

Lower School Student Handbook 2022-2023



It is our pleasure to welcome you to Athens Christian School. The faculty and staff are happy to have you as a part of the ACS family. We hope that this will be a successful and satisfying year. The pages of the Lower School Student Handbook are filled with important information regarding school policy and procedures. We suggest that parents/guardians and students review the contents together. We feel that the handbook will serve as a helpful reference for families as you seek to provide academic support at home. If you have questions that remain unanswered after reading the handbook, please call the school office. We feel that open as well as clear communication between school and home is important to the success of our educational program.

Athens Christian School was founded upon and has grown around the dedication to quality education in a Christian environment. It is the intent of the faculty to lead students toward becoming academically, socially, and spiritually prepared for life. We desire to work with you and your child in every way to make this possible. The school is an extension and reinforcement of the home. We desire to support the role of the home and family, and in return, we ask for your support of the school. We look forward to partnering with you this year to ensure student success.

Please review the handbook with your child, complete the information on the signature page, and return the last page to your child's homeroom teacher.

Attendance, Late Arrivals, Early Dismissals

Regular attendance in school accompanied by the responsibility to study and participate in school activities is essential to the learning process. Once a student arrives on campus, he/she is expected to remain and attend each class throughout the day. If a student is absent or tardy, he/she must bring a written note or a doctor's excuse upon returning to school.

School hours are from 7:55 a.m. until 2:40 p.m. daily and students may arrive as early as 7:15. Children may not arrive prior to 7:15 a.m. as supervision will not be provided. Ideally, students should arrive between 7:40 and 7:50 each morning, allowing time to become settled before class begins promptly at 7:55 a.m. **Anyone arriving after 7:55 a.m. must be checked in by a parent in the front office to avoid being counted absent.** Late arrivals create extra work and disruption for teachers and classes as well as for the student. Excessive tardiness may result in a parent conference.

Students are not permitted to remain on campus past 3:00 p.m. unless participating in a supervised activity, Homework Helper, or enrolled in the Extended Care program. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade who must remain later than 3:05 will be taken to extended care with a charge assessed for the service. We ask that parents attempt to schedule doctor and dental appointments after school or on school holidays. If it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early for an appointment, he/she must be dismissed from the front office. In the event an appointment is needed, your child's binder provides a schedule indicating the best time for students to be checked out. **Lower School students may not be released to siblings who remain on campus to participate in extracurricular activities and practices.** Parents must secure **adult supervision** accompanied with a permission slip otherwise the student will be sent to extended care.

Family vacations and trips are typically not considered excused absences. However, if your family plans to participate in a trip, please fill out the **Lower School Pre-Approved Absence form** located in the parent folder received at the beginning of the school year as early as possible. Upon approval from the Principal, classroom teachers will determine how work should be completed. It is the expectation that students will be prepared for all tests and projects upon return with regular work completed **PRIOR** to leaving.

Code of Conduct (Student and Parent)

In order for students to receive the maximum benefit from our program, **support from parents/guardians and cooperation from each student is expected.** Each faculty member at Athens Christian School accepts responsibility for maintaining discipline in his/her classroom. Student behavior should conform to the acceptable standards of conduct as established by the administration and teachers. The faculty and staff request **parental support** in helping maintain appropriate conduct in school, on campus, on school buses, and on trips. All behavior should reflect self-control, respect for teachers and administration, and consideration for the rights, feelings, and property of others, **which includes behavior exhibited on social media.** The lower school principal and teachers plan to acknowledge positive behavior regularly in the classroom and in chapel.

We look forward to working with each student and assisting him/her with any academic or behavioral challenges he/she may face. If sufficient warnings and interventions have proven ineffective and a child continues to display an uncooperative attitude, demonstrates bullying behavior, or if a student/parent is deemed by the administration to be a threat to the well-being of other students or faculty, he/she will be asked to withdraw from ACS. These decisions are very rare, and made only after prayerful deliberation and meeting with the parents/guardians as well as the student to determine the best course of action. Please keep in mind that these decisions must be made based on the well-being and benefit of all students.

By enrolling in ACS, and agreeing to abide by the terms of the **Code of Conduct**, each student and his/her parent/guardian recognize the Biblical mandate that every person should make a conscientious effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with others in private or within the Christian church (see Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 6:1-8). Therefore, the student along with his/ her parent/guardian, agree that any claim or dispute arising from or related to enrollment at ACS or participation in ACS activities shall be settled by biblically-based mediation.

Discipline

Grades K-5 will utilize the student binder to communicate behavioral strengths as well as challenge areas for each student in order to track progress. A list is included in the weekly test folder or binder to inform parents of behavioral struggles and assigned consequences which will translate to a citizenship grade at the end of the quarter. If a consistent behavioral struggle exists, our faculty will partner with you to make plans for progress. If you have concerns about your child's behavior, please contact your child's teacher to schedule a conference.

Dress Code

Our dress code is designed to provide many options for parents while requiring students to be mindful of appearance. Studies have shown that students who are required to comply with a dress code standard display an attitude suitable for learning and therefore typically perform better academically. Help prevent embarrassing or uncomfortable situations by **checking apparel regularly as children this age are continually growing. What may be suitable at one point in the school year may no longer be deemed appropriate.** If there are any questions about acceptable or unacceptable clothing, please contact the administration. In the event of a dress code concern, parents/guardians may be called to bring a change of clothing. Please be assured sensitive situations of this nature will be handled with utmost discretion so as not to embarrass the child. **At this time, kindergarten students will not be required to conform to the lower school dress code.**

Lower School girls may wear dresses, skirts, loose-fitting pants, **khaki, black, or grey uniform capri-length pants or uniform shorts that are no more than 3 inches above the knee.** Jeans and athletic pants may be worn with an ACS shirt or ACS t-shirt. Leggings may be worn as tights under dresses or skirts, which must come to the top of the knee. Sun dresses are to be worn over a shirt or with a sweater. Sleeveless shirts may be worn if straps are a minimum of 2" in width. Logos or writing on clothing must be in good taste and in harmony with Christian standards. Clothes must be in good repair, neat in appearance, and fit appropriately. Hair should be neat and natural in color. **Tennis shoes must be worn daily for PE and recess.**

Lower School boys may wear loose fitting pants, and **khaki, black, or grey uniform shorts** that are no more than 3 inches above the knee with collared shirts or tee shirts. Jeans and athletic pants may be worn with an ACS shirt or ACS t-shirt. Clothing should be neat, not oversized, and in good repair. Logos or writing on clothing must be in good taste and in harmony with Christian standards. Boys' hair is to be neatly combed and trimmed off the eyes, ears and collar without obstructing vision. Extreme styles such as a Mohawk or unnatural hair color are not permitted. **Tennis shoes must be worn daily for PE and recess.**

At various times throughout the school year, students may wear full athletic attire for school activities such a Field Day or field trips. On those days, athletic shorts should be no more than three inches above the knee. School spirit days and special activity dress code will be communicated via the weekly newsletters or by Lower School administration.

Electronic Devices

Gaming devices, Ipads, phones, or any similar device are permitted during the school day only when permission has been granted by a teacher for academic purposes or as a reward. Devices will be permissible under specified guidelines during some co-curricular and extracurricular activities and before the school day begins, after which time devices should be placed in the student book bag for the remainder of the day. **All cell phones and watches must be turned off and remain in the backpack during school hours, extended care hours, and on school buses, unless permission is given by the supervising adult.** Should parents need to contact a child during regular school hours, please call the front office. Upon arrival to campus, students may not use devices to call without the consent of the supervising adult. ACS is not responsible for lost or stolen electronics.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are encouraged if students are able to **manage grade-level course work** while continuing to receive adequate rest. It is important for students choosing to participate in extracurricular activities to maintain passing grades as well as good behavior. Students may not attend practice for school events if they have been absent the day of practice. Participants may be asked to withdraw from athletic teams or fine arts groups due to poor grades or behavioral challenges.

Field Trips

Properly supervised and planned educational field trips are an important part of our instructional program. Class and award trips are special times for the children, teachers, and peers to bond. Trips are chaperoned by teachers, school staff, and parents/guardians when possible. **In order to participate in class trips, student citizenship must be in good standing up to the time of the trip and all school accounts must be current.** Refunds are at the discretion of the finance office and on a case-by-case basis as most trips are paid in full at the time of reservation.

Health Requirements

Immunizations: "No Shots, No School." All students entering Athens Christian School for the first time are required to provide proof of immunizations as required by the laws of the State of Georgia. Sick students should follow the "Sick Policy" guidelines located in the parent folder.

Homework

Homework is very important, and it should be completed daily to avoid impeding academic progress. However, if your child is sick or a family emergency occurs and he/she cannot complete homework, please send a note explaining the surrounding circumstances. Failure to remember materials or have student notebook signed is not considered a valid excuse. Grades K - 5 will have a weekly homework assignment sheet sent each Monday in the student binder. To help maintain open communication with your child's teacher, please check for assignments and initial his/her student binder each day, indicating completion of assignments.

The homework time will vary according to the grade, but it should not take the student more than one hour of steady work to complete the homework. If it is taking your child a longer period of time, please set up a conference with the teacher through the office. Homework Helper and tutoring services are available upon request.

In the event your child is absent from school in excess of **two days** and needs his/her assignments, please call the school office in the morning. The homeroom teacher will be notified and will prepare the materials to be picked up later in the day from the front office or by another student.

Inclement Weather

When severe weather creates hazardous conditions, the regular school schedule may be canceled to ensure student safety. For more information, check the school website at www.athenschristianschool.org, social media, onlineathens.com, and/or the following TV stations: Atlanta channels 2, 5, 11, and 46. Announcements are typically broadcast between 6:00 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. When possible, notification will be sent through FACTS email.

Library

All library books are due on the date stamped on the back of the book and fines will be assessed on late books. All books taken out of the school library must be checked out at the librarian's desk. Students who check out books will be responsible for damage or loss of books. **A corresponding fee for lost books or late returns will be added to the student FACTS account.**

Lost and Found

The school "lost and found" is located in the library with the exception of small, more valuable items such as jewelry, purses, or reading glasses, which will be located in the front office. Due to limited space, lost and found items cannot be kept for a long period of time. Unclaimed items are turned over to charitable organizations in the community.

Materials

Students are provided with necessary school supplies once the \$50 school supply fee is paid. Teachers will determine supplies adequate for and specific to the class curriculum. If a student is continually losing or not taking proper care of supplies, **parents/guardians may be asked to replace particular items.** Please put names on all items brought to school including backpacks, coats and lunch boxes.

Medication

When possible, prescribed medication should be dispensed at home. In the event medication must be given at school, it must be accompanied with written authorization from a parent/guardian to include specific instructions regarding time and dosage.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We welcome your request for a conference any time you feel one is needed. Please email, send a Remind message, or call the school office at (706) 549-7586 to arrange a conference with your child's teacher. Additionally, feel free to contact your child's teacher through email or a note in the student binder. Teacher email addresses are located on the school web site, www.athenschristianschool.org. **We ask for all conferences to be prearranged, eliminating the need for parents to go directly to the child's classroom,** as this is an extremely busy time of day and attention must be focused on the students. Teachers are always happy to accommodate a parent meeting to discuss both challenges and successes of the student.

Parties

Throughout the year, you may be requested to send treats for holiday class parties and school events. This is not required, and if it presents a problem, please make the teacher aware. We love to celebrate student birthdays with a special snack during lunch or snack time. To do so, email the teacher a few days in advance to ensure there are no conflicts. You may choose to come to the class at the designated time with treats, send them with a student, or deliver them to the front office prior to the celebration. Please limit treats to one item for students to eat, remembering to provide enough for each child in the homeroom, taking into consideration allergies represented among students in the class. **Teachers will not be allowed to disperse personal party invitations unless the entire class is invited nor are they permitted to share class parental contact information.**

Physical Education

Physical education is an integral part of the instructional program and therefore all children will be required to participate. In the event a student is sick or sustains an injury outside of school, a parent note excusing the student from PE for up to two days will be satisfactory. Students needing to be excused from PE more than two days will require a doctor's note. **All students are to wear tennis shoes for P.E. and recess as stipulated in the dress code.**

Sales

With the exception of school-sponsored projects, students are not to advertise or sell items on the school campus.

Snacks

Lower School students may bring fruit, vegetable sticks, or other **healthy snacks** for break time. **Students will not be allowed to eat/drink sugary treats, snack cakes, soft drinks or candy during snack time unless it is supplied for a birthday celebration.** Due to time limitations, no snacks are to be purchased from the machines during break time.

Student Performance and Evaluation

Grades are posted online weekly through the school's Renweb system. Additionally, test folders will be sent home most Tuesdays during the nine weeks. Please review the tests, sign the folder, and return the papers with the folder the following day. Report cards will be sent home at the end of each nine weeks.

A student achieves Honor Roll when his/her report card grades are all A's and/or B's with no N or U in areas of Citizenship or Independent Learning. A student achieves Headmaster's List when his/her report card grades consist of all A's with no N or U grades in areas of Citizenship and Independent Learning. Honor Roll and Headmaster's Lists include only eligible students in grades one through twelve.

Textbooks

Some textbooks are furnished to your child by the school on a loan basis and should be treated as borrowed property. **Students must pay for the loss of or damage to textbooks.** Students utilizing hardcover books that are non-consumable may need to cover books. This should be done the first week of school with appropriate paper as directed by the homeroom teacher. Please refrain from covering books with adhesive covers. All ACS students in grades two through five will need a **New King James or a King James Bible for Bible class.** Weekly Bible verses will be typed and placed in the student notebook in the version the teacher chooses (NKJV or KJV) so testing will remain consistent.

Transportation and Traffic Safety

Please send a note to the teacher on the first day of school detailing how your student will normally be going home. If a student is planning to leave school in any way that is not his/her normal way, we must have a note from his/her parents/guardians. **In the event a student plans to go home with another student, a dated note must be provided from both parents. In the event of a last minute change, we can only guarantee accommodation if received by 2:00 p.m. Please do not call the office after this time for last minute changes.**

PLEASE HELP US PREVENT THE RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY BY CAREFULLY ADHERING TO THE FOLLOWING RULES OF TRAFFIC SAFETY:

Car Riders

Please display car tags in a visible location. All car-riding students should be dropped off and picked up in the car line in front of the kindergarten building or the main academic building. Refrain from putting your child in a hazardous situation by dropping him/her off in an unauthorized or unsupervised area. **When picking up or discharging a child, please allow your child to enter or exit the right-hand door of your vehicle. Other cars pass on the left of the car line,** presenting a very dangerous situation when children are asked to come around to the left side of the car line. **DO NOT stop to pick up or discharge a child until you have driven as far up the car line as possible and directly behind the car ahead of you as directed by Safety Patrols.** This allows others access to pick-up area and helps the car line move along more efficiently.

Patrols will be on duty every morning and afternoon to assist students as they arrive, depart, and to direct traffic. Please acknowledge and cooperate with all school safety patrols. Advise grandparents or other authorized persons with whom your child will be riding of these rules. **For those arriving early to afternoon carline, vehicles must remain at the corner steps of the main gymnasium until all buses have pulled up to the front of the main office. At that time, cars may proceed forward in the order arrived. There is no walk-up option for student pick-up.** Parents must arrive prior to 2:40 for necessary appointments otherwise students must wait in the car-rider line.

Bus Riders

If your child rides the bus, the teacher will help him/her find the correct bus in the afternoon. **Arrive to bus stops in a timely manner as bus drivers are on a tight schedule and therefore unable to wait for your child or stop the bus in an unauthorized location.** In the event you miss the bus stop, please drive to the next stop.

A fee of \$1 per minute will be assessed for any student not picked up at the scheduled time at the last afternoon stop.

If you are unable to meet the bus on time, please communicate with the bus driver the name of anyone having permission to retrieve your child. Encourage your child to cooperate with the bus driver and all bus patrols regardless of age. Any distractions on the part of the students could endanger everyone on the bus. Students are expected to sit properly in their seats and talk quietly with others around them. They are not permitted to move around on the bus when it is moving. **Eating or drinking is not permitted on the bus so please refrain from sending food to be eaten during the ride to and from school.** Talk with your child about bus behavior and stress the importance of cooperating with the driver and patrols. Continued behavior problems on the bus will result in loss of bus-riding privileges.

Visits to Campus

For security reasons, we ask **ALL** visitors to report to the school office. **THIS INCLUDES EARLY MORNING AS WELL AS AFTERNOON VISITS** and applies to visitors regardless of grade level. Plan to leave your child at the front entrance each day beginning with the first day of school or by the second week for students in kindergarten and first grade. Student patrols will be on duty to assist as needed. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend parties, events, special chapels and presentations. However, due to space limitations and time constraints, please limit lunch visitations to special occasions and birthdays when given **prior teacher approval.**

Volunteers

ACS loves volunteers! Each school year, parents and grandparents are needed in various areas of service such as fundraising, Book Fairs, Daughter's First Date Night, Mother-Son Christmas event, Teacher Appreciation, and an array of other school as well as community projects. Parents/guardians who work full time might choose to volunteer by sending food donations or taking on a home project, while those with a more flexible schedule are able to serve in some capacity on campus. Either way, **WE NEED YOU!**

Although classroom teachers will communicate volunteer opportunities for parties, reading, crafts, or career-related speaking, many volunteers will also be needed for larger events. To volunteer for events, clearly print your name, phone number, and email address followed by areas you wish to serve on the clipboard provided in your child's homeroom. You will then receive a follow up email with instructions for completing a back-ground check (on-campus volunteers only) as well as sign-up genius information.

Help your child be the best they can be!

- Start each day right; a calm beginning at home makes the school day much better.
- Encourage your child to have a good breakfast.
- Make certain that your child sleeps at least eight hours each night.
- Praise your child each day for something he/she has done.
- Designate a special place for school materials as they are brought home each day.
- Make sure all materials to be returned are signed (if needed) and put back in your child's book bag before going to bed to ensure a less stressful morning and more pleasant day.
- Laugh and talk with your child about school experiences and listen attentively to what is said about your child's school day.
- Prioritize attendance, ensuring your child arrives on time (ten minutes before school starts allows your child time to prepare for the day). If your child is ill, home is the best place; otherwise, your child needs to be in attendance every day.
- Keep the lines of communication open between you and your child's teacher. Remember, you are on the same team!
- Inform the teacher of any family situation that could potentially influence your child's behavior.
- Encourage reading for fun!
- Work at home with skills taught at school.