Family and Student Handbook

2026-2027

Arbor Christian Academy

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Dear ACA Families,

Welcome to a new school year at Arbor Christian Academy! We are grateful that the Lord has brought your family into the ACA community and honored to partner with you in the education and formation of your children. At Arbor Christian Academy, our mission is to **"equip the mind and educate the heart to impact the nation."** We believe education is about more than academic achievement. Our desire is to help students know and love Jesus Christ, grow in wisdom and character, develop strong academic foundations, and become **fruitful leaders** who use their gifts to serve God and others.

Our unique bilingual and multicultural community is an important part of that mission. Students learn from Dominican, North American, and other international educators and receive instruction in both Spanish and English. Throughout their years at ACA, we seek to develop students who are **rooted in Christ, growing in godly character, pursuing academic excellence, developing healthy relationships and self-awareness, and prepared to engage their communities and the world with wisdom, compassion, and a heart to serve.**

We also recognize that the education of a child is a partnership. The goals we have for our students cannot be accomplished by the school alone. They require parents, teachers, staff, and students working together with shared expectations, open communication, and a commitment to helping each child grow.

This Family Handbook is intended to strengthen that partnership by clearly communicating the policies, procedures, and expectations that guide our school community. We ask each family to read it carefully and support these expectations throughout the year.

We are excited to see how God will work in the lives of our students and throughout the ACA community this year. Thank you for entrusting us with the privilege of teaching, encouraging, and discipling your children. May the Lord help us to grow together and **overflow in love for one another and for all people.**
God bless,



Ellen Kujawski
Director
Arbor Christian Academy

I. Welcome to Arbor Christian Academy

Purpose of the Handbook

The parent & student handbook serves to communicate basic policies and expectations with students, parents, and staff. This handbook is written to answer commonly asked questions and to set forth procedures and policies for ACA. These policies and procedures are set in place in order to help us achieve our goals and to provide a safe and efficient learning environment for each of our students. Commitment to these policies by all parties involved allows for the school to function in an orderly manner. We believe that Christian education serves to prepare students spiritually, emotionally and academically for their world that they may go out and be the light of Christ (John 8:12). Therefore, the overall purpose of this handbook is to allow us to be of "one-mind" as we train up children for the world around them. School leadership will review and approve these policies as needed.

II. Arbor Christian Academy

History

Arbor Christian Academy began as a dream of Iglesia Bautista San Francisco de Macorís. This church desired to open a school that provided both a quality Christian education and a thorough knowledge of the English language. Additionally, they wanted a school that would follow American curriculum and standards so that students would be prepared academically to enter our global world and become leaders in their communities. ACA offers kindergarten through sixth grade classes. ACA opened its doors to students for the first time in August 2017. Our goal is that the majority of the primary classroom teachers at ACA are English speakers with university degrees in Education.

Mission and Vision

Arbor Christian Academy exists to provide an exemplary Christian education with an English immersion program, where students are provided with age-appropriate academic rigor and students and families have the opportunity to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

We at Arbor Christian Academy strive to grow our students into fruitful leaders by **"Equipping the mind and educating the heart to impact the nation."** This vision will be accomplished through:

- Implementing quality curriculum that is aligned to U.S standards and also complies with educational regulations of the Dominican Republic.
- Partnering with families who are the primary educators and leaders for their children.
- Obtaining highly qualified teachers and staff.
- Providing regular and applicable training for teachers, staff, and school leadership.
- Maintaining the expectation that all persons associated with Arbor Christian Academy will uphold high standards of Christian character.
- Focusing on discipleship and providing opportunities for all who are involved with Arbor Christian Academy to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

Core Values

At Arbor Christian Academy, our desire is to help our students become fruitful leaders. A fruitful leader is one who positively impacts his or her world for Christ. We want to train children up to understand and embody the following traits:

- A fruitful leader is **Rooted**, grounded in knowledge and Biblical wisdom.
- A fruitful leader is **Courageous**, choosing to persevere and be set apart in God's call.
- A fruitful leader is **Relational**, serving others with respect, generosity and love.
- A fruitful leader is **Wise**, having the qualities of reflection, growth and creativity while remaining a teachable, life-long learner.
- A fruitful leader has **Integrity**, modeling truth and discernment in order to lead a life above reproach.

Statement of Faith

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).
2. We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons-Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30).
3. We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Hebrews 4: 15, 7:26), His miracles (John 2:11), His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9), His Resurrection (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4), His Ascension to the right hand of God (Mark 16:19), and His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).
4. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified on the

single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ, and that only by God's grace, and through faith alone, are we saved (John 3:16–19, 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:8–9; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 3:5).

5. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28–29).
6. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, Galatians 3:26–28).
7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13–14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19–20; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18).

8. We believe that the term *marriage* has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18–25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18, 7:2–5; Hebrews 13:4).
9. We believe that God wonderfully foreordained and immutably created people as either male or female in conformity with their biological sex. These two distinct yet complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26–27).
10. We believe in a literal translation of the creation account in Genesis (Genesis 1-2). All of creation, including mankind, was purposely ordained and designed by the omnipotent God. For this reason, we believe that all human life has value and should be respected, whether born or unborn (Psalm 139:13).

Our Statement of Faith is not exhaustive of all our beliefs. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with absolute authority regarding the proper conduct of mankind and is the unchanging foundation for all belief and behavior. Our school board acts as the final authority on the application and interpretation of this statement of faith.

School Philosophy

At Arbor Christian Academy, we believe that God is the Creator of all things and the ultimate source of truth. We believe that every person is created in the image of God and that education is an opportunity to participate in His work of shaping hearts and minds for His glory. Therefore, biblical truth is not simply added to our academic program; it shapes the way we teach, learn, relate to one another, make decisions, and understand the world.

We believe that **discipleship is a culture, not simply a program.** Every classroom, chapel, conversation, relationship, act of service, and moment of correction is an opportunity to

help students learn to love God fully, think biblically, and serve faithfully. Our desire is to **grow fruitful leaders** who demonstrate wisdom, integrity, courage, deep spiritual rootedness, and healthy relationships as they use their knowledge and gifts to serve God and others.

Because every child is made in the image of God and capable of growth and learning, we seek to teach students with dignity, respect, grace, and truth while maintaining high expectations for both character and academic achievement. We believe academic excellence and spiritual formation are inseparable. Students are encouraged to think deeply, pursue truth, develop discernment, and reach their God-given academic potential through meaningful, interactive, and interdisciplinary learning.

Discipline at ACA is also an important part of discipleship. Rather than viewing discipline primarily as punishment, we seek to help students recognize wrongdoing, take responsibility for their choices, restore relationships, and make wise and righteous choices moving forward. Biblical truth, justice, grace, reflection, restoration, and redirection guide this process.

Ultimately, our goal is not simply to prepare students to succeed academically, but to equip them to understand God's truth, recognize the world through a biblical worldview, love God and their neighbors, and confidently and compassionately serve as agents of His redemptive work in their families, communities, nation, and world.

Language Model

A Child's brain is an amazing creation of God, and it is highly capable of learning a new language at an early age. We want to capitalize on the rapid brain growth of young children, giving them the best chance and being fully bilingual as they grow. At ACA we desire to teach language in authentic and natural ways. This leads us to teach children their second language in the following ways.

- Students in kindergarten and 1st grade focus on oral English skills. Just as a child learns to speak before they read or write, we are building their vocabulary and communication skills in English before we add in the academic side of language. This means that our students will be learning to read and write in Spanish first. By focusing on these skills in their native language, we are providing the necessary knowledge base to add in English reading and writing later. This strategy often gets students talking and conversing in a new language faster and with a larger vocabulary.

- During second semester, 1st grade students will begin learning to identify all English sounds and begin reading simple words and phrases.
- 2nd through 4th grade will be fully bilingual, with significant English immersion. The goal is to be sure that students are growing in both languages at the same time.
- 5th and 6th grade are also bilingual but will have a strong focus on Spanish writing and Spanish academic vocabulary in math, science and social studies. This is done to prepare them for their next school that may or may not provide a bilingual program.

Expected Student Outcomes (ESOs)

Arbor Christian Academy exists to provide an educational environment that raises up fruitful leaders who are equipped to positively impact their world. ACA believes that fruitful leaders demonstrate growth or mastery in the areas of spiritual development, character formation, academic excellence, emotional and social development, and global awareness and service. The following expected student outcomes establish an overview of what ACA students should know and be capable of doing upon their graduation from the program

A student who graduates from ACA demonstrates:

1. Spiritual Development

- Understanding of key Bible stories, teachings, and doctrines.
- Knowledge of God's plan for humanity and unique purpose for each life.
- Active participation in school-wide chapel services, devotions, and Bible classes.
- Application of Biblical principles in daily life, including Christ-like character, compassion, and integrity.
- Development or understanding of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

2. Character Formation:

- Respect for self, others, and God's creation through positive behavior and attitudes.
- Kindness, honesty, humility, and forgiveness in relationships with peers, teachers, and staff.
- Responsibility, accountability, and stewardship in academic, social, and spiritual areas.

3. Academic Excellence:

- Strong foundational skills in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies.
- Critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity across subject areas.
- Curiosity, perseverance, and a love for learning.
- Fluent performance at or above a 6tḥ grade level in both English and Spanish.

4. Emotional and Social Development:

- The ability to build healthy relationships through empathy, cooperation, and effective communication.
- Conflict resolution in a Christ-centered manner, using Biblical principles for reconciliation.
- Resilience and the ability to navigate challenges with faith and confidence.

5. Global Awareness & Service:

- Understanding of global issues and a heart for serving others, both locally and globally.
- Participation in service projects and mission activities, reflecting a Christ-centered desire to help those in need.

Faculty and Staff

Our teachers come from universities in the United States, Canada, and the Dominican Republic and are highly qualified for their positions. All members of our support staff, both Dominican and North American, are committed to the values of ACA and actively model lifelong learning for our students by pursuing fluency in both English and Spanish.

Academic Overview

Primary Education (Elementary)

The elementary school offers a traditional academic program based upon United States and Dominican educational standards and is open to students who successfully pass the corresponding entrance assessment. Students are immersed in both English and Spanish during the school day. The elementary school day lasts from 8:00am-3:10pm.

III. Admissions

Policies

Arbor Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin and will not discriminate on the basis of these factors when following the school policies set forth in this handbook.

Restroom:
Each child in Kindergarten through 6th Grade must be able to consistently and independently use the restroom. Students in Kindergarten are required to have a change of clothes kept in their backpacks in case of an accident.

Health Forms:
Each child must submit a record of immunizations and proof of medical examination before being admitted to ACA and upon entering 4th grade (also known as the "segundo cyclo" of primary school).

Wait Pool:
Class sizes will remain small enough to promote student success. If there is more student interest than space, a list of prospective students will be kept in the office. Parents will be notified as space is available. Acceptance is not based on first-come, first-served. Acceptance is based upon student academic needs, principal recommendation, score on entrance assessment, etc.

Special Needs:
ACA strives to meet the needs of all students; however, students who have behavioral, physical or academic needs that exceed current programming will not be admitted. Should such needs become known during the school year, ACA may refer students to a different school that could better support their unique needs. We will continue to add programming, as space and staffing allows, to meet the needs of such students.

Previous Expulsion:
Students who have been previously expelled from school or who have been in serious disciplinary trouble will not be enrolled at ACA.

Important Notice to Parents and Students:
It is understood that attendance at ACA is a privilege, not a right. This privilege may be forfeited by any student or family who, in the opinion of the administration, does not uphold the expectations and regulations set forth by this institution. Additionally, ACA reserves the right to deny entrance to students who, in the discernment of the administration team, are not a good fit for the program.

Student Enrollment Procedures

Current Student Reenrollment *(begins in February before the upcoming school year)*

1. Complete the reenrollment forms online.
2. Provide the following *updated* documents to the main office.
    - Medical records signed by a doctor (Kindergarten / 4th Grade students only)
    - Vaccination records
    - Signed handbook and payment agreements
3. **The first part of the inscription payment by March 19th, 2027.**
4. **The second part of the inscription payment by July 31st, 2027.**
5. **Payment for the month of August before the first day of school.**

Please note, students will only be allowed to attend the first day of school if all documentation and payments have been submitted to the office. If a student is missing one or both of these requirements, he/she will be denied entrance until the requirements have been met.

New Student Enrollment *(begins in March before the upcoming school year)*

1. Complete the online pre-enrollment application.
2. Contact the office to arrange the mandatory entrance exam and pay RD $1000 at the time of the assessment. (A secondary group exam may be given at the discretion of the admissions team.)
3. Wait to receive confirmation of your child's acceptance by formal letter.
4. Upon acceptance, you *must* provide the following to the main office before the start of school or your child's position in the school will be forfeited.
    - **The first part of the inscription payment by March 19th, 2027 (or, if accepted after this date, within one week of receiving the notification of acceptance).**
    - **The second part of the inscription payment by July 31st, 2027.**
    - **Payment for the month of August before the first day of school.**
    - Medical records
    - Immunization records
    - Copy of birth certificate
    - Copy of previous school records (grade cards and proof of timely payments)
    - Copy of parents' cedulas
    - 2 current photos of student
    - Signed handbook and payment agreements

- If applicable, students in 2nd-6th who have studied abroad or are recent expats to the DR, must also provide the validation letter from MINERD.

**Siblings of current students must also complete this process for admission.*

Student Withdrawal

A student is not considered withdrawn until the school office has been notified in a formal letter (not through WhatsApp) specifying the reasons why the student is being withdrawn by the parent or, in the case of dismissal, the parent has been notified in a formal letter and met with administration. Families who choose to withdraw their child during the months of May and June are required to pay full tuition for the remainder of the school year.

Documentation for student withdrawal will be provided upon receipt of all payments due and the return of any borrowed school materials (such as tablets or computers).

IV. Tuition & Payment

Policies

In order to secure a child's spot in the upcoming school year, families must pay the inscription fees according to the previously mentioned dates.

ACA divides the remaining tuition amount over a period of eleven months (August 2026 – June 2027). PAYMENT WILL ALWAYS BE DUE BY THE LAST DAY OF EACH CALENDAR MONTH, except for the month of August when tuition is due before the first day of school. Tuition payment is expected on time each month of the year (August 2026 – June 2027).

A late fee of $500RD will be charged to accounts that are overdue in excess of 3 days. Parents will be notified of late payment fees. Multiple late payments will affect a student's eligibility for reenrollment.

- No deduction is made from tuition due to student absences.
- No refunds will be made for student withdrawal. Additionally, students who choose to withdraw from school in the months of May and June are required to pay full tuition for the remainder of the school year.

Matrícula y Honorarios Año Escolar 2026-2027

Inscripción	RD$14,000	*RD$4,000 a más tardar el 17 de abril 2026* *RD$10,000 a más tardar el 31 de julio 2026*
Mensualidad *11 meses (agosto 2026 – junio 2027)*	RD$9,480	**MATRÍCULA INCLUYE:** ✓ Libros de texto ✓ Todas las actividades escolares y excursiones ✓ Una gran parte de los útiles que los estudiantes requieren
Costo Total Anual	RD$118,280	

Descuento Familiar

¡Ofrecemos un descuento! Si tiene más de un niño inscrito en ACA, el siguiente descuento se aplicará automáticamente a su mensualidad. *(Si se le otorga asistencia financiera, este descuento no será aplicable.)*

	Inscripción *Enrollment Fee*	Mensualidad *Monthly Payment*	Costo Total Anual *Total Annual Cost*
Niño #2 10% descuento	RD$14,000	RD$8,532	RD$107,852
Niño #3 15% descuento	RD$14,000	RD$8,058	RD$102,638

Tax Credit Receipt

- Parents who need to receive receipts with "Crédito Fiscal" must make this request at the beginning of the school year before receipts are provided.
- Any reprinting of invoices will have a cost of RD$10 per page.

Scholarships

**Process begins in January of the previous school year*

There are a limited number of scholarships available for qualifying students. These scholarships are funded by our *Descubre Inglés* program and individual donors who partner with students or classes at ACA. Scholarships are awarded based on need and are offered to qualifying families by our Administration Team before the start of each school year. Families desiring to apply for a scholarship must have submitted their complete application by March 1st, 2027.

All scholarships will be awarded during the month of March, prior to the start of the coming school year. Families who were previously awarded a scholarship must reapply during reenrollment and are not guaranteed to receive the same scholarship amount. New families who desire to enroll their children in ACA and plan to apply for a scholarship must note this on their enrollment application. However, the application for a scholarship *must be completed* by March 1st, 2027 in order to be considered eligible. No scholarships will be awarded outside of this timeline.

Textbooks and Supplies

All students will be given a supplies list in their enrollment packet. These basic supplies are to be purchased and brought to school with your child during Open House or on the first day of classes and may need to be replenished later in the year. While some supplies are kept apart for your child, others (such as tissues, pencils, baby wipes, etc.) are used communally in the classroom and will not be returned at the end of the school year. All supplies not listed, including textbooks, will be provided by ACA as a part of the monthly tuition fee.

V. General School Policies

Spiritual Participation

Our Christian faith saturates all we do at Arbor Christian Academy, including our curriculum and teaching practices. Therefore, student participation in all events, including chapel, devotions, discipleship times, Service Week, Christmas and Easter programs, and Bible class is expected.

Attendance

Attendance is an important component of academic success. Dominican law states that students must be in attendance at least 80% of school days, regardless of the reason for absence, as a requirement of passing to the next grade. Repeated unexcused absences will affect a student's eligibility for reenrollment.

When a student is absent, it is extremely important for the parent to contact the academic secretary by telephone or WhatsApp on the day of the absence before 9:00 A.M. If a child is absent for more than 3 days due to illness, a doctor's certificate will be required.

When it is known ahead of time that a student will miss more than two consecutive school days, the parent must submit a signed letter stating the date(s) of and reason for the student's absence. This letter must be received by the office at least three days before the absence. Similarly, should the student need to leave school early, a note detailing the reason for the absence and the type of transportation the child will use to get home must be sent to the school WhatsApp at the start of the school day.

Students must arrive each day to school between 7:40 and 8:00am. Students who arrive after that time will be marked as tardy. If a child receives 3 tardies, it will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Excused Absences:

Excused absences may include illness, bereavement, prolonged trips out of the country with parents when prior request for absence has been approved, and for trips pertaining to cédulas, driver's licenses, visas, passports, and other legal paperwork.

Unexcused Absences:
All absences are first considered and recorded as unexcused until a written parent note or phone call is submitted to the office explaining the reason for the absence *and* the reason is determined to be excused.

Homework During Extended Absences:
Should families desire to bring schoolwork for their child during extended absences, they must notify their child's teacher **at least one week in advance** . If sufficient time is not given to prepare the child's work, it will be sent home as "make-up work" to be completed upon the child's return to school. Please refer to the "Make-up Work" section for more information.

Tardies:
It is necessary for students to arrive each morning before classes begin. Research shows that one of the most productive learning times is the first part of the day. Therefore, we have high expectations for all students to be at school on time each day. "Tardy" is defined as arriving to school after 8:00am. For every three tardies received, an unexcused absence will be added to the student's record.

Illness

Students who have had a temperature at or above 38° Celsius (100° Fahrenheit), **or** experienced vomiting, diarrhea, severe cough, difficulty breathing, or lice will not be permitted to attend school **until the symptoms have subsided for at least 24 hours** .

If a student becomes ill while at school, a parent or guardian will be contacted to pick up the child early. It is expected that students again **wait at least 24 hours from the end of symptoms** to return to school.

Homework

Homework is a time to practice the skills being learned at school with a parent at home.

- In kindergarten through second grade, homework will be given at the teacher's discretion and will not exceed more than 20 minutes a day (including 10 minutes of reading).
- In third and fourth grade, homework will not exceed 40 minutes (including 15 minutes of reading)
- In firth and sixth grade, homework will not exceed 60 minutes (including 20 minutes of reading).

Teachers will strive to assign homework that students are able to complete with minimal assistance. If parental assistance is needed, simple directions will be provided.

Make-up Work

After an absence, teachers may send home additional work with a child. This work will need to be completed in as many days as the child was absent. For example, if a child was ill and missed two school days, that child has the next two school days to complete and return any make-up work. Teachers may extend this time frame at their discretion.

Grading

At the conclusion of each quarter, a report card will be sent home with your child detailing his or her academic progress. This card is simply a tool to help you understand what your child is learning, the areas where he or she is excelling and the areas where he or she may need additional support. Instead of using a traditional grading scale, Arbor Christian Academy monitors progress using the goals that we desire each child to meet by the end of the school year. These goals are aligned with United States curriculum and are called "standards." Each child can receive a 1, 2, 3, or 4 for each standard. Following are the explanations for each number:

4 – Exemplary	*The student is performing skills above the expected level.*
3 – Accomplished	*The student is performing skills at the expected level.*
2 – In Progress	*The student is beginning to show comprehension of skills.*
1 – Below	*The student has not shown progress in the expected skill.*

Each standard has multiple goals tied to it that are not listed on the report card. These goals are divided and spread out over all four quarters. If your child receives a 3 for a certain standard, this means that he or she has met the quarter-specific goals for that standard.

The goal is for your child to have 3's every quarter for each standard. 2's indicate that your child is making progress toward meeting the standard. 1's indicate areas of concern and a need for additional practice. 4's are only given if your child has *exceeded* the goals set for *this quarter*. A 4 does not mean that your child has accomplished this standard for the entire year.

In an effort to keep parents informed in a timely manner of their child's academic progress, the school will issue progress reports in the middle of each quarter. These reports are not as

extensive as grade cards. However, they will provide insight on your child's progress and allow for additional opportunities to connect with your child's teacher about any concerns.

Tier 2 Intervention

Students who do not show significant growth in a specific subject by the end of a quarter will receive what is known as "Tier 2 Intervention" also known in Spanish as "Recuperación Pedagógica." This intervention will take place in a small group setting. Students will receive targeted instruction in the skills they are lacking, and their progress will be monitored weekly. The intention of this program is to ensure that students are making appropriate progress throughout the school year. Parents will be informed if their child is receiving this type of intervention, as well as receive consistent updates on their child's progress.

Dress Code

All students at ACA are required to attend school in the approved school uniform. On regular uniform days, students must wear an **official ACA polo shirt purchased through the school** with appropriately fitting khaki pants. Families may not recreate, reproduce, embroider, print, or otherwise make their own version of the ACA uniform shirt.

Decorative patches, additional logos, embroidery, pins, or other additions or alterations may not be added to school uniform shirts or pants. Students are required to wear closed-toed shoes with a secure back at all times. Crocs are not permitted.

On PE days, students must wear an **official ACA PE t-shirt purchased through the school** and blue athletic pants with two white stripes on each side.

PE Days for 2026-2027

K-3: Monday, Wednesday, Friday

4-6: Tuesday, Thursday

All uniform clothing should be clean, appropriately fitting, and free from stains, holes, or tears. Students who arrive at school out of uniform will wait in the office until a parent or guardian provides the proper uniform. If the correct uniform cannot be provided, the student may be sent home.

After-School Sports Practices

We understand that some students may travel directly from ACA to an after-school sports practice. Parents who would like their child to change into a practice uniform before leaving campus must provide the school office with written permission specifying the days

on which the student may change at school. ACA staff will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these requests. However, if changing at school becomes disruptive or difficult to manage, ACA reserves the right to require students to change at another location.

Parent and Visitor Dress Code

As a Christian school, Arbor Christian Academy asks all parents and visitors to wear modest, respectful attire while on campus. This expectation applies whenever entering school grounds, including brief visits to the office, dropping off items, attending meetings, or participating in school activities. Clothing that is overly revealing or otherwise inappropriate for a school environment—including sports bras or similar workout attire worn without an appropriate outer layer—is not permitted. Our goal is to maintain a respectful, professional environment that reflects the values we seek to model for our students.

If a parent or visitor arrives in attire that does not meet these expectations and needs to remain on campus, the school may provide a jacket or T-shirt to be worn over the clothing for the duration of the visit.

Lunch

Lunch will be held at school for all elementary students. In order to provide a well-monitored lunchtime where students have adequate time to eat, the following procedures will be enforced:

- Students may have lunch in one of three ways:
    1. Pack a lunch that does not require heating – students will not have access to a microwave or electrical outlet to reheat cold food. (Electric lunch boxes are not allowed.)
    2. Have a lunch delivered to the school during the designated hours.
    3. Order a hot lunch through the church cafeteria. ***Please be sure your child knows how he or she is receiving lunch each day.*** *(Parents of students in Kindergarten and First Grade must send a message to the school secretary through WhatsApp before 8:10 am notifying the school that the child will be ordering lunch.)*
- At 11:45am, students in grades K-2 will go to lunch. At 12:15, students in grades 3-6 will go to lunch. Students will sit in their assigned seats for lunch.
- As soon as students have finished eating, they will clean their space and be released to the playground for recess.

Procedures for Delivering and Bringing Lunch:

- All lunch deliveries and payments must be arranged by the parent ahead of time. Students will not be able to pay for delivered lunches. Food must arrive labeled with the child's name and grade level to the office **at least 5 minutes before the start** of your child's lunch hour.

- Should a student's lunch not arrive at the school by the start of lunch, one will be given to the child from the church's cafeteria. If the lunch is not paid for by 4pm that day, the cost will be charged to that student's lunch account, along with a $100RD fine. Food that arrives late will not be given to the child but sent home.

Ordering Lunch from the Cafeteria:

ACA is blessed to have partnered with a cafeteria operating as a separate business out of the church next door. They and their finances are completely separate from ACA. Each morning, the cafeteria purchases only the amount of food necessary to cook lunch for students who have placed an order.

Lunch Prices	
Kindergarten – 2nd Grade	RD$150
3rd – 6th Grade	RD$200

- Students are given an opportunity to place an order with the cafeteria each morning in their classrooms. For this reason, it is students' responsibility to know if they are ordering lunch that day. Orders placed after 8:45am will not be accepted.
- When students place an order, they will be charged immediately and receive the food at their designated lunch time. (Should a child go home sick before lunch, this charge will be refunded.)
- Lunches ordered by mistake will still be charged to your child's account and given to your child. If you are concerned about your child's ability to remember how he/she is receiving lunch, you should contact your child's teacher through ClassDojo by 8:10am or call Pastor Alex Almanzar (809) 250 – 7680 before 8:45am.
- The menu for this school year 2026-2027 is determined on a monthly basis and will be shared by the school in Friday Folders, on Class Dojo, and in classroom WhatsApp chats.
- Students should only order lunch if they have the money in hand (or if it has been previously given to the café) to pay for that lunch. It is the responsibility of the parent to check ClassDojo for updates on your child's lunch balance.
- Parents will be made aware of any unplanned charges or fines through messages on ClassDojo or WhatsApp.
- **All questions or concerns regarding hot lunch should be directed to the lunch coordinator, Pastor Alex Almanzar (809) 250 - 7680. Transfers for lunch payments may be made using the following information:**

Banco BHD, Cuenta de Ahorros: 06723640014
Alex Gabriel Almánzar,
Contacto: 809-250-7680 Cédula: 056-0135995-2
Email: bendicion14@hotmail.com

LUNCH/ RECESS SCHEDULE	
Grades K-2	11:45-12:30
Grades 3-6	12:15-12:50
All students will have a 20-minute recess after lunch	

Snack

Snack time will differ for each class. For this reason, each child must arrive in the morning with a healthy snack and water bottle. Please be sure that the child's name is prominently displayed on both items. Snacks cannot be delivered to the school after 8:00am. Examples of healthy snacks include: fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers, yogurt, and small sandwiches. Unhealthy snacks that are not allowed include: candy, chocolate, desserts and soda. Should families choose, small snacks and drinks will also be available for purchase from the church cafeteria. Students must have pesos to purchase a snack. **Siblings must each bring their own money to purchase a snack as snack times differ between grade levels.**

Snack is optional. Students who do not come to school with a snack, nor with money to purchase one, will not eat a snack that day. Please note: **snack time is not breakfast.** Please be sure that your child has eaten a healthy meal *before* arriving to school.

Water

Students must bring a water bottle to school each day. It is very important that students get enough water to drink throughout the school day. Students may bring their own bottle each day, or they can purchase one first thing in the morning from the church's cafeteria. Students who do not have a water bottle with them at school (or money available to purchase one) will be given the money to buy a water bottle. If the charge of the water bottle (RD$20) is not paid by 4pm, an additional fine of RD$30 will be charged to your child's account.

Birthdays

Birthdays are exciting milestones in children's lives and we love to celebrate them! If your child has a birthday on a school day and would like to celebrate with classmates, please follow the steps outlined below:

1. Coordinate with the child's teacher at least three days in advance.
2. Recognize that all birthdays will be celebrated during snack time. This is not a family celebration, but a time to celebrate with classmates. Therefore, no parents or family will be allowed.

3. If your child desires to bring in a special snack for the class for their birthday, it must come to school with the child that morning.
4. The snack must be in individual servings, not a large cake or dessert that needs to be cut.
5. No drinks or other gifts are allowed. No other times will be made available to celebrate birthdays.

On occasion, students may wish to distribute invitations to birthday parties or other celebrations while on campus. In order to prevent possible exclusion and hurt feelings, this may only happen if an entire class is to be invited. Invitations to a select group of students may not be distributed on the school campus.

Field Trips

All grade levels will take field trips for academic reasons which are directly related to curriculum. Parents will have the opportunity to approve their child's participation in such trips. Parents who do not want their child to attend a field trip must contact the teacher at least 3 days in advance. Alternative assignments may be given by the teacher to make up for the learning that is missed when a student does not attend a class field trip. Field trip expenses are included in student tuition with the exception of lunch or snack, if needed. ACA teachers, with possible help from parents, chaperone all field trips.

Parent Involvement

We at Arbor Christian Academy believe that providing a high-quality education for our students is a joint effort between the school, family, and church community. Research has shown that children who receive intentional support from each of these groups perform stronger academically, have better social skills and behavior, and are more likely to graduate and go on to higher education.

For this reason, ACA encourages parental involvement in a variety of ways. Our expectation is that a member from each family participates in the classroom each year. Ways to serve include but are not limited to:

- helping with classroom parties
- chaperoning field trips
- volunteering as a classroom assistant
- working with small groups of students (as designated by the teacher)

Communication

At Arbor Christian Academy, we are a bilingual community. As such, all staff members are regularly studying an additional language and culture (be it Dominican Spanish, American English, or Haitian Creole) in order to continuously improve communication.

Parent-Teacher Interactions:

Being a part of a multicultural community is a beautiful experience, however, it is not without its challenges. To maintain clear and consistent communication, parents should direct questions, concerns, and important information to the **lead teacher** , either in person or through ClassDojo. When needed, a bilingual assistant may help facilitate communication.

If a parent speaks with an assistant during dismissal or in passing, the assistant will relay the information to the lead teacher as soon as possible. While assistants are valued members of the classroom team, the lead teacher remains responsible for instructional decisions and communication regarding student learning.

ACA expects communication between families and staff to remain respectful, professional, and free from gossip. Concerns should be addressed directly with the appropriate staff member following the school's established communication and conflict-resolution process.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

All parents will be required to attend a parent-teacher conference at least twice per year. The dates of these conferences will be communicated to parents at the beginning of the year on the school calendar. Two weeks prior to conferences, parents will have the opportunity to sign up for a time that best fits their schedule. Should parents wish to schedule an additional conference with an ACA teacher or staff member, they should contact the school secretary during school hours.

Student Cell Phone Use:

Should parents decide to send a cell phone to school with their child, it will not be allowed to be stored in the child's backpack or pocket. This policy is to avoid theft, damage, misplacement, and distractions during the school day. Instead, **cell phones will be stored in a secure location in the front office at the beginning of the school day and picked up by the student at the end of the day.** Parents who need to communicate with their child during the school day must send the message through the school office.

Emergency Procedures

The safety of students and staff at ACA is our priority. For this reason, everyone in the school building participates in regular emergency drills to ensure swift action in the case of an actual emergency. Students and staff are trained in responding to a building fire, earthquakes, or the presence of a dangerous person on campus. Should you have additional questions about this training, please contact our administrative team.

Natural Disaster Procedures:

In the event that a serious earthquake, hurricane, or other natural disaster occurs during school hours, parents will be notified as soon as possible of the actions the school has taken to protect students as well as the steps to be taken to pick-up their children. Additionally, notifications of school cancellations due to inclement weather or other emergencies will be sent through WhatsApp and Instagram.

Gradelink:

Gradelink is ACA's primary student information system and provides families with one centralized place to stay informed about their child's academic progress, attendance, behavior, and school experience. Families are required to learn how to access Gradelink and to review it regularly throughout the school year.

ACA uses Gradelink for several important purposes:

- **Standards-Based Grading:** Teachers record student progress toward grade-level academic standards rather than relying only on traditional percentage grades. Families can use Gradelink to see which standards their child has mastered, where they are still developing, and where additional support may be needed.
- **Attendance:** Daily attendance, absences, and tardies are recorded in Gradelink so that families have an accurate record of their child's attendance.
- **Academic Progress:** Teachers use Gradelink to document assessments, progress, and other academic information throughout the grading period. This allows families to monitor growth before formal report cards are issued.
- **Celebrations and Infractions:** Gradelink may also be used to record positive celebrations as well as behavioral infractions. These records help families and the school recognize growth, identify patterns, and work together when additional support is needed.

ACA does not use Gradelink's online payment features. Tuition, fees, lunch payments, and other financial transactions should be made only through the payment methods communicated by the school.

Gradelink is intended to strengthen communication and partnership between home and school. Families should review the platform regularly rather than waiting until report-card periods to become aware of academic, attendance, or behavioral concerns. Gradelink supplements, but does not replace, direct communication with teachers and school administration when questions or concerns arise.

VI. Student Conduct

Discipleship and Biblical Worldview

At Arbor Christian Academy, student conduct is understood within the larger purpose of **discipleship** . Student ministry is not simply a program or a scheduled activity; it is part of the culture of the school. Every classroom, conversation, correction, celebration, chapel, and relationship provides an opportunity to help students learn to love God, think biblically, live wisely, and serve others faithfully.

ACA seeks to create an environment of **biblical worldview immersion** , where faith is not separated from academics, relationships, behavior, or decision-making. We believe that God is the Creator and source of Truth and that all areas of life and learning are understood most fully within His redemptive story. For this reason, biblical truth is not simply added to the school day; it shapes how we teach, how we relate to one another, how we respond to conflict, and how we understand both wise and unwise choices. Students are continually encouraged to develop spiritual and moral discernment and to apply biblical truth to their everyday lives.

Our approach to students begins with several foundational beliefs:

- Every student is created in the **image of God** and therefore possesses God-given dignity, value, and purpose.
- Students are intelligent and capable and should be held to meaningful academic, behavioral, and spiritual expectations.
- Students are deeply loved and should be treated with honor, respect, grace, and compassion.
- Students live in a fallen world and, like adults, reflect the reality of human sin. They therefore need guidance toward discernment, reflection, repentance, restoration, and growth.
- God is active in the lives of students in ways that adults may not always immediately see. Staff should listen carefully, pray for students, and seek to understand the roots of behaviors and needs.
- Students were made for relationship and desire to be known. Healthy relationships are therefore essential to both learning and discipline.
- Students are on a journey. Growth occurs over time, and adults may sometimes plant seeds that others will later cultivate and harvest.
- Students are more than their struggles or behaviors. Discipline must never reduce a child to a problem that needs to be fixed.

- Each student has been uniquely created by God. Differences should be understood thoughtfully, and support and expectations may appropriately look different from one child to another.

  These beliefs guide all student-adult interactions at ACA and form the foundation for our approach to behavior, discipline, restoration, and student growth.

Growing Fruitful Leaders

ACA's vision is to **Grow Fruitful Leaders** . Our Core Values describe the character we desire to cultivate in students:

- **Rooted:** grounded in Christ, His Word, knowledge, and biblical wisdom.
- **Courageous:** willing to persevere and stand for what is right, even when doing so is difficult.
- **Relational:** serving and interacting with others through respect, generosity, and love.
- **Wise:** reflective, discerning, creative, teachable, and committed to growth.
- **Integrity:** acting truthfully and consistently in thought, word, and deed.

Behavior expectations, celebrations, corrections, and restorative conversations should consistently point students toward these characteristics rather than simply toward outward compliance.

Schoolwide Conduct Expectations

To provide students with clear and consistent expectations across classrooms and common spaces, ACA uses three schoolwide rules:

Be Respectful

Honor God, others, yourself, and property.

Students are expected to:

- Honor God in their words and actions.
- Use kind and appropriate language.
- Address adults respectfully and listen to directions.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves and respect personal space.
- Treat school property and the belongings of others with care.

These expectations reflect Jesus' teaching to treat others as we would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

Be Responsible

Be prepared, do your part, and take ownership of your choices.

Students are expected to:

- Come prepared and ready to learn.
- Follow established procedures.
- Contribute appropriately to the classroom and school community.
- Care for their belongings and materials.
- Take responsibility for their decisions, correct mistakes, and continue working toward growth.

Students are reminded, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart" (Colossians 3:23).

Be Safe

Think before you act and make choices that protect yourself and others.

Students are expected to:

- Think before acting.
- Make choices that protect themselves and others.
- Use spaces, materials, and equipment appropriately.
- Remain where they are expected to be.
- Ask an adult for help when there is a safety concern.

"The wise are cautious and avoid danger" (Proverbs 14:16).

Teachers may establish additional developmentally appropriate classroom procedures; however, classroom expectations should support and remain consistent with these three schoolwide rules.

Discipline as Discipleship

Discipline at ACA is **redemptive rather than merely punitive** . Its purpose is to help students recognize what happened, understand the effects of their choices, restore damaged relationships when possible, and make a wiser choice moving forward. ACA summarizes this process as: **Reflection → Restoration → Redirection**

Discipline should be grounded in both **truth and grace** . Appropriate consequences remain an important part of accountability, but the ultimate goal is not simply to make a student experience discomfort. It is to cultivate wisdom, responsibility, repentance, reconciliation, and increasingly mature decision-making.

Hebrews 12:10–11 describes discipline as something that ultimately produces "a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." In this spirit, ACA seeks to walk alongside students as they learn.

Because students are unique image-bearers of God, discipline will not always look identical from child to child. Age, developmental level, individual needs, previous interventions, motivation, frequency, severity, safety, and the circumstances surrounding an incident may all appropriately affect the school's response. **Equity does not always mean identical consequences; it means holding students to meaningful expectations while responding wisely to the individual child.**

Whenever possible:

- Student dignity should be protected.
- Correction should take place privately rather than publicly embarrassing a student.
- Students should have an appropriate opportunity to explain what happened and be heard.
- Staff should seek to understand the possible motivation or root of the behavior rather than reacting only to the outward action.
- Natural, logical, and restorative consequences should be used when appropriate.
- Students should be given a clear path toward repairing harm and successfully returning to the learning community.

Classroom Behavior Management

Teachers are responsible for building positive, orderly, relational classrooms in which expectations are explicitly taught, modeled, practiced, and reinforced. Behavior management is intended to **teach and guide—not simply punish** . Teachers should use the least intensive intervention reasonably necessary to redirect behavior while maintaining the safety and learning of the class.

Depending on the situation, classroom responses may include:

- A nonverbal or verbal class reminder
- An individual reminder or private conversation
- Reteaching an expectation or procedure
- Proximity or seating modification
- Temporary loss or modification of a small privilege
- A temporary separate workspace or supervised recovery period
- Teacher-student reflection or conference
- A restorative action

- Parent communication
- Office referral when classroom interventions are insufficient or the behavior requires administrative support

A temporary recovery space should allow a student to calm down and refocus while remaining appropriately supervised. Parent communication and administrative involvement may occur earlier when circumstances warrant it.

Positive reinforcement is equally important. Teachers should intentionally notice and celebrate students who demonstrate growth, responsibility, kindness, perseverance, honesty, wise decision-making, and ACA's Core Values. Positive reinforcement may be tangible, relational/social, or connected to appropriate activities and privileges.

Behavioral Levels and Office Referrals

ACA uses a three-level system to help staff determine when behaviors should ordinarily remain within classroom management and when administrative intervention is appropriate.

Level 1 — Classroom Managed

Level 1 behaviors are ordinarily managed by the teacher unless they become repeated or develop into a larger pattern.

Examples include:

- Disruptive behavior
- Lack of respect

Teachers should use appropriate classroom interventions, reteaching, reflection, restorative practices, and communication before requesting administrative involvement unless circumstances indicate otherwise.

Level 2 — Teacher Discretion

For Level 2 behaviors, the teacher should consider the context and determine whether the situation can appropriately be managed within the classroom or requires administrative assistance.

Examples include:

- Defiance
- Inappropriate language
- Misuse of property

Level 3 — Immediate Administrative Involvement

Level 3 behaviors require the staff member to contact administration promptly.

Examples include:

- Aggression or violence

- Cheating or dishonesty
- Destruction or vandalism
- Repeated behavior that has not improved through previous interventions

The referral form also asks staff to consider possible motivations for the behavior—including avoiding a person or task, seeking adult or peer attention, obtaining an item or activity, or another/unknown motivation—and to document the steps already taken with the student. This helps administrative intervention remain focused on understanding and changing behavior rather than merely assigning a consequence.

Repeated behaviors may move to a higher level even when an individual occurrence would ordinarily fall into a lower category.

Administrative Discipline and Restoration

When a student is referred for administrative support, the administrator will seek first to understand the incident and the student's perspective. Depending on the circumstances, the student may:

- Participate in an individual conference
- Complete an oral or written reflection
- Identify the schoolwide rule or Core Value connected to the incident
- Consider who was affected and how
- Practice or describe a better response for the future
- Write or communicate an appropriate apology
- Participate in a restorative conversation
- Repair, replace, clean, or otherwise address damage when appropriate
- Complete another natural or logical consequence
- Participate in a behavior support or intervention plan
- Receive additional disciplinary consequences when necessary

The administrator will help the student return to the classroom or school community successfully whenever possible.

Serious incidents may require additional administrative responses, parent conferences, behavior agreements, loss of privileges, suspension, or other consequences consistent with ACA policy and applicable Dominican regulations.

Celebrating Positive Conduct

Student discipline includes intentionally recognizing what students are doing well. ACA uses Gradelink to document both **behavior celebrations and behavior concerns** . Teachers are expected to recognize students who demonstrate ACA's schoolwide expectations, Core Values, personal growth, wise choices, restoration, or other positive conduct. Celebrations help students understand that Christian character is something ACA actively notices and values—not merely the absence of misconduct.

Students may earn rewards or other school-approved recognition connected to positive behavior and character development. Classroom teachers may also use developmentally appropriate incentives and celebrations that support the school's larger behavior philosophy.

Gradelink Behavior Records and Family Communication

Gradelink is ACA's formal schoolwide system for documenting student behavior. Classroom teachers record typical classroom celebrations and behavior concerns so families can remain informed and so the school maintains an appropriate record of patterns over time. When an incident requires administrative intervention, the responding administrator assumes responsibility for entering the administrative behavior report in Gradelink. Families are expected to **regularly check Gradelink and enable notifications** regarding their child's behavior.

For routine classroom matters, the Gradelink notification may be sufficient communication. When an incident is significant, repeated, requires a coordinated intervention, or presents an immediate concern, ACA may also contact the parent or guardian directly by phone, ClassDojo, WhatsApp, conference, or another appropriate means.

Behavior records are intended not merely to create a history of mistakes, but to help teachers, administrators, students, and families identify patterns, recognize growth, and work together toward appropriate support.

Family Partnership

ACA recognizes parents and guardians as the primary educators and spiritual leaders of their children and seeks to work alongside families in the discipleship process.
When behavioral concerns arise, families are expected to partner with the school by:

- Reviewing communication from the school.
- Discussing concerns and expectations appropriately with their child.

- Supporting reasonable school interventions and restorative actions.
- Communicating relevant information that may help staff better understand or support the student.
- Encouraging honesty, responsibility, reconciliation, and respectful communication.

Likewise, ACA commits to communicate respectfully, protect student dignity and confidentiality, listen carefully to family concerns, and seek solutions that promote student growth. The purpose of this partnership is not simply to stop unwanted behavior. It is to help students increasingly become **Rooted, Courageous, Relational, Wise leaders marked by Integrity** —young people who understand God's truth and learn to live it faithfully in relationship with Him and with others.

Dominican Law Regarding Student Discipline

Arbor Christian Academy operates in accordance with the "*Normas del Sistema Educativo Dominicano para la Convivencia Armoniosa en los Centros Educativos Públicos y Privados,*" established through "*Ordenanza 05-2023,*" as well as the applicable provisions of "*Ley 136-03, Código para el Sistema de Protección y los Derechos Fundamentales de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes.*"

Dominican regulations approach student discipline from a formative and restorative perspective. Disciplinary measures are intended to help students take responsibility for their actions through reflection, correction, restoration, and the development of greater autonomy and self-regulation. This approach is consistent with ACA's philosophy of Discipline as Discipleship and with our process of:

Reflection → Restoration → Redirection

Relationship Between ACA Behavior Levels and MINERD Classifications

ACA's Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 behavior system guides teachers and administrators in determining who should respond to a behavior and how quickly administrative support is needed.

Separately, Dominican regulations classify formal disciplinary incidents as:

1. Minor Offenses
2. Serious Offenses
3. Very Serious Offenses

These two systems are related, but they are not equivalent. For example, a Level 2 office referral does not automatically constitute a Serious Offense. When formal classification is

necessary, administration will consider the circumstances of the incident and the applicable regulations.

Repeated behavior may result in a more serious classification when appropriate. However, repeated behavior should also result in increased intervention and support. When a pattern develops, ACA will document the interventions already implemented and may create an individualized action plan or behavioral support plan in collaboration with the student, family, teachers, administration, and appropriate student-support personnel.

Principles for Disciplinary Decisions

When determining an appropriate response, ACA will consider:

- The student's age and developmental level.
- The nature and seriousness of the behavior.
- Whether anyone's physical or emotional safety was affected.
- The circumstances surrounding the incident.
- The student's understanding and intent, when relevant.
- The effect of the behavior on others and on the learning environment.
- Previous incidents and documented interventions.
- Whether the behavior represents an isolated incident or an ongoing pattern.
- Any relevant needs, vulnerabilities, or circumstances of the student.
- The student's willingness to reflect, repair harm, and participate in restoration.

The best interests of the child or adolescent will be a primary consideration. Discipline will be proportional to the situation and designed to promote responsibility, restoration, learning, and continued participation in the educational process.

1. Minor Offenses

Minor Offenses are behaviors that negatively affect harmonious coexistence, fulfillment of student responsibilities, or the orderly functioning of educational activities, but that do not ordinarily create significant danger or harm. Minor Offenses are generally addressed by the student's teacher.

Examples may include:

- Disruptive behavior in the classroom or another area of the school.
- Inappropriate or disrespectful comments or behavior toward classmates or adults.
- Inappropriate language or tone of voice.
- Failure to follow established classroom or school procedures.
- Being in an unauthorized area of the school.
- Leaving an assigned area without appropriate permission when the situation does not present a significant safety concern.
- Littering or failing to care appropriately for shared spaces.
- Unauthorized use of a cell phone, tablet, computer, or other electronic device.
- Inappropriate use of materials or property that does not result in significant damage.

Appropriate responses to Minor Offenses may include:

- A private verbal or nonverbal reminder.
- A reflective conversation with the student.
- Reteaching or practicing the appropriate expectation.
- An appropriate apology or restorative action.
- A written reflection related to the behavior.
- A service or restorative task directly related to the behavior.
- A written agreement or commitment with the student.
- Temporary retention of a distracting object until the end of the activity or school day, when appropriate.
- Temporary modification of a privilege or nonessential activity when reasonably related to the behavior.
- Parent notification or communication.
- A teacher-student conference.
- Referral for additional support when a pattern begins to develop.

Correction should ordinarily take place privately and preserve the dignity of the student. When Minor Offenses become repetitive, ACA will move beyond repeated warnings and consider additional interventions, family involvement, and an appropriate action plan.

2. Serious Offenses

Serious Offenses are behaviors that significantly disrupt harmonious coexistence, interfere with the educational process, violate the rights or dignity of others, or demonstrate a level of seriousness requiring administrative review. Serious Offenses are generally referred to administration and reviewed in collaboration with the appropriate members of school leadership and the student-support team.

Examples may include:

- Defiance of authority or significant refusal to comply with reasonable school expectations.
- Serious disrespect toward a student, staff member, visitor, or other member of the school community.
- Discriminatory comments or actions.
- Academic dishonesty, including copying, cheating, plagiarism, or other deliberate misrepresentation of academic work.
- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of artificial intelligence or other digital tools to complete academic work and present it as the student's own.
- Leaving the classroom, assigned activity, or school area without authorization.
- Significant misuse of school property or another person's property.
- Intentionally damaging property when the level of damage does not rise to the category of a Very Serious Offense.
- Unauthorized or inappropriate publication of information, images, recordings, or comments involving members of the school community.
- Inappropriate conduct during field trips, athletic events, transportation, or other school-sponsored activities.
- Serious false accusations or deliberate statements intended to damage another person's reputation.
- Serious violations of school expectations related to patriotic or civic activities.
- Repeated Minor Offenses after documented interventions and support.

Appropriate responses to Serious Offenses may include any appropriate measure available for Minor Offenses, in addition to:

- An administrative conference with the student.
- Investigation of the circumstances and perspectives of those involved.
- Parent or guardian notification and conference.
- A written action plan or behavioral support plan.
- Restorative conversation or mediation when appropriate.

- Repair, replacement, cleaning, or another appropriate response to damaged property.
- A private apology or, when appropriate and restorative, a public apology.
- Completion or revision of academic work affected by academic dishonesty, in accordance with ACA's Academic Integrity Policy.
- Temporary restriction of a specific nonessential privilege or activity.
- In-School Suspension, through temporary placement in a supervised alternative learning space.
- Referral to ACA Psychology/Student Support services or appropriate outside support when necessary.

In cases of Serious Offenses, ACA will seek to ensure that the student continues the educational process while disciplinary measures are being implemented.

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3. Very Serious Offenses

Very Serious Offenses are behaviors that involve danger or significant physical, emotional, moral, digital, or institutional harm to students, staff, visitors, or school property. These incidents require immediate administrative intervention.

Examples may include:

- Physical aggression or violence.
- Credible threats against the safety or physical integrity of another person.
- Bullying or repeated intentional intimidation as defined by ACA's Bullying Policy.
- Theft or knowingly participating in theft.
- Possession, distribution, or consumption of prohibited drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or other prohibited substances.
- Possession or use of a weapon or other dangerous object.
- Serious vandalism or intentional destruction of property.
- Alteration, falsification, or deliberate manipulation of official educational records or documents.
- Serious digital misconduct, including hacking, identity impersonation, digital fraud, or unauthorized access to another person's account.
- Creation of unauthorized social media accounts using the school's name or falsely representing the school or members of its community.
- Publication or distribution of harmful, threatening, humiliating, or inappropriate digital content involving students or members of the school community.
- Serious inappropriate sexual conduct on campus or during a school-sponsored activity.
- Repeated Serious Offenses after documented interventions and support.

Depending on the circumstances, appropriate responses to Very Serious Offenses may include:

- Immediate action to protect the safety of all persons involved.
- Removal from the immediate situation and placement under adult supervision.
- Administrative investigation.
- A documented conference with the student and parent or guardian.
- Referral to ACA Psychology/Student Support personnel.
- Development or revision of an individualized behavior or safety plan.
- Restorative measures when appropriate and safe.
- Repair or restitution for damaged or stolen property when appropriate.
- Confiscation and secure handling of dangerous or prohibited objects.
- Activity Suspension .
- In-School Suspension , through temporary placement in a supervised alternative learning environment.
- Referral to outside professionals, safeguarding personnel, authorities, or appropriate government agencies when necessary.

Restorative practices will not be used in a way that requires a victim of violence, bullying, abuse, or other serious misconduct to directly confront or reconcile with the person who caused the harm when doing so would be unsafe or inappropriate.

Unlisted Conduct

It is not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise within a school community. When conduct is not specifically listed in this policy but may constitute a Minor, Serious, or Very Serious Offense, administration will evaluate the situation using the process established by applicable Dominican regulations. ACA will not impose a formal disciplinary measure that is not authorized by established school policies or applicable regulations.

Procedure for Serious and Very Serious Offenses

When an incident may constitute a Serious or Very Serious Offense, ACA will use an administrative review process.

The process will ordinarily include:

1. Address the immediate situation.
   Staff will first protect safety, calm the situation, separate students when necessary, and contact the appropriate administrator.

2. **Inform and hear the student.**
   Before determining a formal disciplinary measure, the student will be informed of the concern and given an age-appropriate opportunity to explain what occurred, respond to the information presented, and provide relevant information.
3. **Gather information.**
   Administration may speak with students, staff members, witnesses, parents, or others and review relevant records or documentation.
4. **Consider the context.**
   The school will consider the seriousness of the behavior, previous incidents, documented interventions, the student's developmental level, and any relevant risk or vulnerability factors.
5. **Determine the appropriate measure.**
   Administration and the appropriate members of the School Management Team will determine a proportional educational and disciplinary response that is provided for in school policy.
6. **Communicate with the family.**
   Parents or guardians will be informed of significant incidents, the school's conclusions, and the measures, interventions, or supports that will be implemented.
7. **Document the incident.**
   Relevant information, interventions, communication, and outcomes will be appropriately documented.
8. **Support restoration and return to learning.**
   Whenever possible, the student will be provided a clear path to correct behavior, repair harm, rebuild relationships, and successfully return to the regular learning environment.
9. **Provide follow-up.**
   The school may monitor the student's progress and adjust interventions or supports as necessary.

Students and their families may request review of a formal disciplinary decision through procedures established by the school and applicable Dominican regulations.

Prohibited Disciplinary Practices

ACA does not permit disciplinary measures that violate the dignity, safety, or educational rights of students. The following practices are prohibited:

- Corporal or physical punishment.
- Verbal aggression, humiliation, ridicule, threats, or degrading treatment.
- Collective punishment of a class or group for the behavior of an individual student.

- Financial penalties imposed as behavioral punishment.
- Denial of food or drinking water as punishment.
- Denial of reasonable access to the bathroom.
- Arbitrary exclusion from the educational process.
- Withholding required assessments as a disciplinary measure.
- Using academic grades solely as punishment for misconduct.
- Requiring inappropriate physical exercise or labor as punishment.
- Any disciplinary action that is discriminatory, abusive, degrading, or disproportionate.

Recess should not routinely be removed as punishment. When a student needs to complete a restorative or disciplinary activity directly related to the behavior during a portion of recess, the response should be reasonable and supervised. Likewise, any service task used as a restorative measure must be safe, developmentally appropriate, supervised, and meaningfully connected to responsibility or repairing harm. It must never be used to shame or degrade the student.

Suspension and Emergency Removal

For serious concerns involving behavior, safety, or school functioning, ACA may use the following measures:

- In-School Suspension
  A student may be temporarily removed from the regular classroom and placed in a designated, supervised space. During this period, the student will continue assigned academic work and may complete reflections, restorative activities, conferences, or other interventions related to the incident.
- Activity Suspension
  A student may be temporarily restricted from field trips, extracurricular activities, special events, or other nonessential school activities when the restriction is appropriate to the behavior or necessary for safety.
- Emergency Removal
  When a student's behavior or condition creates an **immediate safety concern or significantly prevents the safe and normal functioning of the classroom or school**, ACA may require the student to leave campus with a parent, guardian, or authorized adult for the remainder of the school day. This may include a behavioral or emotional crisis requiring a level of individualized supervision or immediate intervention that the school cannot reasonably provide at that time.

Emergency Removal is a temporary safety and operational intervention, not a disciplinary suspension.

When Emergency Removals occur repeatedly, administration will review the situation and develop or modify an appropriate support, behavior, or safety plan. Emergency Removal will not be routinely used as a substitute for the student's regular educational program.

Following an In-School Suspension, Activity Suspension, or Emergency Removal, ACA may require a re-entry meeting, behavior plan, safety plan, or other appropriate support before the student returns to normal participation.

Emergency Physical Intervention

In an emergency situation, an ACA staff member may use reasonable and limited physical intervention only when necessary to protect the student or another person from an immediate risk of physical harm, including dangerous destruction of property that creates such a risk. Physical intervention will never be used as punishment, retaliation, or simply to obtain compliance. Only the minimum intervention necessary will be used, and it must end as soon as the immediate danger has passed.

Any use of physical restraint will be documented, communicated to the parent or guardian, and reviewed by administration. When these incidents occur repeatedly, ACA may develop or review an individualized behavior, safety, or support plan.

Relationship to Other ACA Policies and Obligations

Certain conduct may also activate additional ACA procedures, including:

- Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Conflict Resolution Policy
- Technology and Digital Citizenship Policies
- Emergency and Safety Procedures

When an incident involves suspected abuse, exploitation, significant violence, criminal activity, serious threats, or another safeguarding concern, school disciplinary procedures do not replace ACA's safeguarding, reporting, or cooperation obligations with the appropriate authorities.

When conduct may constitute a criminal offense or another matter requiring external intervention, ACA will follow its safeguarding and reporting procedures and cooperate with the appropriate Dominican authorities. Any external investigation or process will be handled independently of the school's internal disciplinary process.

VII. Student Safety

Student Drop Off and Pick Up

All students are expected to be dropped off and picked up on time. Students may arrive at school between 7:40-8:00am. Students who arrive after this time will be marked tardy.

At dismissal, children may be picked up from the patio area by a designated family member, friend or transportation service. These individuals must be noted on the child's transportation form with a copy of their cédula. Should someone other than a designated individual desire to pick up your child, a message must be sent to the office before 2:00pm, or a phone call made to the secretary by the designated family member before dismissal.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Instructions

- If your child is dropped off or picked up in a car or motorcycle, you must pull up on the school side of the Street, facing Ave. Bienvenido Fuertes Duarte with your flashers on if possible. You must not exit your vehicle unless you need to enter the office or enter the building for a meeting. If that is the case, you must park **on a side street** in order to allow traffic to move through without interruption during drop-off and pick-up times.
- You can never park between the speed bumps during drop-off and pick-up times.
- If you are walking to pick-up or drop-off your child, you will enter from the small side gate closest to the school entrance.
- All vehicles, including motorcycles, must line up to drop-off or pick-up students from the large gate at the church entrance. Should motorcyclists choose to walk to pick up a child, they must park their motorcycles on a side street.
- **All parents and persons authorized to pick-up students must present the identification card provided by the school for easy and quick identification of students.** If someone arrives without the card, they must move outside of the drop-off/pick-up area until it is confirmed that they are listed on the release form for that child. Any adult arriving without the student identification card needs to provide a cedula or driver's license in order to prove identity.

Student Walking Release

Because we know that every family and child is different, ACA makes allowances for those families who desire their children to walk home independently or with an individual under the age of 15. Families may sign a form releasing the school of all liability should any accident happen once the child leaves ACA's campus. Additionally, students who are in 5th or 6th grade may also have a release form signed that allows them to walk home independently. **This form must be on file in the office before children are released to a minor individual or to walk by themselves.**

Student Pick-up After 3:25pm

Students are dismissed at 3:10pm and **should be picked up before 3:25pm.** Any student who is not picked up after 3:30pm will be marked late. Each family is given a grace period of three late marks per year. Should a family exceed three late marks, **a fine of $300RD will be added to their account for each additional time a child remains on campus past 3:30pm.**

> **If you know that you will be late picking up your child, please call the office before 3:15pm to avoid a late pickup notice. If we are advised ahead of time, no tardy will be given. Should this grace be abused, this policy is subject to change.*

Releasing Student Information

For the purpose of providing accurate information and to protect the privacy of our parents, students and staff, no information will be made available to any party without the written authorization of the parents or guardians requesting the information.

Updating Student Emergency Contact Information

During registration or reenrollment, parents and guardians are required to update student information. In the event information changes at any time throughout the year, please notify the office immediately, so as to keep school records up to date.

Campus Security and Usage

We value a safe and protected campus environment for both staff and students. For this reason, when students are on campus, all entrances will be locked, and visitors will only be allowed to enter through the front door. Additionally, while we share our campus with select community organizations, we do so intentionally and ensure that we maintain a secure campus environment. Please respect the campus schedule and maintain appropriate usage of facilities at all times. Students should never be on campus outside of school hours without pre-approved permission and an adult chaperone.

Security Cameras

Arbor Christian Academy is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for every student. To support this goal, security cameras are in place in public areas such as hallways, the front lobby, and outdoor spaces like the playground and lunch area. These cameras are intended to promote safety, discourage unsafe behavior, and assist school staff in the event that an incident needs review.

All footage is private and remains the property of the school. For the protection of our students and staff, viewing access is limited to school administration, who may decide if and when footage will be shared. Cameras are never placed in classrooms, restrooms, or any private areas.

Campus Visitors

All campus visitors must enter directly to the office to check in. After signing in and listing the reason for their visit, the secretary will then assist them. If visitors remain on campus, they must wear a visitor's pass which, depending on the color, indicates the adults who have received a clean background check as well as ACA/TeachBeyond safeguarding training (green). When these requirements are not met, visitors will wear an orange pass. These visitors are never permitted to be alone with students. All parents are considered visitors when on campus outside of the scheduled drop off, lunch, and dismissal times and should have a specified reason for their visit.

Injuries and Emergencies

In case of sickness or injury, the school will notify the student's parents or guardians. It is the parents' responsibility, however, to notify the school if the student has any existing medical needs of which we should be aware. ACA will only assist with basic First Aid needs. In cases that require medical attention, the school will call 911 and accompany the student on the ambulance to the nearest clinic or hospital. All possible attempts will be made to communicate with parents before a student is transported on an ambulance.

ACA provides students with Accident Insurance in the event of injuries that occur on school property or during school activities. In the event of an accident that requires medical treatment, the parent should cover the initial costs and submit the bills to the office to be submitted to the insurance company and reimbursed according to the amount covered by the policy. In the event the amount exceeds the yearly allotment, parents are responsible for covering additional costs.

In the event that the school's medical insurance is to be used, please comply with the following process:

- In the event of an accident, the student will be taken to the office.
- The student will be evaluated and receive First Aid at school. If necessary, he/she will be taken to a medical center to receive additional assistance.
- After treatment, parents must request a receipt with the total value paid (using the school's RNC: 131561551) and submit it to the school.
- If treatment is needed outside of the city, the parent is responsible for covering the costs, requesting the receipts, and submitting them to the office for reimbursement not to exceed $10,000RD and not including prescriptions. (The receipt should be identified as "valor fiscal" and have the name Arbor Christian Academy, RNC 131561551, as well as the student's name correctly spelled).

* Injuries that take place on school campus may be eligible for complete reimbursement, depending on the situation and according to the discretion of the administrative team.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Arbor Christian Academy admits students regardless of race, color, gender or nationality into all privileges, rights, programs and activities available to students at school. ACA educational policies, administration, admissions policy, financial support, athletics department and other school programs do not discriminate based on race, color, sex, nationality or ethnic origin of students, faculty, and staff. In accordance with the Bible, we firmly believe that there should be no preferential treatment (Romans 2:11). We are committed to extending our ministry to anyone within reach and carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is defined as intentional, repeated aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power, where an individual or group deliberately causes physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another person. It can take many forms, including physical violence, verbal abuse, social exclusion, cyberbullying, or any behavior intended to intimidate, threaten, or humiliate a student. Bullying may be direct (e.g., hitting, name-calling, threats) or indirect (e.g., spreading rumors, encouraging others to isolate someone). All forms of bullying are harmful and are strictly prohibited within the school community.

Please note, bullying is not:

- *Mutual conflict or social rejection: unless it involves repeated attempts to cause stress, exclude, or create injustice for others.*

- *Unique episodes of rudeness or physical aggression: if someone is mistreated or beaten once, it's not bullying. However, this behavior will not be ignored and will be handled immediately by administration.*

At ACA, we believe that every student has the right to feel safe, valued, and respected. We are committed to providing an environment that promotes the spiritual, emotional, social, and academic well-being of all students. Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy outlines our procedures for preventing, identifying, and responding to incidents of bullying.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers, and visitors on school grounds, during school-related activities (on or off campus), on school transportation, and through digital communications involving members of the school community.

Prevention Strategies

The school will actively promote a culture of respect and kindness through regular character education and Bible-based teachings on empathy and respect, staff training on recognizing signs of bullying, clear classroom rules and behavior expectations, safe spaces and trusted adults designated for student support, encouragement of student peer mentoring and inclusive play.

Reporting Bullying

All members of the school community are encouraged to report bullying. Reports may be made in person or in writing to a teacher, counselor, or designated Safeguarding Lead. Every report will be taken seriously and handled confidentially to the extent possible.

Responding to Incidents

When a bullying incident is reported the following actions will be taken:

1. The Safeguarding Team will conduct a prompt investigation.
2. Both the victim and the alleged perpetrator will be spoken to separately.
3. Appropriate documentation will be maintained.
4. If bullying is confirmed, consequences will be age-appropriate and may include:
    - Mediation and reconciliation
    - Counseling or behavioral intervention
    - Detention, suspension, or, in serious cases, expulsion
5. Parents of all involved parties will be notified.

Support for Students

- **Victims** of bullying will be offered pastoral care, counseling, and follow-up monitoring.
- **Perpetrators** of bullying will be supported in understanding the impact of their behavior and guided toward positive change.
- **Bystanders** of bullying will be educated and empowered to speak up safely.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team. Student and parent feedback will be considered to assess its effectiveness and relevance.

Parents, if you believe that your child has been bullied at school, you should:

- Immediately report the incident.
- Participate in any process initiated by administration to resolve the situation.
- Support your child and the school in implementing strategies to prevent future instances of bullying.

Under no circumstances may a parent approach the family of the other party involved with the aim of discussing the issue. If this happens, the Administration may adjust the consequences for that student's family and affect their enrollment process for the coming year. All communication should flow through the administration for the safety of all parties involved.

Destructive Behavior Policy

ACA prohibits all forms of destructive behavior. Destructive behavior may be defined as, but not limited to, the illegal, underage consumption of alcohol, the use of tobacco products, the consumption of drugs or other mind-altering substances, destruction of property, or physical or emotional harm done to self or others.

Students witnessed in the participation of destructive behavior on-campus or off-campus will be reported directly to the ACA Leadership Team. The ACA Leadership Team will work with fellow ACA staff to provide intervention for the destructive behavior. It is in the best long-term interest to fellow students to report destructive behavior. If destructive behavior is known or suspected, please follow the reporting procedures below:

- Destructive behavior will be reported by a direct conversation, email, or phone call to an ACA Leadership Team member. The Leadership Team member will then inform the Leadership Team. The ACA Leadership Team will then take over all

responses to the destructive behavior. No further follow-up by the student reporting the destructive incident is needed. The anonymity of all students reporting destructive behavior will be maintained to highest degree staff is able, depending on the specific situation.

VIII. Safeguarding: Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Overview

At Arbor Christian Academy, your child's safety is our highest priority. We follow TeachBeyond's Safeguarding Program, which is designed to protect children and help all adults in our community interact with them in healthy, appropriate ways.

We want every child to feel valued, safe, and free to share concerns, knowing that their voice will be heard and respected. To support this, ACA has clear strategies for prevention, accountability, and quick response if concerns arise.

We also believe every adult has a role in protecting children from harm. This includes physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual abuse, as well as neglect. If there are ever concerns that a child may be at risk, staff are expected to raise those concerns promptly so they can be addressed with care and wisdom.

When a concern is shared, ACA responds. Every report—whether current or from the past—is reviewed and handled according to TeachBeyond's safeguarding guidelines. Our goal is always to act in a way that protects children and provides a safe, respectful environment for everyone.

Safeguarding Foundations at ACA

The TeachBeyond Safeguarding Program rests on four key principles that guide our work:

- **Regard** – Every child should feel valued, safe, and empowered to speak up.
- **Responsibility** – We believe children have the right to protection and care, and we each share the responsibility to help keep them safe.
- **Response** – ACA carefully and respectfully responds to any concern or report, past or present.
- **Requirements** – Staff and volunteers receive ongoing safeguarding training, follow ACA's Code of Conduct, and commit to practices that keep children safe at all times.

Our Committment

At Arbor Christian Academy, the safety and well-being of every student is our highest priority. We are dedicated to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment where each child is valued and protected.

As a Christian school, we see safeguarding as both a responsibility and a calling. Our goal is to prevent harm, respond effectively when concerns arise, and build a school culture where students, families, and staff work together to protect children and vulnerable adults.
We pursue this commitment through two main priorities:

1. **Prevention and Awareness** – creating a culture that prioritizes safety through clear policies, staff training, and protective practices.
2. **Effective Response** – ensuring every staff member knows how to recognize, report, and respond to concerns quickly and appropriately.

Core Principles of Safeguarding

As part of the TeachBeyond network of schools, ACA follows key safeguarding principles that guide everything we do:

- All children deserve to be safe, respected, and free from harm.
- Adults have a special responsibility to protect children and vulnerable people.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Understanding Harm

The word *harm* is used at ACA instead of *abuse*, because our focus is on the child's experience and well-being, not just on the actions of another person. Harm may be intentional or unintentional and can be caused by adults or by other children.

What Harm Can Look Like:

- **Physical Harm** – Injuries or patterns of injuries caused by another person.
- **Emotional Harm** – Lasting negative effects on a child's feelings or behavior caused by persistent mistreatment, such as shaming, belittling, or threats.
- **Sexual Harm** – Any sexual behavior or contact involving a child, including inappropriate talk, exposure to indecent images, or physical contact.
- **Spiritual Harm** – Misuse of spiritual authority to control, pressure, or manipulate.
- **Bullying** – Repeated, aggressive behavior (physical, verbal, social, or online) that targets a child and causes distress.
- **Grooming** – When someone builds trust with a child (and often their family) to cross boundaries and prepare for exploitation.
- **Neglect** – Failure to meet a child's basic needs such as food, housing, medical care, education, and supervision.
- **Exploitation** – Manipulating or coercing a child into harmful or illegal activity, often in exchange for money, gifts, or status.
- **Self-Harm** – When a child intentionally hurts themselves or engages in risky behaviors such as substance use.

We also recognize that harmful behavior can occur between students themselves, not only between adults and children.

Safeguarding Definitions

- **Safeguarding** : Protecting children and vulnerable adults so they can live and learn in safety.
- **Child**: Any person under 18. We also extend protection to students over 18 who are still enrolled full-time.
- **Vulnerable Adult** : Any person over 18 in an ACA program (e.g., English Camp, after-school) who cannot fully protect themselves from harm.
- **Safeguarding Concern** : Any observation, suspicion, or disclosure that raises worry about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable person.
- **Confidentiality** : Protecting the privacy and personal information of those involved in a safeguarding case.

Who Oversees Safeguarding at ACA?

Our Safeguarding Team is trained to handle all concerns with care, consistency, and a trauma-informed approach. The team includes:

- **Ellen Kujawski** – Director: ekujawski@arborchristian.org
- **Jasmin Herrera** – School Psychologist: jherrera@arborchristian.org
- **Vladimir Perroux** – Dean of Discipline & Discipleship: vperroux@arborchristian.org

Reporting Concerns

If there is ever a concern about the safety of a child, it must be reported immediately. Parents, staff, and volunteers can report in the following ways:

- Speak directly with a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Email: ekujawski@arborchristian.org or jherrera@arborchristian.org.
- Call the school office and ask to speak to a safeguarding lead.

It is not up to the person reporting to decide whether a situation qualifies as abuse or harm. The Safeguarding Team is responsible for evaluating and responding to all concerns.

If a Child Discloses Harm

If a child discloses harm, staff members are trained to:

- Stop and give the child their full attention.
- Listen calmly and without interruption.
- Avoid leading questions or pressing for unnecessary details.
- Remain calm and provide reassurance.

- Affirm the child's courage in speaking up.
- Avoid making promises they cannot keep (such as secrecy).
- Report immediately to the Safeguarding Team (within 24 hours).

Code of Conduct for Interactions with Children

ACA has a Code of Conduct to ensure safe, respectful, and appropriate relationships between adults and children, both in-person and online. The guiding principles are:

1. **Visibility**
   Interactions with children should take place in settings where other adults can see, such as with doors open or in group contexts.
2. **Accountability**
   Adults should make sure others know where they are and what they are doing. One-on-one time with a child should only happen with parental or supervisor approval.
3. **Balance of Power**
   Adults naturally hold authority over children; staff and volunteers must use this responsibly and in ways that help children feel safe.

Guidelines for Physical Contact

- Contact should be open and never secretive.
- It must be motivated by the child's needs, not the adult's.
- It should be age-appropriate and, ideally, child-initiated.
- Consent must be respected; any sign of resistance means stopping immediately.
- Corporal punishment is never acceptable.

Fairness and Consistency

- Treat all children and families with respect, regardless of background.
- Avoid favoritism or preferential treatment.

Respectful Communication

- Listen to children and respond to their concerns seriously.
- Use respectful language at all times—never shame, embarrass, or belittle.
- Ensure communication (in person, by phone, or online) protects children's dignity, privacy, and safety, and follows ACA's Social Media Use Policy.

If you have any concerns or questions about our safeguarding program or would like to raise a concern, whether current or historical, please contact our safeguarding team.

**All policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are reviewed yearly and are subject to change at the discretion of school administration.*

IX. Contact Information

Arbor Christian Academy

Calle Principal #34
Urb. Los Maestros
San Francisco de Macorís, RD

Office Phone: (809) 588-7925
WhatsApp: (849) 506-7925
Office Hours: 8am-4pm (Monday-Thursday), 8am-3:15pm (Friday)

School Director: Ellen Kujawski
EKujawski@arborchristian.org

School Psychologist: Jasmin Herrera
JHerrera@arborchristian.org

Dean of Discipline and Discipleship: Vladimir Perroux
VPerroux@arborchristian.org

School Operations Coordinator: Amanda Kardol
AKardol@arborchristian.org

Teacher Development & Strategic Planning
CGutierrez@arborchristian.org

Financial Administrator: Stephania Figueroa
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