



Elementary School Grade 1 - 5

STUDENT-FAMILY

HANDBOOK



Updated September 1, 2025

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ACS.SCH.AE

ACS Mission and Vision

Our community empowers all students to define and shape their futures for learning, service, and global citizenship. We are a compassionate, student-centered community of learners that engages, prepares, and inspires.

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 appreciate 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.

ACS Learners Are ...

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

Social Media Channels

Follow us on our social media channels Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn



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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Families,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2025–26 school year at ACS. As your new Elementary School Principal, I am excited to join this special community and begin my first year alongside you. This year is especially meaningful, as the UAE celebrates the *Year of Community*, a perfect theme for us, because community is at the very heart of ACS.

Our dedicated teachers are eager to welcome your children back to school. In partnership with you, our families, we will ensure that every student feels supported, challenged, and inspired. Together, we will create a joyful, nurturing environment where curiosity thrives and learning is celebrated.

Elementary School is a time of extraordinary growth. At ACS, students are nurtured as they grow into confident readers, writers, mathematicians, scientists, designers, athletes, artists, and compassionate global citizens. Our program is designed to inspire courage, creativity, and self-directed learning, helping each child discover their strengths and passions while building the skills that will serve them for a lifetime.

As you will see throughout this handbook, our daily work is guided by the four ACS pillars: **Academics, Arts, Athletics, and Service**. These pillars shape how we learn, play, and grow together whether in classrooms, on playgrounds, in studios, or through acts of kindness that remind us of the importance of caring for others. This handbook is designed to help you understand how these pillars, along with our daily routines and practices, support your child's learning and wellbeing every day at ACS.

Thank you for entrusting us with the education of your child. I look forward to working in close partnership with you during the year ahead, celebrating milestones, supporting challenges, and watching our students grow!

Sincerely,

Jonathan



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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:

- 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.
- Help my child learn from mistakes and to benefit from suggestions for improvement.
- 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.
- Ensure that my child has proper rest, nutrition and recreation.
- 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 teaching team.
- Attend orientations, back to school nights, parent conferences, and be an active participant in school functions.
- 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.

- 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.
- Practice and model effective conflict resolution by handling concerns appropriately, respectfully, directly, and honestly, only with those involved.
- Ensure that my child arrives on time and remains for the full length of the school day.
- Comply with the school calendar for vacations.
- 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.
- 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 , or contact our Executive Assistant, [Lone Wennestad](#) directly.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION HANDBOOK

We are committed to:

- Protecting students against any physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation, and/or peer-on-peer abuse.
- Identifying at-risk students and taking action to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm.
- Reporting when there is reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to students.
- Applying Safer Recruitment and hiring practices, including staff training (as defined in the Child Protection Handbook).

Every suspicion or disclosure of abuse from within or outside the school will be taken seriously. Action will be taken by members of the Child Protection team, and as appropriate, may include referral to an external agency.

Please take the time to review the contents of the [Student Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures Handbook](#) and let your Counselor, Principal or Superintendent know if you have any questions about our commitment to work in partnership to protect children.

WHOLE SCHOOL CALENDAR



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL
OF ABU DHABI *SINCE 1972*

2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR

JULY 2025							AUGUST 2025							AUGUST		
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
		1	2	3	4	5							1	2	Aug 11 - 15	Professional Learning - No School for Students
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		Aug 18	New Family Orientation
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		Aug 19	Grades 1 - 12 First Day of Classes
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		Aug 20 - 21	KG 2 First Day of Classes - Staggered Start
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Aug 21 - 22	KG 1 First Day of Classes - Staggered Start
							31								Aug 30	PTA New Family Welcome
SEPTEMBER 2025							OCTOBER 2025							SEPTEMBER		
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
		1	2	3	4	5				1	2	3	4		Sept 5	Prophet's Birthday - No School
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		Sept 15	Professional Learning - No School for Students
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31				
NOVEMBER 2025							DECEMBER 2025							NOVEMBER		
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
						1		1	2	3	4	5	6		Nov 3	Professional Learning - No School for Students
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		Nov 27	Thanksgiving - Early Release Day
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31						
30																
JANUARY 2026							FEBRUARY 2026							DECEMBER		
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Dec 1	UAE Commemoration Day - No School
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		Dec 2-3	UAE Union Day - No School
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		Dec 6	PTA Holiday Extravaganza
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		Dec 15 - Jan 2	Winter Break - No School
25	26	27	28	29	30	31										
MARCH 2026							APRIL 2026							JANUARY		
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4		Jan 26	Professional Learning - No School for Students
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		Jan 31	PTA International Day
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30					
MAY 2026							JUNE 2026							MARCH		
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
						1									March 13 - 20	Spring Break - No School
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		March 18 - 20	Eid Al Fitr Holiday - No School
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30							
31																
														APRIL		
															April 8	ES Student- Led Conferences
															April 11	ACS Gala
															April 24	Professional Learning - No School for Students
														MAY		
															May 27 - 29	Eid Al Adha Holiday - No School
														JUNE		
															June 11	Last Day of Classes - Early Release Day
															June 12	Professional Learning - No School for Students

*Islamic religious holidays are subject to change based on government announcements.

*Islamic religious holidays are subject to change based on government announcements.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We believe school is a place where curiosity sparks, imaginations flourish, and every child experiences the joy of learning. At ACS Elementary, we are dedicated to creating a nurturing and playful environment where each child feels seen, celebrated, and inspired to reach their full potential. By blending strong academic foundations with social, emotional, and creative growth, we help children build the skills, confidence, and love of learning that will guide them throughout their lives.

Learning Through Values

Our students are guided by the ACS Core Values: Courage, Curiosity, Compassion, and Integrity. These values are not just words, they are lived in the classroom, playground, and community. Children are encouraged to take risks, ask questions, show kindness, and act with honesty. By connecting behavior to these positive values, we help children build character alongside knowledge.

Collaboration and Community

We believe learning is strongest when it happens together. Each grade level functions as a Learning Community, where teachers collaborate to plan, teach, and support every student. While each child has a Homebase Teacher as their daily anchor and first point of contact, they also benefit from the expertise and care of the entire grade-level team. This shared approach ensures that each child is known, challenged, and celebrated.

Play, Joy, and Discovery

Play is essential to how young people learn and it is why this is at the heart of our approach. Children are given space to explore, imagine, and engage in hands-on learning. Playful experiences spark curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills, laying a strong foundation for future academic and personal growth. Whether in the classroom, on the playground, or during special projects, joy is an essential ingredient in everything we do.

Learning With Purpose

Inquiry, creativity and technology are integrated thoughtfully to deepen learning, inspire innovation, and connect students to the world around them. Through guided use of digital tools, hands-on investigations, and collaborative projects, students develop critical skills that prepare them for the future, while still having fun along the way.

Partners in Learning

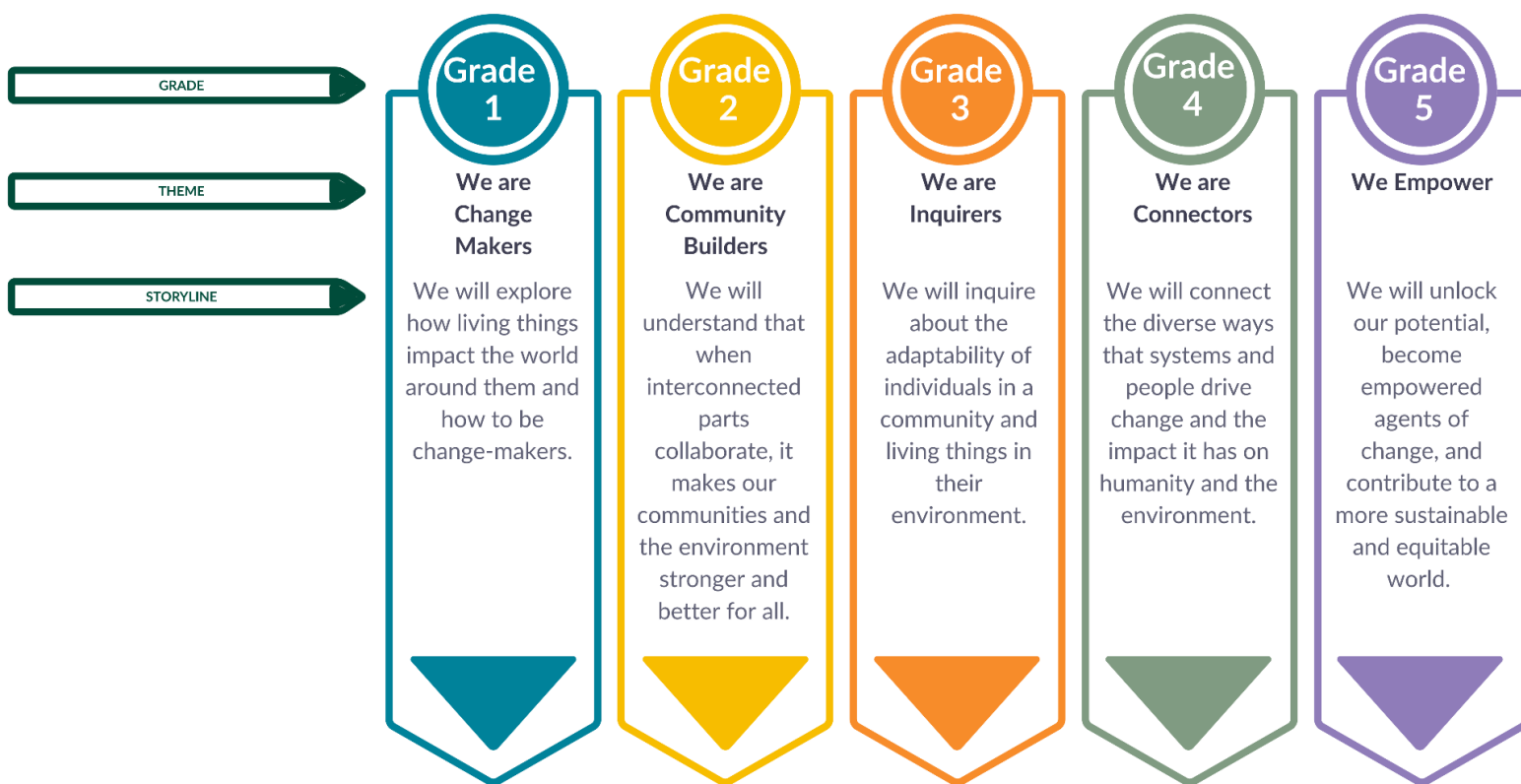
We know that parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Our Elementary School philosophy relies on strong partnerships with families. By working together, communicating openly, and celebrating each child's growth, we create a joyful, supportive community that nurtures confident, curious, and compassionate learners.

APPROACH TO LEARNING & CURRICULUM

Interdisciplinary Units

Learning is active, connected, and purposeful. Rooted in inquiry, students are inspired to question, explore, and think critically. Through big questions and storylines, interdisciplinary units help children see meaningful connections between classroom learning and the world around them.

For example, a unit such as *“How do communities meet their needs?”* may include reading and writing, investigations into local and global communities, and scientific explorations like the impact of weather on daily life. These units are intentionally connected to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), giving students opportunities to link their learning to global challenges and consider how they can contribute to a better world.



Each grade level builds learning around a unifying theme and storyline. This progression helps students:

- See themselves as active participants in their learning journey
- Make connections between classroom learning and the wider world
- Develop a sense of responsibility for their community and environment
- Strengthen their voice and agency as they prepare to be future-ready

Learning Standards and Frameworks

Our curriculum is guided by internationally recognized standards: Common Core (Literacy and Math), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the C3 Framework (Social Studies). These provide clear expectations while allowing teachers to design learning that is exploratory, discovery-driven, and problem-based.

Students build strong foundations in core subjects and apply their skills in meaningful, real-world contexts, developing curiosity, resilience, creativity, and the Approaches to Learning: responsibility, collaboration, self-directed learning, and global citizenship.

These frameworks set clear expectations for each grade level while giving teachers the flexibility to design learning that is exploratory, discovery-driven, and problem-based.

For students, this means:

- Building strong foundations in reading, writing, and mathematics
- Applying literacy skills across interdisciplinary units
- Developing scientific thinking through hands-on investigations
- Exploring social studies concepts through projects and real-world inquiries

Together, these experiences foster curiosity, resilience, creativity, and the Approaches to Learning — responsibility, collaboration, self-directed learning, and global citizenship.

Arabic Language and Culture

The Arabic Program in the Elementary School offers all students the opportunity to learn both the Arabic language and culture. From Grade 1 to Grade 5, students follow one of two pathways:

- Modern Standard Arabic (MSA): Designed for students who are heritage speakers of Arabic.
- Arabic as a World Language (AWL): Designed for students who are heritage speakers of other languages.

Placement in these pathways is based on each student's language background and proficiency in Arabic, ensuring that all learners are supported and challenged appropriately. For more information regarding our Arabic Language Program, please contact our Director of Arabic Studies, [Dr. Hanadi Dayyeh](#)

Islamic Studies

The Islamic Studies program is available to all Muslim students in Grades 1–5 and is mandatory for all UAE citizens. It is offered in either Arabic or English, in line with Ministry of Education guidelines. The program introduces students to the fundamental precepts of Islam and Islamic morals. Through study of verses from the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the stories of other prophets, students deepen their understanding of their faith. Placement in the Arabic or English program is determined by each student's background and proficiency in the Arabic language. Classes are held once per week.

Specialists

Alongside the core program, students have the opportunity to broaden their learning and nurture creativity through classes that encourage curiosity, exploration, and discovery. Each area is guided by internationally recognized standards that set clear expectations for growth.

- **Art:** Guided by the National Core Arts Standards, students create, respond, and present in ways that develop confidence, reflection, and appreciation of global traditions.
- **Music:** Aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, students sing, play, and compose while collaborating and exploring diverse cultures.
- **Design Technology:** Grounded in the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards, students design, construct, and code to solve problems and innovate.

- **Physical Education (PE):** Based on the SHAPE Standards, students build coordination, teamwork, and healthy habits; they also learn swimming for safety, stamina, and confidence.

LEARNING STRUCTURES

Collaborative Learning Communities

Each grade level functions as a *Learning Community*, where all teachers share responsibility for the growth and success of every student. Teachers collaborate to plan, teach, and assess, ensuring that all learners benefit from the expertise of the entire team.

For students, this creates a school day filled with opportunities to experience different teaching styles, learn in ways that best suit their needs, and build friendships across the grade level. Whether working in their Homebase classroom, collaborating in flexible breakout spaces, or joining small groups across the grade level, children feel supported, challenged, and known by many caring adults.

In practice, students experience:

- **Shared Students:** The chance to learn in groups that are just right for them. They will experience lessons with classmates from other Homebases, so they get the right mix of challenge, support, and enrichment.
- **Shared Spaces:** A variety of learning environments, from classrooms to flexible learning areas, that give them room to move, collaborate, and explore.
- **Co-Teaching:** Two or more teachers working together in the same space, meaning more small-group time, more personal attention, and more opportunities to learn in different ways.

This approach surrounds each child with a team of adults who know them, value their individuality, and believe in their potential. Collaborative Learning Communities give students a sense of belonging while encouraging them to see themselves as learners who can work with others, think deeply, and grow with confidence.

Homebase Teachers

While every student benefits from the full *Learning Community*, each child is also assigned a *Homebase Teacher*, who serves as their daily anchor and the family's primary point of contact. The Homebase Teacher greets students each morning, establishes consistent classroom routines, and fosters a strong sense of connection and belonging.

In addition to daily guidance, the Homebase Teacher monitors each child's academic and social-emotional growth, sharing updates and celebrating progress with families. They collaborate with parents to address questions or concerns and ensure communication is clear and supportive. In this way, the Homebase Teacher provides stability and advocacy for each student while connecting families to the expertise and collective strength of the entire grade-level team.

Home Learning

We believe family time is important and children should have some choice in their learning outside of the school day. We invite children to participate in reading and self-directed learning and to explore their curiosities. We do not assign one-size-fits-all homework for Elementary students to complete at home. When it benefits an individual student, the teacher, parent and child may make a plan to address specific learning needs or to reinforce a concept or skill in a way that provides the student with a choice. We will always ensure that our students' learning needs are being met. Please contact your child's Homebase Teacher if you have any questions about Home Learning or your child's specific learning goals.

Parent Support For Learning

We believe in the power of community and partnering with parents to support your children's learning journey. We enthusiastically encourage parents to participate in the joy of learning and development of their child(ren). Our own experience guides us, and research confirms that the most successful students have parents who are involved in their school lives.

In order to ensure students enjoy every opportunity to succeed at ACS, we ask parents to support your child in the following ways, so they are ready to learn and engage fully at school:

- Prioritize healthy sleep habits/routines and send students to school well-rested
- Support healthy food habits by providing breakfast each day
- Send a healthy snack (and lunch) from home and/or maintain your child's Spare account
- Follow the ACS communication chain for questions or concerns by reaching out to your child's Homebase Teacher or Counselor first
- Be an active member of our ACS parent community (attend back to school night, parent conferences, support events and volunteer opportunities)

When challenges arise, strong partnership and collaboration with parents are essential to ensure effective interventions, with the expectation that families work in trust with school teams to support the best interests of the child including transparent communication.

COMMUNICATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

Why We Assess

Assessment helps us understand each child's learning journey. It highlights what students do well, tracks progress, and guides next steps. Teachers gather information through observations, conversations, and checks, giving families, teachers, and students a well-rounded picture of learning.

What Assessment Means

Assessment is an ongoing process that:

- Allows us to monitor each child's progress over time by observing and gathering evidence of learning.
- Guides growth by offering feedback that helps students improve while giving teachers insight to adjust instruction.
- Encourages reflection to help students take ownership of their learning and celebrate their achievements.

How We Assess: Gathering Evidence of Learning

Assessment takes many forms depending on the purpose and together, they provide a well-rounded picture of student learning:

- **Observation & Informal Checks:** Teachers watch, listen, and record learning moments during class to track growth.
- **Skill Monitoring:** Recording the frequency or consistency of a skill to see development over time.
- **Classroom Assessments:** Tasks such as projects, portfolios, oral presentations, performances, written work, quick writes, self-assessments, and reflections.
- **Screeners:** Short “check-ins” given at different points in the year to identify strengths and areas for support.
- **Standardized Assessments:** More formal tools that provide information about growth and help benchmark against wider expectations.

How We Make Learning Visible

Learning is a journey, and we share it in multiple ways so progress is visible and meaningful to students and families. This includes:

- **Learning Progressions:** Roadmaps that outline how skills develop step by step, helping students see where they are and what comes next.
- **Rubrics and Scoring Tools:** Clear descriptions of what success looks like at different levels of understanding.
- **Conversations and Conferences:** Opportunities for students, teachers, and parents to talk together about growth, challenges, and next steps.
- **Student Reflections:** Students’ own words about what they have achieved and what they are working on.
- **Portfolios and Evidence of Learning:** Collections of student work over time that showcase progress and accomplishments.

How We Report: Sharing the Learning Journey

We use standards-referenced grading, which means progress is measured against clear learning goals (standards). Student report cards highlight:

- The learning expectations for each grade level.
- How a student is progressing toward those expectations.
- Specific areas of strength and areas needing more support.

Reports may also include student reflections, where children describe in their own words what they are proud of, what they have learned, and how they see themselves growing as learners. Families hear about learning throughout the year in report cards, at parent-teacher conferences, and through regular updates from teachers.

Approaches to Learning (AtLs)

In addition to sharing the individual academic growth of a student, teachers also share information about Approaches to Learning (AtLs) – behaviors that support learning: **collaboration, responsibility, self-directed learning, and citizenship**. Approaches to Learning (AtLs) are taught and learned, improve with practice, and develop incrementally. They provide a solid foundation for learning independently and with others and a common language that students and teachers use to reflect on and articulate the process of learning.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Students receive a Progress Report at the end of the Quarter 1 and 3 and Report Cards at the end of the Quarter 2 and 4. All Progress Reports and Report Cards are sent home electronically via the parent portal in Veracross.

Parent Conferences

Twice a year, in the fall and spring, parents are encouraged to meet with Homebase Teachers, specialists, and Arabic teachers to review their child's progress, performance, and Approaches to Learning (AtLs). In the spring, students take an active role by leading these conferences, sharing reflections and setting personal goals. These meetings complement Progress Reports and serve as important opportunities to strengthen communication and collaboration between school and home, supporting each child's continued growth and success.

Promotion and Retention

We collaborate closely with parents to determine the most appropriate grade-level placement for each student. We place great importance on social and emotional development and strive to keep students with their same-age peers whenever possible.

Promotion to the Next Grade

- Students who demonstrate continuous progress are promoted to the next grade and follow the standard ACS curriculum.
- Students making appropriate progress with learning support will also be promoted and remain with their same-age peers.
- In some cases, a conditional enrollment or re-enrollment letter may be issued. This letter, which requires a parent signature, outlines specific conditions and support systems needed for the student's continued enrollment and successful promotion.

Retention

- Retention is considered only as a last resort, after academic and behavioral support strategies have been implemented without sufficient progress.
- Retention is more often considered for students who are young for their grade level (e.g., July or August birthdays).

TECHNOLOGY

Overview

At ACS, we believe technology is more than just a collection of tools. It is a powerful enabler of learning, creativity, and connection across all grade levels. We view technology as a means to deepen thinking, spark creativity, and support meaningful collaboration. Whether students are researching, designing, coding, composing, or reflecting, they are using technology to enhance their learning experience and develop future-ready skills.

Technology is integrated into learning across the curriculum, helping students to:

- make informed decisions about when and how to use digital tools.
- develop responsible, ethical habits in digital spaces.
- create, explore, and communicate learning in innovative ways.

We believe technology use should be ...

- purposeful, enhancing rather than replacing authentic learning experiences.
- developmentally appropriate based on age, readiness, and context.
- a shared responsibility between school and home to foster healthy, reflective habits.

Our complete Technology Philosophy and Responsible Use Policy is available [here](#).

Devices

Students in Grades 1- 4 have access to a school-owned iPad for daily use and Grade 5 students use a family-owned MacBook.

LIBRARY

Our Library, located on the ground floor next to the ES Office, is open daily from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and provides a welcoming space where students can explore new worlds, develop literacy skills, and engage their imaginations through both traditional texts and innovative learning experiences.

Book Checkout

- Grades 1- 5 students may check out two books at a time for a two-week period.
- Materials may be renewed for extended use.

Responsibility

Students and parents are financially responsible for lost or damaged books and materials. Costs reflect not only the purchase price but also shipping and processing. Students with overdue or lost items will not receive their report cards until the obligation is resolved.

Library Learning

During library class rotations, students engage in literacy lessons, explore a range of texts, and participate in creative projects that may incorporate technology. The librarian also supports classroom lessons to extend learning and foster a love of reading.

Tips for Families

- Encourage daily reading at home to reinforce a love of books.
- Remind your child to return library books on time and handle them with care.
- Label all personal belongings, including library books, to help your child keep track of them.
- Visit the Library with your child when possible—exploring books together fosters curiosity and excitement about reading.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY AT RECESS

Recess is an essential part of the school day, providing students with a purposeful opportunity for social, physical, and emotional growth. Time spent playing, exploring, and interacting with peers supports creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, and overall well-being. All students are encouraged to participate fully in recess, though some may have modified options if additional structure is needed to ensure safety and success on the playground.

Playground Rules

To ensure safety and a positive experience for all, students are expected to follow these guidelines while on

campus:

- Demonstrate respect, responsibility, honesty, and fairness toward peers and school property.
- Playground and equipment use during school hours is reserved for Elementary students.
- Use playground equipment safely and appropriately.
- Follow official ACS *Gaga Ball* rules at all times.
- Food and drinks (except water) are not permitted on the playgrounds or any artificial turf fields.
- Wear secure shoes at all times (flip-flops and crocs are not allowed). Shoes may be removed only while playing in the sand.
- Wear hats for sun protection or stay in shaded areas.
- Playground supervision is provided only during school hours. After school, parents or caregivers are responsible for supervising their children in close proximity.

DROP-OFF, PICK-UP, AND BUS TRANSPORTATION

Keeping students safe and supported is at the heart of everything we do. Clear routines help children feel secure, make transitions smoother, and ensure every student is accounted for at the end of the day.

Drop-Off

- School gates open at 8:15 a.m. for all grades.
- Students may enter via Gate 1 or Gate 2.
- Between 8:15 and 8:40 a.m., students should enter through their grade-level door and proceed directly to the classroom.
- After 8:45 a.m. all students must enter through the main entrance and check in at the office so attendance can be updated.

Pick-Up

At the end of the school day, safety and clarity are our top priorities. Students in Grades 1–5 may be dismissed in several ways, depending on family preference.

Parent or Caregiver Pick-Up

Families may meet their child in the ES Playground or another designated meeting area.

Bus Riders

Students may take the school bus directly home.

Independent Dismissal (Grades 3–5 only)

With parental permission, students in Grades 3–5 may leave campus independently, either walking, scooting, or biking home.

Carline

Car pick-up takes place at **Gate 1**, in the lane closest to the buildings. To ensure a smooth process, families must inform the Homebase Teacher of the car color, driver's name, and license plate number. Parents remain in their cars while a staff member escorts each student safely to their vehicle.

Changes to Pick Up

If your child's regular pick-up plan changes, please notify **both the Homebase Teacher and the ES Office** as early as possible. Written communication through email is preferred so we can share the information with all staff who may be helping at dismissal. Last-minute changes should always be called in to the ES Office to ensure the message is received in time. This process allows us to carefully monitor who is picking up each child, communicate with all supervising adults, and provide a safe, organized transition for your child and their classmates.

Early Pickup

- Parents needing to pick up a child before regular dismissal must notify the classroom teacher and the ES Executive Assistant, Lone Wennestad
- The classroom teacher will provide an Exit Slip, and the child will be sent to the waiting area outside the ES Office for pickup.

Bus Transportation

ACS partners with Imperial Transport, a trusted transportation provider with over 20 years of experience in Abu Dhabi. Imperial Transport ensures student safety with features such as GPS monitoring, electronic attendance systems, seat belts, a central operations control team, and professionally trained drivers. They also provide a dedicated representative for ACS families.

For current ACS families, please log into the Veracross Parent Portal to register and access detailed information about bus transportation. If you are interested in bus service for part or all of the year, please email bus@acs.sch.ae to receive more information. Standard home-to-school round transport service will be AED 8,000 per student annually. A prorated cost will be available for families opting to only use transportation for part of the year.

Leaving School Grounds

Elementary School students are not allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours unless a parent informs the classroom teacher and the office. The student will be escorted to the ES Gate 2. Students who are leaving early may be collected from the Guard's station at Gate 2.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES AND TARDINESS

Attendance

Regular attendance helps students stay engaged with learning, build friendships, and fully benefit from classroom experiences. To count as a school day, students must be in attendance for at least four hours. For reporting purposes, students must attend at least 80% of the days in a term—missing no more than nine days per quarter or 18 days per semester, to receive grades and teacher comments on their report card.

While teachers support students with extended absences due to emergencies, many classroom experiences—discussions, hands-on activities, and special events—cannot be recreated at home. Please note:

- Work is not provided in advance for family vacations.
- Students who miss school may not participate in school events (parties or programs) on the same day.

- Attendance and punctuality are recorded on Report Cards.

Absences

If students are absent from school, even for one day, parents must inform the teacher and the ES Executive Assistant (lwennestad@acs.sch.ae) **before 8:15 a.m.** Please use Veracross to report your child's absence. The nurses will be updated if follow-up is required. At 8:45 a.m., the ES Administrative Assistant will begin calling parents of absent students if we have not heard from parents. If students are absent for more than three days, due to medical reasons, they must submit a doctor's clearance form.

Tardiness

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

FOOD, DRINK AND HEALTHY HABITS

Allergen-Awareness

ACS is an allergen-aware campus, not an allergen-free school. This means we aim to create an environment where children with severe allergies can learn to make safe, informed choices, while the entire community works together to minimize risks.

Students with chronic conditions such as allergies, asthma, or diabetes must have a **Health Care Plan** on file, completed by parents and supported with relevant medical reports or prescriptions. This ensures that their health needs are understood and supported throughout the school day.

We ask parents to help us provide a safe environment by avoiding snacks or foods that contain peanuts or have cross-contamination warnings. If a student in your child's class has a serious food allergy, families will receive a letter outlining specific guidelines for food brought into school.

For additional information, please see: [Tree Nut and Peanut Allergies](#)

Cafeteria Purchases

Students in Grades 1-5 may purchase lunch from the Cafeteria. A weekly menu is shared every Friday in the Principal's Newsletter.

To keep the process safe and efficient, all food and beverage purchases are made using the student's ID card, which is linked to the [SPARE App](#). This secure digital pocket money platform allows parents to add funds directly to their child's account. At the Cafeteria, students simply present their ID card to pay—no cash needed.

Lunch and Snacks

All students will eat their snack and lunch in the Cafeteria. Lunch will begin with five minutes of quiet eating time so students can focus on eating their food. The five minutes of pause provides time for everyone to focus on eating and begin their break in a mindful manner. Then, students will be able to converse with friends for the rest of lunch and recess. Much research has been done on nutrition's impact on children and their learning. It is clear that there are foods that nourish the brain and foods that contribute to lack of focus, tiredness, and/or hyperactivity.

Healthy Snack Suggestions	Healthy Lunch Suggestions
• Fruit: fresh (apples, grapes, bananas, pears, sliced mango or orange) and dried (raisins, dates, all citrus fruits) • Veggies: carrots, cucumber, green/red pepper or celery sticks/slices, cauliflower or broccoli florets, sugar snap peas, dark green leafy vegetables • Crackers • Snack mix: combine pretzels, whole-grain cereal, banana chips, plain popcorn, etc. in a plastic container • Boiled eggs (one egg gives a child almost 1/3 of their daily protein needs. Boil a dozen and leave them in the refrigerator; they last for a week!) • Plain popcorn • Dairy products: cheese (string, sliced, or cubes), plain yogurt or labneh (add fruit, wheat germ, or sugar-free cereals), milk • Meat: tuna, salmon, sliced turkey or chicken • Bread/baked items: whole wheat sandwiches; muffins and breads made with grains and banana, zucchini, blueberry, etc.; raisin bread toasted with cinnamon; whole wheat rolls w/butter; oatmeal/raisin cookies	• Sandwiches: falafel, egg and cheese, turkey, deli meat, quesadillas, hummus, cheese • Salads • Pasta: spaghetti with sauce, macaroni and cheese • Soup in a thermos • Chicken “fingers”, chicken legs, sliced chicken breast • Potatoes • Meatballs with sauce • Drinks: water, juice, milk Snacks are often eaten at a set time each day between classes or during an activity. Please pack items that make it easy for your child to enjoy his/her snack: • Simple: nothing messy, no drippy sauces, nothing that needs to be cut up • Small: the size of your child’s fist • Quick: must be eaten in a few minutes
Foods and Drink to Avoid	
• Soda • Candy bars • Candy • Cookies • Anything with frosting or powdered sugar on top • Salty products - chips, pretzels, salted popcorn	• Chocolate • Donuts • Cake • Brownies • Sugary granola bars • Nuts

Water

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

Recycling & Garbage-Free Snacks and Lunches

As an environmentally responsible campus, we encourage families to minimize waste by choosing reusable or recyclable options whenever possible. Consider sending food in containers that can be washed and used again, such as plastic sandwich boxes or small drink bottles instead of multiple single-use juice boxes. Inexpensive cutlery that returns home for washing and fun cloth napkins can also help reduce daily waste. Most importantly, involve your child in these choices, support their enthusiasm for “reduce, reuse, recycle” by helping them make small, responsible decisions each day.

UNIFORMS

Our uniform helps students feel a sense of pride and belonging, while also ensuring they are dressed appropriately for learning and play. As members of the ACS community and guests of the United Arab Emirates, students are expected to follow the school’s dress code each day. Families play an important role in helping children come to school ready and appropriately dressed.

Students should wear:

- An ACS-approved uniform top (t-shirt, polo, sweater, pullover, or cardigan).
- Beige or black pants in good condition, or shorts/dresses that reach at least to the knee.
- An ACS sweater or sweatshirt is recommended, as classrooms can feel chilly after outdoor play.
- Appropriate athletic footwear that children can put on and fasten themselves

Please note:

- Flip flops, Heelies/Street Gliders, and Crocs are not permitted.
- Hats are required for outdoor play in the sun.

How to Purchase Uniforms

The uniform shop is located on the Ground Floor of the MS/HS Building. Parents can either:

- **Book a fitting appointment** through www.trutex.ae to visit the school store with your child and ensure the correct size. (If you have more than one child, please book a separate appointment for each.)
- **Order online** for home delivery or school collection. A size guide is available to help with selection, and returns are easy—either in-store or by courier.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

At ACS, we emphasize the importance of making positive choices. We know that children are still learning and will not always make the right decisions—and that is a natural part of growing and developing.

When students need additional support, teachers and counselors use **Restorative Questioning** to guide conflict resolution and strengthen relationships. Parents will be informed if concerns arise, ensuring that together we can support each child in developing respectful, responsible behavior.

Our goal is to guide students toward understanding, responsibility, and empathy, helping them learn from their choices in a supportive environment. We approach each situation with compassion, especially for students who:

- Are still learning how understand social situations and what behaviors are appropriate

- Are new to ACS or are adjusting to transitions within the school community.
- Upset or provoked by the words or actions of others
- Are experiencing significant stress, such as the loss of a loved one, family changes, or other personal challenges.

Behavior Categories and Consequences

Consequences are designed to be age-appropriate, fair, and restorative whenever possible. Our approach to behavior support emphasizes guidance, communication, and growth, ensuring that students can learn from their mistakes while maintaining their dignity. Families are an important part of this process, and collaboration between home and school helps students develop responsibility, understanding, and respect for themselves and others.

Inappropriate Behavior Consequences	
Category 1	
Definition: Low-level, minor, infrequent behaviors not aligned with school values. These behaviors are typically impulsive or due to poor decision-making and require reflection and correction.	
Behaviors	Consequences
• Talking out of turn or disrupting class • Disrespectful tone or gestures • Off-task technology use • Mild inappropriate language	• Verbal warning and reminder of expectations • Reteaching or redirection • Incident reported to parents • Short loss of privileges *More than three Category 1 infractions will be treated as a Category 2 infraction
Category 2	
Definition: Behaviors that violate our core values through repeated or more serious actions that disrupt teaching and learning, impact others, or compromise the school environment. These behaviors often signal the need for targeted intervention.	
Behaviors	Consequences
• Ridicule, bullying, harassment and violence or failure to report • Property misuse or minor vandalism; • Academic dishonesty; • Ignoring safety rules; • Inappropriate physical contact (non-violent) • Minor physical contact (e.g., pushing in line or bumping into someone during a disagreement)	• Formal conference with student and teacher; • Parent contact and behavior reflection; • Loss of privileges • Behavior contract/safety plan created • Counseling referral (as needed) • Suspension (in school or alternative schedule) *More than three Category 2 infractions will be treated as a Category 3 infraction

without intent to harm) that causes disruption or discomfort. • Three or more Category 1 offenses	
Category 3	
Definition: Repeated Category 2 behaviors or serious violations that compromise safety, school climate, or violate UAE law.	
Behaviors	Consequences
• Physical aggression or fighting • Repeated bullying or harrasment • Tampering with fire/safety equipment • Serious bus misbehavior • Unsafe or malicious use of technology • Violation of a behavior contract • Possession of prohibited or dangerous items • Threatening language or behavior • More than three Category 2 offenses	• Immediate administration referral and meeting with parents • Incident reported to parents • Mandatory counseling referral • Suspension (in school or out of school) • Behavior contract and re-entry plan • Possible expulsion / withdrawal (extreme cases or legal violations)

Recording Behaviors
• All behavior infractions will be noted in Veracross. • These entries are private records for the Administration and the Counseling Team. • When it is necessary to inform the student's teachers the student's right to privacy is respected by limiting the dissemination of information and only disclosing pertinent and necessary information.

Explanation of Behavioral Consequences	
Warning	A written or verbal warning issued by faculty or administration that future incidents will incur more serious consequences.
Loss of Privileges	Students may lose their right to attend or participate in certain school activities, such as field trips, sporting events, or special events. In addition, students may be required to attend school during a Professional Learning Day.
In-School Suspension	This consequence is reserved for serious or repeated offenses of our Behavioral Expectations (see above). Students on in-school suspension report to the ES Office and may not attend classes, engage in social interaction with peers or attend co-curricular activities. In-school suspension is logged in Veracross but is not recorded on the student's official transcript. Future disciplinary infractions could result in out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

Out-of-School Suspension	This consequence is reserved for more serious or repeated offenses of our Behavioral Expectations (see above). During an out-of-school suspension, the duration of which will be determined by the Administration, students are not allowed access to the campus or school grounds, may not attend classes or participate in co-curricular activities. Students must submit assignments that are due and must make up missed assessments upon their return.
Indefinite Suspension	The Principal, in conjunction with the Superintendent, may determine to suspend a student indefinitely. This means that the student may not attend classes for an extended period.
Expulsion or Withdrawal	The Principal, in conjunction with the Superintendent, may determine to expel the student or provide the option for a student to withdraw from ACS for the most serious or repeated violations of our Behavioral Expectations. Both will terminate the student's enrollment. The student may not attend school co-curricular activities nor access the campus or school grounds. Withdrawal and dismissal are noted on the student's transcript.
Note: None of these consequences entitle the students or their parent(s)/guardian(s) to reclaim part or all of the tuition paid or not to pay the tuition due. Further details are described in the Financial Regulations.	

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Purpose

The goal of student support is to assist students who may need extra help in academics or are facing challenges in meeting behavioral, social, or emotional expectations. Support is tailored to help every student thrive and reach their full potential.

Oversight and Collaboration

The Elementary Student Support Service is managed by the Director of Student Support Services in collaboration with the Division Principal. Learning Support teachers work closely with classroom teachers to ensure students meet grade-level expectations.

Parental Communication

Before a student receives formal support, parents are notified in writing and informed of the purpose and scope of the services. Families are key partners in the support process.

Support Services Offered

- Academic Support: Delivered in the classroom, 1:1 individualized intervention, or through small-group sessions.
- Social/Emotional Support: Guidance and strategies to help students navigate challenges and develop coping skills.
- Monitoring: Progress is tracked by the Student Support Team and Homebase Teachers to ensure students are making gains.

Additional Support

- In cases where students' attainment and development is significantly below grade level expectations,

families may be advised to access external academic support outside of school.

- The school may set limits on the number of students receiving additional support per grade level based on the capacity of the Learning Support Team.

Student Support Plans (SSPs) & Student Accommodation Plans (SAPs)

- Services are customized to meet individual learning needs.
- Support requires coordination and expertise from our team of specialists, counselors, and support staff.
- An additional annual Student Support Services fee will be added to tuition to cover specialized support. Details about eligibility and the fee will be shared directly with families.

Contact

For more information regarding K-12 Student Support Services, please contact the Director of Student Support Services [Dr. Ryan Bull-Beddows](#).

COUNSELING PROGRAM

The Grades 1-5 Counseling Program follows a preventative and embedded philosophy and follows the International School Counselor Association (ISCA) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) standards. Our philosophy is that learners excel when they feel safe, supported, and connected. Counselors provide prevention and intervention services to all students while partnering with parents, faculty, and administration to ensure that every child's academic, social, and emotional development is nurtured.

Preventative & Embedded

The ES Counseling Program is a preventative and embedded counseling approach that reflects current student needs and international best practices.

- *Preventative:* Counselors proactively build skills and create systems to support students before challenges escalate. School-wide initiatives (Kindness Week, Upstander Week, Mental Health Awareness Week), and parent education workshops.
- *Embedded:* Counselors are present in classrooms, morning meetings, recess, and grade-level meetings. They support teachers with strategies, coach staff on SEL practices, and build relationships with students in natural settings to foster trust and accessibility.

Counseling Curriculum & Services

Counselor Connections & SEL: Quarterly Counselor Connections lessons are provided for all grade levels (Grade 1–Grade 5) on topics such as communication skills, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, problem-solving, empathy, and multicultural awareness. Teacher-delivered *Second Step* lessons take place on “Wellness Wednesdays,” continuing bi-monthly across grade levels.

Responsive Counseling Services

School Counselors provide individual and small group short-term counseling sessions that focus on social skills, friendship, and coping strategies. As part of our daily responsive support, we offer regular check-ins and check-outs, monitor behavioral intervention plans, and provide crisis response when needed. To promote friendships and a sense of belonging, we also facilitate lunch bunch and recess connections. In addition, we support parents through groups that focus on transitions, developmental milestones, and parenting strategies.

Student Support Team (SST)

The ES Counselors participate in the Student Support Team (SST) to coordinate interventions for students with academic, social, or behavioral needs. Serving as a member of the team, counselors provide a unique lens to identify student needs and behaviors.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Health Office

The Health Office is open Monday–Thursday from 7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Friday from 7:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. It is staffed by two licensed School Nurses accredited by the Department of Health (DoH). They support the health and well-being of all students through the DoH School Health Program. Their work includes:

- Responding to minor injuries on campus
- Monitoring and preventing communicable diseases
- Conducting school health screenings (KG1–Grade 12)
- Managing childhood immunization programs (Grades 1, 8, and 11)
- Running health promotion campaigns

All services are delivered according to DoH standards to ensure student safety and well-being.

Medication

If a student requires medication during the school day, parents must complete [this consent form](#). The form is also available for download from our website.

Illness During the School Day

Students who feel unwell should report to the Health Office. Nurses will assess and document the situation and determine if the student should go home.

Return to School After Illness

Students with fever, diarrhea, or vomiting must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication before returning to school, per DoH guidelines. This ensures the safety and health of the entire school community.

Head Lice Guidance for Families

From time to time, children may get head lice, and it is something most families experience at least once. While lice are not a health hazard, we know they can be unpleasant and inconvenient. If we suspect your child has head lice, we will contact you so you can check and, if needed, treat your child at home. Our School Nurses are always available to provide advice, reassurance, and guidance on effective treatments.

To help prevent lice from spreading, we ask all parents to make weekly checks using a nit comb (widely available at local pharmacies). Regular detection combing is the most effective way to identify lice early and stop them from spreading. Please note: Children should only be treated if live lice are found and preventive use of treatments is not recommended, as it can cause resistance to the products.

Health Office Contact

For any questions, please email nurses@acs.sch.ae or call 02 508 4412.

Air Quality Guidelines

Air pollution can cause both short- and long-term health effects. Children are particularly vulnerable because:

- They are more physically active outdoors.
- Their lungs are still developing.
- They are more likely to have asthma or acute respiratory conditions, which can worsen during high pollution levels.

ACS is committed to protecting the health and well-being of students and staff by monitoring air quality and adjusting activities as needed.

Monitoring

- ACS monitors PM2.5 (fine particulate matter) daily using an on-campus air quality monitoring device.
- PM2.5 refers to tiny airborne particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and, in some cases, enter the bloodstream.
- Air quality levels are assessed using the Air Quality Index (AQI), developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Activity Guidelines by AQI Level

AQI 151–200 (Unhealthy):

- Children should avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion.
- ES recess and ES PE classes will be moved indoors.

AQI 201–300 (Very Unhealthy):

- All PE classes and recess will be held indoors.
- Outdoor ACS staff, or staff from contracted companies must wear PM2.5-rated masks (provided by their employer).

AQI 301+ (Hazardous):

- All students and staff (except essential security personnel) will remain indoors.
- Movement between buildings is permitted.

Sensitive Groups

Certain individuals may experience health effects even at lower AQI levels. Sensitive groups include:

- Children with asthma or other respiratory conditions.
- Individuals with heart or lung disease.

Parents with concerns about their child's participation in outdoor activities should contact the Health Office or their child's Principal.

Heat Policy

Keeping students safe during outdoor activities in hot weather is a priority. We monitor conditions four times a day using the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), a comprehensive measure that accounts for temperature,

humidity, wind, and sun exposure. Based on these readings, and the nature and duration of the activity, we decide whether it's safe for students to be outside or if activities should be moved indoors.

AFTER SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

Mini Vipers

The purpose of Mini Vipers is for students to be able to explore their interests and find new passions. All activities will be aligned with one or more of the ACS pillars: Academics, Arts, Athletics, and Service. The goal is to achieve as much balance as possible among the pillars across grade levels. Activities offered will change throughout the year based on staff offerings and facility availability. Activities led by external providers carry a fee and will complement many free-of-charge activities from which to choose.

Within each session, activities will meet once a week for 45 minutes after school (3:45 - 4:30 pm) for KG2 - G5 students. KG1 students do not participate in Mini Vipers.

Junior Sports

Students in Grades 4-5 are able to take part in ACS sports teams. These teams practice twice a week for an hour after school and participate in friendly competitions with schools in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. There are no tryouts; the focus is on learning the basic skills of the sport and how to be an effective member of a team. Practice days are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:45 - 4:45 p.m. Junior sports consist of soccer and swimming in Season 1, track & field in Season 2, and basketball towards the end of the school year.

HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Strong communication between home and school is essential to support your child's learning, growth, and well-being. At ACS, we aim to keep families informed, involved, and engaged in their child's school experience. The following information outlines the ways we share updates and how you can reach out when needed.

Weekly Newsletters

Staying connected is an important part of supporting your child's learning. Each Friday, families receive the **Principal's Newsletter**, which shares key updates about classroom activities, upcoming events, and the broader school community. Links to the **Grade Level Newsletters** are also included, making it easy to access everything in one place.

Grade Level Newsletters give you a window into your child's learning journey. They highlight classroom activities, celebrate accomplishments, and share what's coming up next. You will also find:

- Highlights of the week's learning and collaborative activities
- Conversation starters to help you talk with your child about their day
- Important announcements and reminders about upcoming events

Toddle

Toddle is one way we regularly communicate with parents about their children's growth. Teachers use *Toddle Announcements* to communicate with parents about the whole class learning journey. The *Toddle Portfolio* celebrates a child's growth and development. It highlights each child as a unique, capable, and competent child, sharing learning in all areas and reflecting ACS core values, Approaches to Learning, and Four Pillars. Teachers and students curate the learning stories together at school.

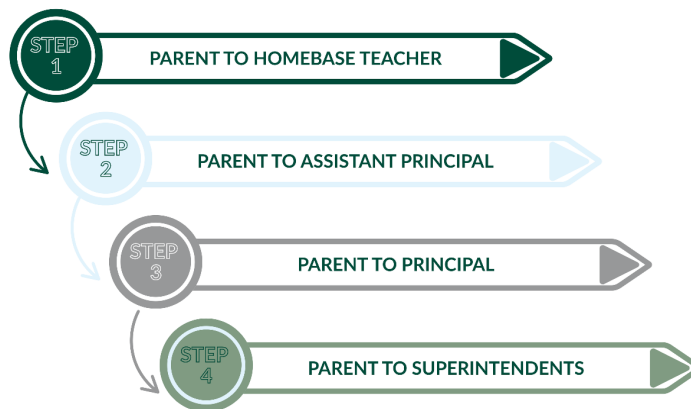
Together, *Toddle Portfolios* and *Announcements* support students and parents by creating connections between home and school. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their children’s learning by using Toddle to generate discussions and respond to their children’s learning.

Contacting Teachers and Staff

Email is the preferred way to communicate with teachers or the ES Office. Responses are typically provided within **48 hours**, excluding weekends and holidays. Parents are responsible for checking the ACS Veracross Parent Portal frequently to ensure they receive all important communications.

Channels of Communication

To help us address questions or concerns quickly and effectively, please follow these recommended channels. Following these steps ensures that your questions reach the right person promptly, and that we can work together to support your child’s success.



Parent Coffees

Several times throughout the year, ES parents are invited to join us for Parent Coffees, informal gatherings designed to connect our community and share valuable information. These morning sessions, lasting about an hour, provide a chance to learn more about important school topics such as curriculum, report cards, or technology, while also enjoying time to meet and engage with other parents. Parent Coffees are both social and informative, helping to strengthen the partnership between home and school.

Parent-Teacher or Student Led Conferences

Before the end of the Quarter 1, parents are invited to attend conferences with their child’s Homebase Teacher, specialists, and Arabic teachers to discuss student performance, progress, and Approaches to Learning (ATLs). In Quarter 3, students and parents participate in student-led conferences, providing an opportunity to reflect on students’ growth and set goals. These conferences, held in conjunction with Progress Reports, are essential for building a strong partnership between home and school, ensuring a shared understanding of each child’s strengths and areas for development.

PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Room Parents

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

Parent Liaisons

The Elementary Parent Liaison Committee was created to strengthen communication between the

Administration and the parent community. Each year, seven parent volunteers form the committee to act as a bridge between families and school leadership. Parent Liaisons help:

- Collaborate with principals to advance the ACS mission, vision, and strategic plan
- Share and clarify information relevant to grade levels and divisional matters
- Provide practical support and assistance as needed

Library Volunteers

Library volunteers will be selected to help with daily library duties: book checkout, shelving, reading with students, special events organization. Specialized training is required to work as a library volunteer. Please contact our Elementary Librarian, [Robyn Gibson](#), for more information.

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

All ACS parents are automatically members of the PTA, our parent volunteer organization that builds community and supports student life. The PTA is central to many of our most cherished traditions, from welcoming new families to organizing major events such as Fall Festival, Holiday Extravaganza, International Day, Used Book Sales, Snow Cone Sales, and Faculty & Staff Appreciation Week.

These events only happen with the support of our parents. We encourage you to get involved, whether by joining a committee, helping at an event, or volunteering your time in another way. Every contribution strengthens our community and enriches the school experience for our children. To get involved or learn more, please contact the [PTA](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays on the first Friday of each month. Your child's Homebase Teacher will share details ahead of the celebration, which may include games, privileges, or snacks (see Healthy Snacks section for treat ideas). Party invitations for the entire class should be given to students at the end of the day. Invitations for only select students should not be distributed at school.

Books

The school provides instructional materials for classroom use. Students are responsible for the care of books and must pay for damaged or lost items. Parents should provide book bags to protect books.

Chewing Gum

Chewing gum is not permitted on campus.

Class Parties

Class parties are a special way for students to celebrate together and build community. Each year, three class parties are planned:

- December – Winter Holiday Celebration
- February – Friendship Party
- June – End-of-Year Celebration

To support these events, as well as teacher gifts given during PTA Teacher Appreciation Week, Homebase Parents

will collect 100 AED from each family at the start of the year.

These celebrations are designed to be simple, joyful, and focused on the students. Parents are warmly invited to join, and we ask that families honor the spirit of these gatherings by keeping them relaxed and low-key, without the need for elaborate additions.

Community Service

We encourage students to be active, positive contributors to society. In the ES, students participate in hands-on community service projects at the individual, grade, or group level. Direct action that impacts students personally is emphasized. Soliciting money for causes is reserved for secondary students.

Field Trips

Students enjoy periodic field trips related to their curriculum. Students are expected to participate in all school trips because they are curriculum-based and are supported by classroom instruction and activities. If students are not able to go on a field trip, they will not come to school for the time the class is gone from ACS. Students on field trips must demonstrate the same integrity, compassion, courage, and curiosity that is expected of them while at school. While the focus of all field trips is on the learning experience, student safety is the most fundamental goal of any school-sponsored trip.

Gifts

ACS Board policy discourages elaborate or expensive gifts for staff. Instead, families contribute 100 AED per child at the start of the year, which covers class parties and teacher appreciation gifts. These gifts are organized by Homebase Parents and given during PTA Teacher Appreciation Week in the spring.

Guests and Visitors

Visitors are permitted on campus only with an appointment or official invitation from the school. Parents and guests are welcome throughout the year for opportunities such as volunteering, sharing expertise, or attending student showcases.

Lost and Found

Items left around the Elementary School are placed in the lost and found cart or cubbies next to the ES Office. Valuable items, such as wallets, jewelry, or money, are held by the ES administrative assistant. We encourage children to be responsible for their belongings and ask that all items be clearly labeled with the student's first and last name and current class.

Movies

Audio-visual materials are used for curriculum-related instruction only. Movies rated PG require parent or guardian approval. The ES Principal may be consulted if content suitability is in question.

Nuisance Items

Items such as toys, electronic games, collector cards, toy weapons, fidget spinners, personal recorders, water pistols, skateboards, roller blades, or smart devices should not be brought to school unless requested for a specific program. Bicycles, scooters, and roller shoes may be used between home and school but are not permitted on campus; they must be parked inside Gate 2. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Phones and Smart Watches

Phones and Smart watches with data or SIM cards must remain off and stored in backpacks during the school day. Students may use them after school to communicate with caregivers. Inappropriate use during school hours will result in confiscation; parents will be asked to collect the device from the ES Office. Students may use phones in the ES Office if they need to contact a parent during the day.

Security

All students, parents, and staff must comply with ACS security procedures. Adults should carry campus access cards; visitors without a card must register at the gate and provide identification. Without a purpose or event, the ES campus is closed for general use past 5:00 p.m.

Smoking and Drug Use

ACS is a smoke-free and alcohol-free campus. Smoking and drug use, including stimulants, inhalants, and depressants, are illegal for minors in the UAE.

Valuables

Students are discouraged from bringing valuables to school. Each student has a non-locking cubby or desk for personal belongings. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Withdrawal

Parents who wish to withdraw a student must submit a written request to [Jodi Lefort](#), the Director of Admissions. Students must receive clearance from the library, cafeteria, accountant, and teacher before school records and transcripts can be released.

DIRECTORY

Elementary School Leadership Team

Jonathan Mueller	Principal	jmueller@acs.sch.ae
Jenna Murray	Assistant Principal - KG1-Gr 1	jmurray@acs.sch.ae
Evelyn Lucero	Assistant Principal - Gr 2-5	elucero@acs.sch.ae

Elementary School Counseling Team

Dana Allen	Counselor	dallen@acs.sch.ae
Farwa Devji	Counselor	fdevji@acs.sch.ae
Ghinwa Masri	Counselor	gmasri@acs.sch.ae
Kalen Bruce	K-12 School Psychologist	kbruce@acs.sch.ae

Elementary School Administrative Support

Lone Wennestad	Executive Assistant	lwennestad@acs.sch.ae
Nada Hani	Office Assistant	nhani@acs.sch.ae

Elementary School Teaching Faculty

Luckhardt, Sabine	KG 1A
Hirsch, Ami	KG 1B
Encalada, Gaby	KG 1C
Mani, Manila	IA - KG 1A
Kyzy, Nura	IA - KG 1B
Baltazar, Maureen	IA - KG 1C
Jalloul, Ghida	KG2A
Ackermann, Jennilee	KG2B
Abbott, Victoria	KG2C
Rana, Madhvi	KG2D
Samonte, Betsy	IA - KG2A
Dayang, Leonisa	IA - KG2B
Sud, Shipra	IA - KG2C
Reyes, Flora	IA - KG2D
Bohara, Ritu	Gr 1A
Weiner, Danica	Gr 1B
Weiner, Anin	Gr 1C
Odie, Patricia	Gr 1D
Dajani, Abeer	Gr 1E
Hossny, Rabab	IA - Gr 1A
Majewski, Charlotte	IA - Gr 1B
Surendra, Piumi	IA - Gr 1C
Sawant, Padmini	IA - Gr 1D
Negash, Menbere	IA - Gr 1E

Commodore, Peter	Gr 2A
Herron, Kristine	Gr 2B
Burt, Velma	Gr 2C
Evans, Danielle	Gr 2D
Saxena, Nandita	Gr 2E
Pereira, Jessica	IA - Gr 2A
Katdare, Riva	IA - Gr 2B
Thivianandan, Christine	IA - Gr 2C
Sabbour, Sally	IA - Gr 2D
Sharma, Charvi	IA - Gr 2E
Hitchcock, Laci	Gr 3A
Magee, Caoimhe	Gr 3B
Brannan, Nora	Gr 3C
Stykalo, Kayla	Gr 3D
Bruce, Sarah	Gr 3E
Reyes, Cathline	IA - Gr 3
Pizarro, Lili	IA - Gr 3
Bhatia, Tina	Gr 4A
Cheron, Ashley	Gr 4B
McTavish, Alison	Gr 4C
Hitchcock, James	Gr 4D
Tryon, Anouk	Gr 4E
Makarova, Nadia	IA - Gr 4
Nair, Ashwathi	Faculty Intern / IA - Gr 4
Kingsbury, Amalia	Gr 5A
Graham, Patrick	Gr 5B
Mulvihill, Amy	Gr 5C
Kriel, Tilani	Gr 5D
Lambert, Jordan	Gr 5E
Smith, Mako	IA - Gr 5
Tauro, Meera	IA - Gr 5
Taha, Anaila	IA

Elementary Learning Support and Special Subject Faculty

Abraham, Averì	Student Support
Ahmad, Fatima	Student Support
Winter, Krystle	Student Support
Boaitey, Roseline	Student Support
ElKathiri, Ahlam	IA - Student Support
Nonis, Daphni	IA - Student Support
John, Deepa	IA - Student Support
Gopalakrishnan, Suba	IA - Student Support
Sahel, Atheel	Arabic
Schulze, Corrie	Arabic
Sinno, Jamila	Arabic
Houdeib, Marwa	Arabic

Bayoumi, Mohamed	Arabic
Hammoud, Razzak	Arabic
Naffa, Suha	Arabic
Almansoori, Afra	IA - Arabic
Al Hattali, Buthaina	IA - Arabic
Alhosani, Hajer	IA - Arabic
Al Nahdi, Shama	IA - Arabic
Said, Safiya	IA - KG1 Arabic
Baldwin, Scott	Art - Gr 1-5
Medin, Marielle	IA - Art - Gr 1-5
Ross, Jane	Design Tech & Innovation
Aljuneibi, Maitha	IA - Design Tech & Innovation
Libreros, Carolina	Creative Arts - KG
Krishnan, Uma	Faculty Intern / IA - Creative Arts - KG
AlMehairi, Salama	IA - Creative Arts - KG
Cheron, Rony	Music - Gr 1-5
Tabaday, Jenifer	IA - Music - Gr 1-5
Moog, Isaac	PE
Dean, Kelly	PE
Romera, Maria Angeles	PE
Ninala, Efraim	IA - PE
Dupay, Joy	IA - PE
Mathai, Reeya	IA - PE

Administrative Offices

Flickinger, Monique	Superintendent
Al-Tamimi, Waheeda	Superintendent's Office Executive Assistant
Greene, Amy	Assistant Superintendent
Rafai, Amber	Business Office Admin Assistant
King, Jacqueline	Director of Finance
Mawlawi, Mona	Accountant
Pradeep, Nija	Accountant
Rajasree, Nimmi	Accountant/Cashier
Panwar, Abhisha	Financial Analyst
Bafagih, Mahmoud	Director of Government Relations
Jama, Faiza	Government Relations Admin Assistant
Salem, Saleh Ali	Government Relations Assistant
Al Hashemi, Omar	Government Relations Assistant
Philip-Jayendran, Marise	Director of Human Resources
Ashley, Sarah	Human Resources Assistant
Lefort, Jodi	Director of Admissions
McColgan, Mia	Admissions Assistant
Arellano, Frances	Admissions Assessment Coordinator
Bohara, Kapil	Campus Operations Coordinator
Donison, Bobbi	Director of Teaching and Learning

Thivianandan, Joy
Campbell, Yvette
Pineda, Yahaira
Manola, Anthi
Salloum, Monica
McIntyre, Brenda
Cooper, Tia
Alhefeiti, Reem
Stanicole, Adi
Wellborn, Erinn
Gietz, Preben
Moog, Jordan
Dreyer, Shaun
Shelby, Aaron
Pubil, Melisa
Zuhdi, Randa
Al Nobani, Karen
McMarrow, Grainne
Obratzsova, Anna
Muhammed, Ashiq
Devitt, Christina
Smith, Chris
Sfeirova, Sandra
Balakrishnan, Rajanish
Nelliyullathil, Suhail

Executive Assistant in the Office of Learning
Director of Institutional Advancement
Director of Communications
Stewardship Manager
Alumni Relations Coordinator
Communications Specialist
Visual Content and Social Media Coordinator
Communications Assistant
Librarian
Technology Systems Analyst
Director of Athletics and Activities
Assistant Director of Athletics and Activities
Athletics and Activities Executive Assistant
Secondary Curriculum Coordinator
Service Learning / CAS Coordinator
Service Learning / CAS Coordinator Assistant
School Nurse
School Nurse
Health Office Administrative Assistant
Facilities Manager
Director of Learning Innovation and Technology
K12 Learning Innovation Coach
Data Systems Manager
Systems Administrator/Technician
Infrastructure Administration