students. ACS belongs to two different leagues, a local league made of UAE schools and for JV and Varsity teams, MESAC (Middle Eastern Schools Activities Conference).

If a student is disciplined on a local or MESAC trip for serious rule violations, he or she forfeits the privilege of receiving a letter or pin for that activity. The student may also become ineligible for the next season of participation if the infraction is deemed serious. The principal makes this determination in consultation with the coach and the athletic director.

Middle Eastern Schools Activities Conference (MESAC)

This organization arranges meetings among the member schools for sports, academic, and cultural activities. These events include volleyball, soccer, basketball, fine arts, academic games, forensics, swimming, badminton, cross-country, track and field and softball. JV athletes may travel to Dubai, Doha, Muscat, and New Delhi to participate in these events. The Viper Club welcomes MS parents to join and participate in its activities. Parents will receive timely information about the Viper Club (club is open during MESAC events and other activities/games) through weekly bulletins and on the PTA page of the [school's website](#).

MESAC Rules and Regulations

Prior to each MESAC event and other activities with students traveling outside the country, participating students and their parents are required to attend a meeting with the Athletic Director and the sponsor(s) of the activity. Details of the travel plans are discussed, and the MESAC rules and regulations are reviewed. These rules are available from the Athletic Director.

Field Trips and Week Without Walls (WWW)

Addendum Update: *At this point in time, all field trips have been cancelled by ADEK.*

As part of the regular school program, students travel on extended field trips in support of the school curriculum. Our Week Without Walls program is closely tied to our MS curriculum and offers students an unforgettable experiential education opportunity. In addition, teachers occasionally organize field trips to extend the learning for students into the community and take advantage of opportunities that cannot be duplicated within the school. Any student participating in a school-sponsored field trip must have written permission from a parent or guardian. In most cases the general permission, which is signed by parents during the application process, will suffice. In some cases, a special permission form may be required which is in compliance with procedures indicated by the principal, teacher, or sponsor of the group involved.

At the discretion of the teacher(s)/chaperone(s), and with the concurrence of the MS principal, students who have encountered disciplinary problems may be prohibited from attending out-of-town field trips, including the Week Without Walls.

Returning to School After Student Trips

Students who traveled out of the country on school sponsored trips do need to report back to school until 10 or 12 hours after the plane lands in Abu Dhabi or Dubai, respectively. Absence or tardiness beyond this time is considered unexcused, and may result in a ban from participation in future activities. The trip administrator is responsible for advising students at the airport about their expected arrival time at school the next day. This trip administrator will also need to inform the MS office of the designated time. Absence or tardiness beyond this time will be considered unexcused, and may result in a student being ineligible to participate in the next activity.

Eligibility Guidelines for Extracurricular Activities

The following eligibility guidelines will be applied to all extra-curricular activities, which require regular after-school practice sessions and/or would require a student to be absent from regularly scheduled classes.

- A student will be considered eligible to participate during that quarter if they are in good academic standing and are not on social probation in that quarter. Students who require additional Learning Support may participate, but must also seek permission from the teachers.
- If a student is declared ineligible, the time period involved will be from the day report cards are issued until the last day of the current quarter.
- Students on probation for disciplinary reasons or placed on social probation at any point in the quarter become ineligible.
- Class attendance is mandatory the day of and the day following any extra-curricular activity. Participation in extracurricular activities is an additional responsibility that should not conflict with the student's primary academic responsibilities.
- Absences for MESAC or other school sponsored trips count toward the total absences for a quarter.
- Students eligible to travel on MESAC events will be in grades 8-12.
- In deference to students of host schools and to show sensitivity to different cultures, students will not be allowed to travel on a school sponsored activity while having hair dyed unnatural colors (green, blue, purple, orange, etc.).
- If a student is selected for a team or other school-sponsored activity/event and accepts a position with that team/group/cast, she/he cannot quit that activity to join another school-sponsored activity. The student is ineligible to participate in any manner until after the initial activity or team has finished for the year.
- A student is declared ineligible if in violation of the ACS Activities code.

Library Media Center

The Middle and High School Library Media Center offers a variety of resources for research and recreational reading to support the school's curriculum and students' personal interests. The Library provides a variety of tech equipment for check out, access to databases, news sources and research tools. In the Library, students have places to read, quiet study rooms as well as spaces for collaborative work. The Library's goal is to promote a love of reading, learning, and provide a place for collaboration.

The library is open Sundays through Thursdays from 8:15 am to 4:00pm.

Students have access to the Library Media Center before school, during break and lunch periods, after school and during class time as deemed appropriate by their teachers.

Library Expectations:

- Treat the library and all materials with respect.
- When working in the library, respect the learning environment of others.
- As a courtesy to others, wear headphones when listening to audio/video.
- Leave food outside the library.
- Water bottles and drinks must be in sealable containers.

Print Material Checkout Policy:

- Print materials may be checked out for three weeks. Books may be renewed, unless there is a waiting list.
- Students are responsible for all borrowed materials. A replacement fee will be charged in the case of a missing, lost, or damaged item.

Technology Equipment Checkout Policy:

- **Tech Equipment is a one day check out.** Checked out items must be returned by the end of the school day (4:00pm).

- We require students to trade a personal tech item when checking out tech equipment. The Tech for Tech policy ensures that students follow the one day check out guideline.
- Check-out of equipment for more than one day must be approved by Library or Tech Department Staff.
- Students are responsible for all borrowed materials. **A replacement fee will be charged in case of missing, lost or damaged items.**
- If your laptop is damaged it should be brought to the Tech Office for assessment and repair, after which a loaner can be issued if necessary.



STUDENT BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Two of our core values are “people flourish in safe and caring relationships” and “people are responsible for their choices, actions, and consequences that result.” The overarching principle that guides our enforcement of these behavioral guidelines is based on trust, respect, and continuous open dialogue, with the end goal being not to punish, but to change behavior and build responsibility.

Staff and Student Rights, Responsibilities and Expectations

Rights

- A safe environment (physically and emotionally)
- Clear communication about academic and behavioral expectations
- To be treated with respect

Responsibilities

- To conduct ourselves in ways which promote and preserve these rights for others, and ourselves, and which meet our behavioral expectations.

Expectations

- Safe and legal behavior
- Adherence to class rules and teacher instructions
- Respectful behavior towards others
- Punctuality and regular attendance
- Scholarly effort
- Honesty
- Respectful attire (see dress code)
- Respect for the host culture

The following types of behavior are considered major school rule violations:

- The possession or use of alcohol, cigarettes, shisha, dokha, e-cigarettes and vape pens / MODS.
- Attendance at school or school activities under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Disruption or obstruction of the learning activities through violence, defiance, force, insubordination, noise, coercion, extortion, threat, intimidation, fear or passive resistance.
- Possession and/or use of any potentially dangerous materials or weapons (guns, knives, chemicals, fireworks, etc.).
- Assault or physical injury or fighting with anyone at school, adult or student.
- Arson, vandalism and/or initiating a false fire alarm.
- Forceful, unapproved and/or irregular entry of school premises.
- Theft or stealing of any kind.
- Any other unlawful or illegal activities while under school supervision.
- Disrespectful, rude and/or inappropriate language.
- Physical, verbal and/or mental abuse, or harassment (including sexual harassment).
- Leaving school and/or missing classes without authorization.
- Forgery of any kind.
- Violation of another student's personal property.

Please note that although not a major infraction, **students are not permitted to chew gum** at school.

ACS Middle School Discipline Policy

Showing Respect to All

Students are expected to show respect to all members of the ACS community. Talking back, being rude, making threats, using put downs, refusing to follow directions, and being argumentative are all examples of showing disrespect. Remember our guards, cafeteria staff, cleaning staff, and grounds staff are all members of the ACS community and all deserve our respect.

Our Middle School is built on a foundation of mutual trust and respect. ANY action that prevents a person from feeling safe, secure and happy to learn at school will be addressed promptly. Our discipline policy attempts to take a proactive approach to issues of meanness and unkindness by confronting them head-on and working with students involved through counseling and administrative measures.

During Break and After Lunch

Addendum Update: At this time, students are not permitted to engage in an outdoor break in the manner that we have in the past. Students will have their lunch in classrooms.

This is the time to play and have fun with your friends. If the weather is nice, spending time outside is a great idea. Remember to throw away any trash before going to class. If you have to be inside, be mindful of your voice level and activity choices. You may use the gym only when there is appropriate supervision.

With Friends

Be sure to use appropriate language (no cursing, no put-downs). Displays of affection are not permitted on campus. Students are not to engage in any type of tackle game while on break. Nor are students permitted to play any type of game or activity that includes hitting or harming others.

Students will not:

- Play tackle games
- Have rough physical contact with other students (for example playing tag by grabbing shirts or body parts)
- Push or pull each other while playing
- Technology use should not be disruptive to other students

Behavior Management/Rewards/Consequences

The primary means of behavior management and intervention is the teacher. Classroom rules and expectations will be clearly defined. Positive reinforcement throughout the school is encouraged. The consequences for students who choose to not show respect to fellow students or staff, or who have not followed the school's policies will depend on the seriousness of the problem and the harm done to others and/or the educational environment.

It is our philosophy that students should learn from behavioral difficulties. Therefore, when consequences are necessary, they are always intended to help students in this process. The formulation of a plan by the student to take responsibility for their behavior and to improve behavior is one effective way to facilitate this learning. Teachers, with the help of the

principal when necessary, will work individually with a student in an attempt to help the student meet expectations.

Our Behavior Guidelines and Expectations establish general guidelines for responsible and respectful behavior at school and in public. The school will not condone or tolerate behavior, either during or outside school hours, which is damaging to the school community nor which jeopardizes the reputation of ACS. Specific school rules notwithstanding, all students are expected to adhere to and respect UAE law at all times. Please see the [ACS 1:1 Laptop Handbook](#) for specific laws regarding technology use in the UAE.

Level 1 Infractions and Consequences

Minor infractions, including:

- Violation of classroom rules
- Disruptive behavior
- Disregarding [Classroom Technology Agreements](#)
- Dress code violations
- Initial tardies

Consequences: Interventions by the teacher, staff member or assistant principal. Student commits to verbal improvement plan.

Level 2 Infractions and Consequences

Violations of conduct and behavior expectations, including:

- Repeated incidents of level 1 transgressions
- Academic dishonesty
- Disobedience
- Rude behavior
- Profanity
- Excessive tardies
- Dangerous behaviors
- Irresponsible behaviors
- Gaming, video watching, or social media during class time

Consequences: Intervention by the assistant principal. Contact made with the parents, teachers and counselor. Detentions, technology consequences, possible in-school suspensions, and/or written behavior action plans.

Level 3 Infractions and Consequences

Gross violations of conduct and behavior expectations, including bullying.

- Repeated incidents of level 2 transgressions
- Repeated incidents of academic dishonesty
- Targeted harassment (in any form) / Bullying
- Forgery, hacking, intimidation, cruelty
- Defamatory, insulting or intimidating online comments and behaviors
- Excessive tardies
- Stealing, fighting
- Use of controlled substances or explicit content

Consequences: Intervention by the principal. Warning on record of a failure of school conduct expectations, in-school suspensions, technology

consequences, out-of-school suspensions, conversations about withdrawal from school, and/or counseling may be expected for the student and/or family.

Detention

Students will serve detention during the first half of lunch, and will include a conversation with the assistant principal or principal. Detentions are served in a supervised setting to reflect upon their behavior. Students are generally given at least 24 hours notice of their detention whenever possible. Students will be asked to use the office telephone to inform their parents that they have a detention should 24 hour notice not be possible.

Suspension

Students may be removed from classes and not allowed to participate in activities for a period of one to three days. In all cases of suspension, students will not be allowed to participate in any school activities during the period of suspension, and a parent conference may be required before the student may return to regular classes.

In-School Suspension

In-School suspension will be in a non-classroom setting at school with teachers sending students their work from the classroom. Students who receive in-school suspension are encouraged to bring their own lunch to school.

Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-School suspension will be used when the problems have been repeated or are of a more serious nature. Students who are serving their suspensions at home are expected to complete all of their assignments while they are at home. If necessary, students will be asked to make up assessments upon their return to school outside of the normal school day.

Social Probation

The principal may place students consistently in violation of school rules and regulations on social probation. First violations of a more serious nature may be handled in a similar manner. This means that the student may be prohibited from participating in extracurricular activities or from being on campus except during regular school hours. Probationary status may be assigned at any time, and will be reviewed by the Student Support Team. Students and parents will be informed in writing and through conferences of the terms and reasons for social probation. Students failing to show the necessary improvements may be recommended for withdrawal, or non-admittance for the following school period. Such a decision would involve the Superintendent.

Technology Probation

Technology related infractions may have a specific technology consequence. These consequences may include being placed on a restricted WiFi network, assigned a restricted laptop, and confiscating specific technology; including the laptop, phone, wireless headphones and other wearable devices.

Dress Code

Addendum Update: At this point in time (August, 2020), **FACEMASKS** are mandatory for all students (Gr 1-12) and staff. Cloth or disposable masks are acceptable. Disposable masks

will be thrown away after each use and cloth masks will be taken home for cleaning daily. [For more information, please see our Return to Campus Plan for 2020-21.](#)

The U.A.E. Ministry of Education requires students to wear a school uniform each day. ACS strives to comply with this mandate while providing options in your child's daily style. This section outlines the various options available for the School Uniform. Please make arrangements to purchase your child(ren)'s uniform well in advance of the beginning of the school year.

All ACS students (KG1 - Grade 12) are required to wear the official ACS uniform to school every day. Please see the detailed information below.

Learning within a multicultural community offers all individuals the opportunity to become responsible global citizens. At ACS, we seek to understand and respect cultural differences of beliefs and values while ensuring that we are sensitive to the customs and norms of our host country. While we appreciate the role that attire plays in expressing individuality, we expect all members of our community to wear the ACS uniform.

For the most up-to-date information related to the dress code, [please visit our website.](#)

What is the ACS uniform?

The ACS uniform consists of an ACS logo top from Lands' End and a variety of options for bottoms in either khaki or black.

Do I have to buy the bottoms from Lands' End?

Students can wear any bottom in khaki or black. That includes plain khaki or black sweatpants, shorts, jeans, and skirts (to the knee). Bottoms must be in good condition – no rips.

May I wear black leggings or jeggings?

Leggings and jeggings are not acceptable to wear to school, unless they are under a knee-length skirt or dress. Black or khaki pants, shorts, jeans, skirts, sweatpants are all acceptable.

What shoes do I have to wear?

Students can wear their own shoes, socks, tights and leggings/jeggings (under knee-length skirts or dresses) are all opportunities to express their own style.

May I wear my own sweatshirt over my uniform shirt?

Lands' End has sweatshirts, sweaters, fleece jackets and vests with the ACS logo and students can wear sweatshirts and fleeces from Viper Pit in evergreen, gray, white, black with the ACS Athletics logo on it. Sweatshirts and jackets, either plain or with other logos, are not to be worn on campus in hallways and classrooms during the school day.

The only class that will be allowed to create a class sweatshirt or top and wear it in place of a uniform top will be the senior class (i.e. Senior Class of 2019). Club and team shirts are only permitted on designated spirit days or at the end of the school day.

My Nike basketball shorts are black; can I wear those?

If the shorts/pants are solid khaki or black with the exception of a logo smaller than the logo on your uniform shirt, you can wear them. If the logo is larger than your uniform logo and/or there are stripes or lettering along the side of the shorts or pants, then they are not permitted. Please check your school dress code to ensure compliance.

Do I have to order online?

A limited inventory of uniform tops will be available for purchase in the Viper Pit throughout the year. Lands' End orders can be shipped anywhere in the world and if families create an account, they will email special shipping offers and sale events throughout the year.

For all after school events, the students and parents are expected to dress in modest clothing, respecting our host country:

- Shorts, dresses, and skirts must be knee-length.
- Clothing cannot be transparent or torn showing skin.
- Hats or shades are not appropriate while in school building, particularly class, library or assemblies.
- Shirts and Tops must:
 - Cover both shoulders, without having to pull it up (nothing sleeveless);
 - Fully cover the back or belly and have a modest neckline;
- Ensure that undergarments are not visible at any time;
- Not include images, words or phrases that are offensive or make reference to alcohol or drugs.

Students who are in violation of ACS dress code will not be admitted to class, will meet with the Assistant Principal and will modify his/her clothing before going to class.

Instances of dress code violations will be handled as follows:

- A warning: the problem is solved in the office (e.g. change shirts) or students call home for a change of clothes. Parents are notified.
- A detention: the problem is solved in the office (e.g. change shirts) or students call home for a change of clothes. Parents are notified
- Parent conference: students call home for a change of clothes.

Further Violations – Will be at the Principal's discretion and further conversation with parents, students, and Assistant Principal. The administration reserves the right to make final decisions on the acceptability of student attire. We thank you in advance for your understanding of our school beliefs and for supporting both the specific parameters of the dress code as well as the spirit in which it is intended.

Attendance

Regular participation in class activities is a vital part of the learning process, and it is therefore important and expected for students to be present in each class, every day.

Learning and understanding gained from classroom instruction, activities and interactions cannot always be replicated independently. Regular attendance and participation are necessary to develop a coherent understanding of a body of knowledge and to develop skills sequentially. As a result, we believe a commitment to school attendance on the part of both students and parents is an essential component of a high-quality learning experience and parents are expected to do everything possible to ensure each student's regular attendance.

Absences

Absence Notification

The Middle School Office must be notified if your child is unable to participate in synchronous (real-time) or on-campus learning ahead of time at jacquiethorstad@acs.sch.ae. The students are expected to notify teachers of their impending absence to find out what assignments they will be missing the day(s) they are absent.

Planned Absence

If a student is planning to be away from school for one or more days (e.g. due to family responsibilities), the school would like to be informed. MS students must submit a completed [Planned Absence Form](#) to the school four to five days prior to leaving. Students must take the form to each of their teachers to indicate work to be completed. Forms are available from the MS office. If you have any questions, you may contact the MS office.

Teachers and Counselors are closely monitoring daily student attendance. Students and families will be contacted by the Assistant Principal when missing classes that are unexcused.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Generally speaking, there are two main categories of absences.

Category 1: Excused Absences

Students may be allowed to miss school for the following reasons:

- Illness (the school may require a physician's certificate from the parent for 3 consecutive days of illness and in cases of chronic or extended absences for an illness);
- Physician appointment (when at all possible, families should try to arrange appointments before school, after school or during holidays);
- School sponsored trip;
- Religious holiday;
- Hazardous weather conditions;
- Passport renewal;
- Visa/immigration appointments;
- Death in the family.

Category 2: Unexcused Absences / Notified Unexcused Absences

An absence that does not fall under one of the above conditions, and occurs without prior notification from parents, is an Unexcused Absence. Unexcused Absences will result in the instructional time being made up before or after school in a supervised study hall, and parents are notified. Note: Teachers will help students make up work when the absence is excused; however, no such obligation exists when the absence is unexcused.

Request for Student Absence for Family Reasons

It is sometimes the case that families request to remove their child from school for a family trip. As a courtesy, we ask that parents please notify the Principal in writing at least 7 days prior to the absence for a family trip. While, in most cases, the school does not support these absences, prior notification does allow the student to have a conversation with his/her teachers and keep up with coursework during the absence.

Tardies

Students who are late either to school or class negatively impact their learning and the learning of others. It is the student's responsibility to attend all classes on time. If a student is late for class, he/she will be marked "tardy." A student will be notified after accruing three or more tardies in one reporting period.

When tardies become a pattern during a reporting period (one quarter),

- the student will be notified after their **fifth** tardy and assigned a one-hour detention.
- the student will be notified after their **tenth** tardy and assigned a two-hour detention.
- the student will receive an in-school suspension if he/she continues to be late and a conference with the student, parent, and Assistant Principal is necessary and co-curricular activity may be suspended.
- continued lateness will result in an out-of-school suspension and issuing of a social/academic contract.

Make-up Work

Students returning after an absence will be given a reasonable time (if the time is extensive) to complete missed assignments/tests. Students are responsible for contacting teachers regarding missed assignments and missed tests. It is an expectation for students to complete their work while away from school.

Students arriving late to school should contact teachers whose classes they missed to discuss make up assignments, tests, quizzes, etc. Similarly, students who anticipate leaving school early should notify those teachers who the student will not see in the afternoon, at least one day prior to the early departure.

Students who become ill during the school day will be sent home only if the parent or emergency contact is notified by the nurse's office. It is important that an emergency contact is stated on each student's registration form and health record. The nurse must excuse students before leaving school because of illness.

Admission Slip

Students who have been absent for all or any part of a day are asked to bring with them, when they return, a statement signed by the parent or guardian which specifies (1) the date(s) and/or time of the absence and (2) the reason for the absence. This note is presented to the MS assistant, from whom the student will receive an admission slip required for readmission to classes. If you know that your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, please email or call the MS Executive Assistant. In addition, the MS office may contact parents concerning a student's absence from school at any time.

Class Attendance / Activities

In order to participate in after-school and evening extra-curricular activities (sports, concerts, theater, etc.), **students must attend a minimum of 2 class periods that same day** (when events occur on the evenings of school days). If a school activity occurs during the weekend, participating students must be in attendance at school on Thursday for a minimum of 2 class periods. A doctor's notification and other relevant information may alter the enforcement of the regulation in extenuating circumstances. The final decision in all cases lies with the principal.

Additionally, students participating in after-school and evening activities **are expected to be at school the following day**. Not attending school the following day may result in the student not being able to participate in further extra-curricular activities.

One Trip Per Quarter

Middle school students are normally allowed to be absent from school for a trip to participate in an extracurricular activity once during a quarter. Please note that **absences due to such trips** do count as an absence with respect to the 80% attendance policy. If a student is involved in activities that will result in more than one trip per quarter, the student must submit a written request to the MS principal for permission to take the additional trip. The review panel consists of the MS principal, the athletic director, the counselor, the activity sponsor, and selected teachers. In general, **students who have “4’s” and “3’s”**, and who have an exemplary attendance record, may be favorably considered. Students struggling academically **or with poor attendance** will normally not be allowed to travel on a second trip.

Nuisance Items

The term “nuisance items” includes such things as toys, gadgets or any item that disrupts the classroom learning environment. These items should not be brought into classrooms unless the teacher in question specifically permits them for an activity.

Mobile phones should never be used or ring during class time and must remain switched off and away during class time.

If a student does not follow these rules, the mobile phone will be taken away and the students will pick up the phone from the teacher or office at the end of the period/day. After the second incident, the phone will be taken away and it will only be returned to a parent. After the third incident, a month long “phone check in” will be instituted. The student will be required to bring the phone to the MS office every morning before the first period class. The phone can be picked up at the end of each school day.

Pocket knives, water pistols, slingshots, and similar items are not allowed on campus. **Bringing a replica of a weapon to school may result in suspension.**

If a student roller blades, or rides a skateboard or scooter to school, it should not be used once the student is on school campus; it should be stored in the appropriate rack. It is suggested that bikes and scooters are locked.

RESPONSIBLE USE AND POLICY GUIDELINES

The 1:1 computer program aims to promote meaningful uses of integrated technology, which inspires students to develop critical thinking skills and support continuous inquiry. ACS students will use state-of-the-art technology in a creative and collaborative environment, and model respectful, responsible, and ethical uses of technology in both social, personal, and academic contexts.

Being a Responsible User

As a member of the ACS community and the 1:1 program, students and parents need to be familiar with the Responsible Use Policy (RUP). In order to use technology at ACS, students and parents must have read and signed the Responsible Use Agreement (RUA).

The use of technology at ACS is focused on educational purposes. As these devices can also be used for personal and recreational purposes, it is important that students are aware of the expectations for the use of technology at school. In some cases, students' behavior is guided by clearly articulated expectations, but in other cases, they must make wise decisions about their own behavior, dictated by a sense of good citizenship and as a responsible member of the ACS community. **These expectations apply to any technological device used at ACS.**

Students are expected to access only classroom-related sites and applications during class time. Recreational games, non-academic use of social networking sites or other activities that disrupt studies, peers or classes **are not permitted**.

Being Prepared to Learn

Being a good digital citizen and a responsible member of the ACS community means students come to school prepared to learn.

This means bringing a charged laptop to school:

- in operating condition and good health
- that meets the "Laptop Dress Code"
- with a minimum of 15% empty disk space available at all times
- with a battery fully charged. Students should not need to use a laptop charger at school.

Care and Maintenance

Damaged or malfunctioning computers should be brought to the Computer Help Desk in the Secondary Library as soon as possible for maintenance. A loaner laptop will be provided for the day. In order to ensure that a computer remains in good health students will:

- employ careful battery management techniques to ensure their computer can last through the day
- care for and transport their laptop responsibly
- regularly perform software updates
- regularly restart their laptop
- regularly back up data on their laptop
- keep files and folders organized

To ensure the security of laptops and to avoid damage:

- When not in use, student laptops must be locked in a locker or kept in a storage cart in the classroom.
- Laptops should not be left unattended for any amount of time.

- Students may not loan laptops or borrow laptops from other students.
- At home, ensure that laptops are stored in a safe place away from food, drinks, pets, and siblings.

The Laptop Dress Code

- Laptops must be transported in a hard-shell case.
- Students may not decorate or deface school owned computers
- Inappropriate media may not be used as a screensaver/desktop or attached to laptop accessories.
- **Display of weapons, images contrary to the culture of the UAE and/or inappropriate language (in any language), is not permitted.**

Keeping Health & Balance in Mind

The 1:1 computer program is meant to be a positive, enriching resource to enhance learning and creativity. It is recognized however, that computers, mobile devices and other technologies can sometimes have a disruptive effect on a person's behavior and well-being. Proper usage of technology should never cause pain, fatigue, or other physical or mental ailments. Additionally, while technology can be an engaging way to spend time, it can take up time that could be better used for studying, working with friends, or seeking direct help from teachers.

It is important that Middle School students use break times during the school day to socialize with others and take a rest from screen time. With balance in mind we have guidelines for when and where MS students should use their laptops.

MS LAPTOP USE - WHEN AND WHERE?

Time of Day	In a classroom with my teacher	In the library	Outside or in the hallway
Before School	✓	✓	X
Break	X	X	
Lunch	X		
After School	✓	✓	

Middle school students are not permitted to use their laptops during breaks unless under the direct supervision of a teacher. Students may use their laptops before and after school to complete work in the library only. **Laptops will not be used during the lunch break.**

Ethical and Respectful Use

Responsible citizenship and having integrity means practicing good ethical behavior, whether online or offline. **Students are encouraged to model good online citizenship by making sure their actions and choices do not disrupt the learning environment for themselves or others**, just like in the classroom.

- Students should cite any and all use of websites, books, media, etc. Students should not share or use others' email accounts or passwords, and not engage in conversation or activities (such as sending pictures) that may inflame, agitate, risk, offend (cyber bullying, flaming, trolling, etc.) or threaten the privacy or security of others.
- The activities below are prohibited at school:
 - use of peer-to-peer file-sharing software that could jeopardize
 - use of hacking or installing malicious software on any device used at ACS
 - use tools to bypass network restrictions or LANschool
 - use of Virtual Private Networks (VPN)
 - possessing or sharing pirated software
 - trespassing into another person's computer, accounts or files
 - removing school installed software
 - spamming
- Using print resources should also be done in a responsible manner. To conserve paper and ink, students will use "print preview" and print documents only once to reduce unnecessary printing.

Protecting Student Identity & Personal Information

With the ubiquity of information networks, safeguarding personal information has become extremely important. Once information goes on the Internet, it is likely that it will remain there for a very long time. Personal information includes names, phone numbers, student ID numbers, addresses, usernames and passwords. As such, it is important that students treat their own and others' personal information with great care. **Students should never share**

user accounts or passwords, especially those that are close to their identity (e.g., email, ACS accounts, social networks). All personal information, such as home addresses, phone numbers and full names, should always be kept private.

Sharing Work Online

Students will be sharing their work in a variety of online spaces and are expected to act safely by keeping personal information private. **When they share their work online, they are expected to treat those spaces as classroom spaces.** Language or images that are inappropriate for class are not appropriate online. If a student's work is shared, only the first name and grade will be included.

Community Awareness

All students are members of the greater ACS community and have a social obligation to protect community resources, such as bandwidth. Participating in activities that use up excessive bandwidth, such as peer-to-peer file sharing, is strictly prohibited at school. **Computer use should not be disruptive to other students who are working nearby;** students are requested to use headphones when listening to audio. Students should also be aware that individual teachers will have different protocols for classroom use and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of these and adhere to them.

Monitored Use, Misconduct, and Free Will

In cases where there are concerns that electronic communications systems and/or technology are being used inappropriately, teachers and/or the technology department may restrict and/or monitor student use. Similarly, student use of the school network is not private, and there should be no expectation of privacy.

In cases of student misconduct ACS reserves the right to inspect computers and electronic media and to carry out appropriate investigation and possible disciplinary action.

ACS does not take responsibility for personal media or information transmitted to a third party by a student of their own free will, nor does it take responsibility for any repercussions that may occur from said action (e.g., posting photos on a social networking website).

ACS reserves the right to make adjustments to these guidelines and expectations throughout the school year if necessary and will be proactive in communicating any changes.

Consequences for failure to adhere to the RUA may result in restricted or complete loss of access to technology and the school's networks and may include suspension, expulsion, and/or notification to the appropriate legal authorities. The school may also remove any software from a student's computer that is causing problems with the ACS network, his/her education or the education of other students.

RESPONSIBLE USE AGREEMENT (RUA)

The Responsible Use Agreement (RUA) acknowledges that students and parents have read and understand the Responsible Use Policy. Parents complete the agreement during the registration/re-enrollment process. Students complete the RUA during their first week of school.

RUA Grades 6-8: Student Owned Laptop

I understand that:

- I am required to supply an Apple MacBook laptop (please refer to the [Middle School page of the school website](#) for details and purchasing options) to be able to participate in the 1:1 program.
- I will follow the responsibilities and expectations outlined in the [ACS Laptop Handbook](#) and RUP.
- Use of school IT resources and services including access to the Internet is a privilege and not a right. Failure to abide by the Laptop Handbook and the RUA could lead to:
 - The revocation of these privileges
 - Appropriate disciplinary action by the Middle School Principal
- Parents/Students are financially responsible for:
 - Laptop repairs not covered under warranty
 - Any deliberate damage to ACS IT equipment, networks and hardware or software systems
 - Damage, loss, or theft of library and media equipment (i.e. lost chargers or laptops loaned by the library)
- If I should leave ACS, any ACS-licensed and provided software, which are the property of ACS, will be removed from my laptop.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LAPTOP SUPPORT PROCESS

All MS teachers **are required** to support the enforcement of the Responsible Use Policy (RUP). If a student has failed to follow the RUP he/she will speak with the relevant adult in charge, depending on the infraction.