

Parent Student Handbook

2023-2024



“Climbing Toward College & Career Readiness”



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Inspiring Collaboration, Innovation, & Empowerments





Let's work together
to make a difference
for our
students!

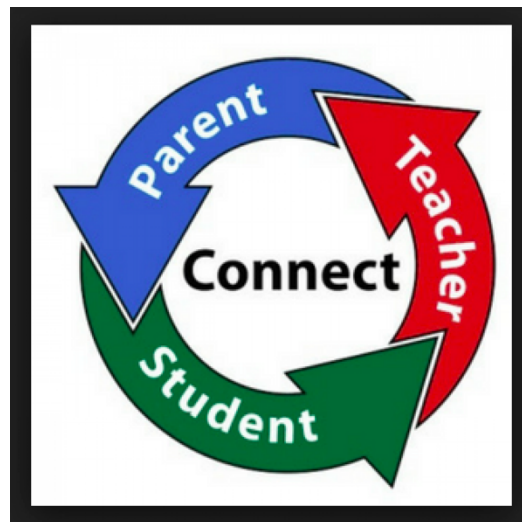


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MESSAGE FROM ARARAT CHARTER SCHOOL

Dear Ararat Charter School Parents and Students,

We would like to welcome back all new and returning Ararat Charter School (“ACS” or the “Charter School”) families! We are looking forward to working together with you to ensure another successful school year. Our efforts will be focused on teaching students the essential 21st century skills needed to be college and career ready. We also understand the importance of teaching students to think critically and teaching students’ problem-solving skills so they are successful at school and life.

The Parent/Student Handbook offers information about school policies and procedures to help parents and students have a successful school year. Our school staff is readily available should you have any questions pertaining to this parent handbook.

Our teachers will continue focusing on teaching students the California state standards with an emphasis on how to apply them in a real-world setting. Students in K-5 will be assessed throughout the school year with our program assessments. Teachers will be using student data to drive instruction to meet the needs of every student. Students in grades 3-5 will take the CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress). This state test assesses students understanding of the California state Standards in ELA and Math. This test is administered online and requires students to have typing skills to respond to questions in ELA and Math. ACS works diligently throughout the year so that students have the necessary skills needed to take the test. More information will be forthcoming on how you can help prepare your child for the test. We would like to continue to collaborate with all ACS families to form strong partnerships with parents and to work together to meet the needs of all students.



Included, are a list of the school’s policies, procedures, and legal mandates that must be followed to comply with District, State, and Federal laws. Please read this handbook carefully as it contains very important information that will answer many of your questions on a variety of topics.

Sincerely,
ACS

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

- **Ms. Shakeh Avakian** – chairperson@araratcharterschool.com
Board Chairperson, Retired School Psychologist
- **Ms. Rosemarie Shamieh** - rshamieh@araratcharterschool.com
Board Secretary, Associate Professor
- **Dr. Giuliana Velarde** – gvelarde@araratcharterschool.com
Board Member, School Counselor
- **Mr. Karim Merzian** – kmerzian@araratcharterschool.com
Board Treasurer, CFO of Private Schools
- **Mr. Vache Shirvanian** – vshirvanian@araratcharterschool.com
Board Co-Treasurer, Founder, and Managing Partner of a Private Entity
- **Ms. Nayri Horvat** – nhorvat@araratcharterschool.com
Board Member, COO of a TPA Company



ACS Campus 1 (Sylmar)

Regular School Days – 8:00am – 3:10pm

Mindful Mondays – 8:00am – 1:40pm

ACS Campus 2 (Erwin)

Regular School Days - 7:50am – 3:00pm

Mindful Mondays - 7:50am – 1:30pm



The vision of ACS is for all students to be high-achieving, lifelong learners and thinkers, who will become productive, thoughtful, and responsible world citizens with an appreciation for cultural diversity.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN “EDUCATED PERSON” IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

An “educated person” in the 21st century is a lifelong learner who has developed competence, self-motivation, confidence, and responsibility.

The Academic Attributes of an Educated Person in The 21st Century Include:

- Knowledge of and ability to demonstrate solid skills in reading, writing and speaking;
- A core knowledge that includes cultural, mathematical and scientific literacy;

- Understanding of the scientific process;
- Knowledge of history;
- Ability to think critically, creatively, analytically, and logically;
- Ability to use technology as a tool and understanding its uses;
- Ability to gather and organize information;
- Understanding of the mathematical process including application;
- Ability to critically assess data;
- Ability to appreciate, enjoy and respect the visual and performing arts;
- An understanding of the political process.

The Personal Attributes of an Educated Person in the 21st Century Include:

- Concentration, focus, and perseverance;
- Ability to work cooperatively with others;
- Adaptability;
- A strong sense of connection to and responsibility for the community;
- Valuing relationships, respect for others and for authority;
- Ability to honor differences, including cultural, ideological, and philosophical;
- Resourcefulness, confidence, and motivation;
- Enthusiasm, a sense of wonder and curiosity;
- A passion for lifelong learning;
- Ability to communicate with respect and compassion;
- A strong social conscience;
- Celebrates diversity;
- A global perspective;
- Ability to think logically, make informed evaluations, and problem solve



ACS is committed to educating students to their maximum potential in an environment that actively engages students in rigorous and relevant programs, promotes academic excellence, and values cultural and linguistic diversity and creative expression. Developing and nurturing the whole child is the primary objective of all ACS programs.

Our students will....

- Achieve academic excellence in an environment that emphasizes critical thinking, self-inquiry, and collaboration.
- Engage in Fine Arts programs, such as visual and performing arts.
- Acquire literacy in information technology.
- Demonstrate positive attitudes and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- Act with a sense of civic responsibility and demonstrate social consciousness.
- Practice good habits of personal fitness and well-being.



SPECIFIC SKILLS AND ANNUAL MEASURABLE OUTCOMES (AMO):

ACS (ACS) will have a comprehensive standards-based assessment program. Student achievement will be assessed using formative assessments, Standards based assessments, and SBAC-CAASPP. Based on aggregate of multiple measures, we will use the summative assessment data to codify the level of mastery of students in the four subject areas: Language Arts, math, science and social studies. The data will also be used to make instructional decisions, allocate resources, and plan for acceleration and interventions.



- Collaboration with all stakeholders of the school community
- Innovation of instructional practices to best meet the needs of all students
- Empowering Students Staff and Parents

ACS's Professional Community has...

- Compelling purpose, shared standards, and academic focus
- Collective efficiency and shared responsibility for students learning
- Collaborative culture
- Communal application of effective teaching practices and de-privatized practice
- Relational trust in one another, in students and parents
- Individual and group learning based on ongoing assessment and feedback

RE-ENROLLMENT OF CURRENT STUDENTS

The official School Intent to Re-enroll forms will be sent home in February or March of each year. **Please ensure that forms are sent back to our office indicating that you are planning to return for the following school year.** In addition, if your child has a sibling who will be attending ACS, please ensure that you indicate this on your School Intent to Return Form. **If you fail to return your School Intent to Enroll Form by the specified due date, your child's space will not be guaranteed and will be subject to space availability and or the Annual Public Lottery result.**

REQUIREMENTS FOR NEWLY ENROLLED STUDENTS



Submit required enrollment documents

Once an offer has been extended, all parents of newly enrolled students are asked to satisfy certain requirements before their child can be formally enrolled in ACS. If you accept an offer of enrollment, you will be asked to submit enrollment paperwork to ACS by the given deadline.

Comply with enrollment requirements by the submission deadline.

The deadline for providing required documents varies depending on when your child receives his or her enrollment offer. The date will be given to you when the offer to enroll is extended. If we do not receive all required paperwork by the specified deadlines, your child's enrollment will be withdrawn, and their space will be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

Attend the New Parent Orientation Session (Recommended)

This orientation will give you an opportunity to meet school officials as well as members of the school. You will be given an overview of our two campuses and learn about how the school is governed. We will also review key policies, and major school events and provide an opportunity for you to get answers to your questions during a formal Q&A session.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

State Board of Education Policy #89-01

A critical dimension of effective schooling is parent involvement. Research has shown conclusively that parent involvement at home and in their children's education improves student achievement.

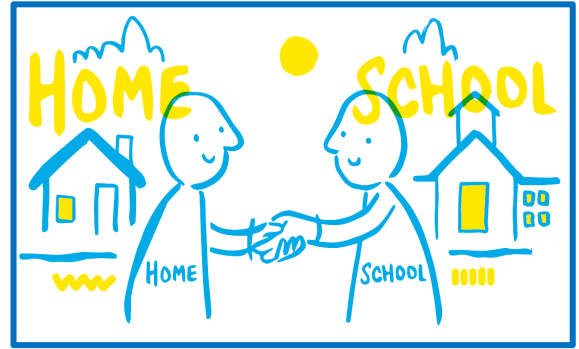
Important Facts:

1. Families provide the primary education environment.
2. Parent involvement improves student achievement.
3. Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, supportive, long-lasting, and well-planned.
4. The benefits of parent involvement are not limited to early childhood or the elementary level; there are continuing positive effects through high school.
5. Involving parents in supporting their children's education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the schools. The extent of parent involvement in a child's education is more important to student success than family income or education.
6. We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another; families and schools need to collaborate to help children adjust to the school environment.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

ACS has adopted a parent involvement policy and plan.

The Charter School aims to provide all students in our school significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps while abiding by guidelines within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (“ESEA”). The Charter School staff recognizes a partnership with families is essential to meet this goal. Our Parent and Family Engagement Policy leverages and promotes active involvement of all families as partners with schools to ensure student success. A copy of the Charter School’s complete Policy is available upon request in the main office.



This policy and the plan to implement it have been developed jointly and in agreement with and will be distributed to all parents. ACS shall convene an annual meeting at a time that is convenient for parents, to which all parents are invited and encouraged to attend. At this meeting, parents will be informed of the current Parental Involvement Policy and any possible changes that need to be addressed.

- ACS will notify parents of the Parent Involvement Policy, their rights under Title I, and how they could be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of the school plan, Parental Involvement Policy, and the Parent-Teacher-School Compact in the school.
- ACS will be flexible as to meeting times to encourage broad parent involvement.
- ACS will hold monthly School Leadership meetings and Parent Involvement meetings and, through parent surveys, will involve parents in planning reviews and improvement of programs.
- ACS, through regular and consistent communication through newsletters, phone calls, biannual parent conferences, Back-to-School night, and Open House, will provide parents with timely information regarding curriculum, assessments, and expectations for student achievement.
- ACS will review and revise annually the Parent Involvement Policy based on parent survey data.

The complete Policy is available for review in the main office.

COMPACT FOR STUDENTS HIGH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- ACS has developed jointly with parents a school-parent compact that describes the school’s, students’, parents’, and teachers’ shared responsibilities to support student academic achievement. The compact shall be reviewed annually and modified as needed.
- ACS teachers will provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that will enable students to meet the State’s academic expectations.
- ACS will include in their compact for parents a promise that they will monitor homework, attendance, and communication with teachers as well as provide a quiet place for schoolwork to be completed.
- ACS will provide two parent-teacher conferences yearly as well as communication throughout the year.
- ACS students will work hard to do their best in school. Students will read, understand, sign, and follow the Parent-Teacher-School Compact. Students will read, understand, sign, and follow the School Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring, to the extent possible, information sent home is in a language and form parents can understand. For parents whose English is a second language, ACS will provide information in their primary language when requested. For parents who are visually impaired, provide information in Braille or in large print when requested.
- There will be ongoing communication between parents and teachers through parent/teacher conferences, at which time the learning compact will be discussed; progress reports to parents; and reasonable access to staff, observation of classroom activities, and opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class.

Building Capacity for Involvement

- ACS will have periodic meetings to assist parents in understanding topics such as content and achievement standards, state/local assessments, Title I requirements, how to monitor their child's progress, and work with educators to improve the achievement of their child.
- ACS will provide materials and grade level-specific training to help parents work with their children by holding parent workshops covering Literacy, Math, and English Language Development.
- ACS will coordinate and integrate parent involvement activities that encourage and support fully participating in the education of their child by coordinating and integrating, as appropriate, parent involvement programs/activities with public preschool programs.
- ACS will ensure that information and reports are sent to parents in a format and language that parents understand.
- ACS will provide teachers and staff members with strategies and techniques to work together with parents to develop a partnership in education.
- ACS will support parents with activities that foster their involvement in the school by involving parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators; providing necessary literacy training for parents; training parents to enhance the involvement of other parents; to maximize parental involvement and participation in their children's education.

ACCESSIBILITY

ACS will, to the extent possible, provide opportunities for participation by parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, parents who qualify for Title I services, parents of traveling students, and migratory parents. This includes providing information and school reports in a format and, when possible, in a language parents understand.

RESTITUTION OF LOST OR DAMAGED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

As part of their education, students are provided with materials and equipment, including textbooks and devices to assist with instruction. In order to ensure the School maintains materials so all students have access, certain procedures are in place. Students should handle instructional materials, library books, devices, and other school property with care. The following are ways to help the student understand this responsibility:

- Model careful handling of instructional materials, library books, devices, and other school property;
- Help students find a safe place to keep books during the borrowing period;
- Inform students that vandalism is not only a crime, but parents/legal guardians may be held financially responsible for the damage.

Parents/legal guardians should report damage to school property to the school as soon as possible. If a student's device is damaged, an investigation will take place to determine the details of the incident. The student will be provided a replacement upon return of the damaged property to ensure access. If the student willfully damages a device or textbooks by cutting, defacing, or otherwise injuring the school property, under the Civil Code and Education Code as well as the School's policy, parents/legal guardians are liable for damage to school property, including textbooks and/or devices. Civil Code Section 1714.1 provides that any act of willful misconduct of a minor that results in any injury to the property or person of another shall be the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian having custody and control of the minor for all purposes of civil damages and the parent/legal guardian having custody and control shall be jointly and severally liable with the minor for any damages resulting from the willful misconduct not to exceed \$25,000, in addition to liability otherwise imposed by law. California EC Section 48904(a)(1) states that a parent/legal guardian of a minor is liable to a school for all property loaned to and failed to be returned or willfully damaged by a minor. The liability shall not exceed \$20,900 as of January 1, 2020, adjusted annually for inflation per EC Section 48904(a)(2). Upon receiving notification, the parent/legal guardian must pay the outstanding obligation. If the parent/legal guardian does not pay the outstanding debt, a small claims action may be filed by the Charter School against the parent/legal guardian. If the parent/legal guardian is unable to pay the judgment, the parent/legal guardian may request an owner-debtor hearing. This is part of the law because these items are purchased with public funds. However, please see the important points.

The Charter School shall not take negative action against a student or former student because of a debt owed to the school, including but not limited to all of the following in cases that do not involve willful damage or loss:

1. Denying full credit for any assignments for a class;
2. Denying full and equal participation in classroom activity;
3. Denying access to on-campus educational facilities, including, but not limited to, the library;
4. Denying or withholding grades or transcripts;
5. Denying or withholding a diploma;
6. Limiting or barring participation in an extracurricular activity, club, or sport;
7. Limiting or excluding from participation in an educational activity, field trip, or school ceremony.

If the school finds that school property is damaged as a result of willful acts, the school may:

1. Offer the parent/legal guardian and the student alternatives to repayment with money. Alternatives to repayment must be approved by the parent/legal guardian. Any alternatives that include service or work in exchange for repayment shall comply with all provisions of the Labor Code, including those sections relating to youth employment;
2. Provide an itemized invoice for the amount owed by the parent/legal guardian;
3. A payment plan may be established, and a receipt will be provided after each payment.

Examples of service or work in exchange for repayment may include library service, completing a service-learning project, assignment, or research report to name a few.

LIBRARY

For success in reading, students need many opportunities to interact with good books by reading them and by hearing them read aloud both at school and at home. It is for that reason that our school library media center policy permits **ALL** students to take their borrowed books home.

We will discuss the meaning of responsibility with your child. We will need help in making sure that the books are kept in good condition and are returned to the school library media center on time. **Parents will be expected to pay the replacement price for any lost or damaged books. (California Education Code section 48904).**



The following are ways to help your student assume this responsibility:

1. Model careful handling of library books.
2. Help your child to find a safe place to keep books during the borrowing period.
3. Help your child to remember to return the books on time.

While the books are in your home, we hope that you will:

1. Read them aloud to your child.
2. Have your child read aloud to you.
3. Have your child read silently.

Giving all students access to library media resources at school and at home is one way that we hope to improve your child's opportunity for academic success.

TRAFFIC SAFETY RULES



Traffic congestion during morning drop-off and afternoon dismissal can be extremely difficult at times. Please review the following drop-off and pick-up procedures carefully. To continue to provide a safe environment for all students, please note the following guidelines:

- ◆ NO PARKING is allowed in this Loading Zone during drop-off and dismissal times.
- ◆ Have children ready to exit your car with all belongings; please do not have items in the trunk of your car.
- ◆ Please pull all the way forward in front of the gate before allowing your child to exit the car.
- ◆ PLEASE ALWAYS USE the CROSSWALK at the intersections.
- ◆ For your safety and the safety of your child, NEVER "JAY-WALK."
- ◆ PLEASE NEVER double-park in the flow of traffic to allow your child to exit the car and walk between parked cars. This is extremely dangerous and puts the life of your child at risk!
- ◆ Please do not use the Staff Parking Lot or neighbors' driveways as a student drop-off and pick-up area.
- ◆ Please do not make a U-Turn in front of the school to leave or enter the valet lane.

Thank you for obeying our traffic rules. Your cooperation ensures the safety of every child at ACS and helps to make our valet lane a success!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

*Students should be picked up **no later than 3:10 pm for ACS 1 and 3:00 pm for ACS2 unless they are enrolled in the APEX program.** **If you are unable to arrange pick-up by that time personally, you should make other childcare arrangements.***

Instructional Program

ACADEMIC APPROACH

ACS believes that each and every child can be academically successful and that each and every student is unique. ACS believes that learning best occurs in self-contained classrooms led by teachers with the skills and knowledge of a variety of teaching techniques and methods and specialized materials that can meet the instructional needs of every student. ACS also believes in the use of meaningful assessment methods to prescribe the best teaching strategies for each individual student.

Although there is no assurance that each child will master every instructional area, a major effort will be made to ensure maximum understanding and mastery. We believe that the potential for learning best occurs in environments that include meaningful content with choices for learning: adequate time, space, and materials; immediate and meaningful feedback and careful monitoring of progress; enriched environment, and collaborative learning opportunities.

The educational philosophy at ACS synthesizes the constructive approach with elements from the following schools of thought: Developmental Stages as defined by Jean Piaget, Behaviorist orientations to learning, Multiple Intelligence developed by Howard Gardner, Jerome Bruner, Bloom's Model of critical thinking (Taxonomy), Accelerated School's model developed by Levin and colleagues at Stanford, and Problem-Based learning.

Constructivism views learning as a process in which the learner actively constructs or builds new ideas or concepts based upon current and past knowledge. Constructivism has two major elements: 1) cognitive constructivism, which is about how the individual learner understands things, is proposed by Jean Piaget. In terms of developmental stages, Piaget claims that learning is dependent on the developmental stages of the individual. Elementary level students, who are at the concrete level of operations, learn by being engaged in hands-on activities and using models. Jean Piaget suggested that through process of accommodation and assimilation, individuals internalize knowledge and construct new knowledge from their experiences; and 2) social constructivism emphasizes how meaning and understanding grow out of social encounters (Vygotsky). A significant basis for constructivism was laid down by Vygotsky in his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) claiming that students do best when they are working in collaboration with adults.

Benefits of constructive approaches include: 1) children learn more and enjoy learning; 2) education works best when it concentrates on thinking and understanding; 3) constructivist learning is transferable; 4) constructivism gives students ownership of what they are learning; 5) by grouping learning activists in an authentic, real-world context, constructivism stimulates and engages students; and 6) constructivism promotes social and communication skills.

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

California's New State-Wide Testing System

The Charter School shall annually administer required state testing to the applicable grades (e.g., the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress ["CAASPP"].) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a parent's, or guardian's written request to Charter School officials to excuse their child from any or all parts of the CAASPP shall be granted. Upon request, parents have a right to information on the level of achievement of their student on every State academic assessment administered to the student.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT FOR CALIFORNIA (ELPAC)

ACS values your child's cultural and language assets and offers appropriate instructional program options that best meets your child's educational needs. To better serve the instructional needs of students who are not fluent English speakers, ACS shall



identify students' English proficiency levels. Parents and school staff work together to determine the languages that families and students speak at home using the Home Language Survey. Based on responses on the Home Language Survey, state law requires the public schools to assess the English language proficiency of new enrollees who speak a language other than English using the Initial ELPAC assessment.

This assessment must be administered within the first 30 calendar days of enrollment. Schools will notify you of this requirement with a parent letter.

To measure student progress in learning English, all continuously enrolled English Learners will be administered the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) Summative in the Spring until the reclassification criteria is met. Additional information can be found at www.elpac.org.

The Charter School will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners as they pertain to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, English Learners and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. The Charter School will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding English Learners and the rights of students and parents.

PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST

The State Board of Education (SBE) designated the FITNESSGRAM® as the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) for students in California public schools. The FITNESSGRAM® is a comprehensive, health-related physical fitness battery developed by The Cooper Institute. The primary goal of the FITNESSGRAM® is to assist students in establishing lifetime habits of regular physical activity.

Public school students in grades five, seven, and nine are required to take the PFT, whether or not they are enrolled in a physical education class or participate in a block schedule.

The PFT provides information that can be used by (1) students to assess and plan personal fitness programs; (2) teachers to design the curriculum for physical education programs; and (3) parents and guardians to understand their children's fitness levels. This program also provides results that are used to monitor changes in the physical fitness of California students. By law (Education Code Section 60800), all school districts in California are required to administer the PFT annually to all students in grades five, seven, and nine.

The FITNESSGRAM® is composed of the following six fitness areas, with several test options provided for most areas:

Aerobic Capacity

- PACER (Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run)
- One-Mile Run
- Walk Test (only for ages 13 or older)

Abdominal Strength and Endurance

- Curl-Up

Upper Body Strength and Endurance

- Push-Up
- Modified Pull-Up
- Flexed-Arm Hang

Body Composition

- Skinfold Measurements
- Body Mass Index
- Bioelectric Impedance Analyzer



Trunk Extensor Strength and Flexibility

- Trunk Lift

Flexibility

- Back-Saver Sit and Reach
- Shoulder Stretch

The FITNESSGRAM® uses objective criteria to evaluate performance for each fitness area (e.g., body composition, abdominal strength, and endurance). The Cooper Institute established these criteria using current research and expert opinions. These criteria represent a level of fitness that offers some protection against the diseases associated with physical inactivity.

SURVEYS ABOUT PERSONAL BELIEFS

Unless the student's parent/guardian gives written permission, a student will not be given any test, questionnaire, survey, or examination containing any questions about the student's or the student's parents or guardians' personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, or religion.

TEACHER QUALIFICATION INFORMATION

As the Charter School receives Title I federal funds through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA"), as reauthorized and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA"), all parents/guardians of students attending the Charter School may request information regarding the professional qualifications of classroom teachers and/or paraprofessionals, including at a minimum:

1. Whether the student's teacher:
 - a. Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
 - b. Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
 - c. Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Upon request, the Charter School will provide the information to the parents/guardians in a timely manner. Parents/guardians may contact the school by emailing to info@araratcharterschool.com



PARENTS

The Information You Need!

Programs and Procedures

ATTENDANCE

Every student is expected to attend school for a full day every day, unless there is valid justification for the absence. The goal for all students is to have 96% attendance or higher, which means no more than seven absences all year long.

Absences, excused and unexcused, impact a student's academic achievement. Please send your child to school daily unless the absence is truly unavoidable. Examples of UNEXCUSED absences include:

- Running errands for the family
- Babysitting
- Vacations or trips
- Weather Conditions
- Transportation problems

School attendance is vital to student achievement. Students who develop patterns of good attendance are much more likely to be successful both academically and socially. The school is required to update attendance data and records during the current school year. Corrections and updates to attendance data and records are not allowed after the school year has closed. **It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide documentation to verify an absence within ten (10) days after the student returns to school to prevent absences from being recorded as non-compliant.** Absences include coming to class 30 or more minutes late and missing class periods. Upon learning from a parent/guardian the reason(s) for a student's absence, the following staff may verify the validity of an absence excuse (CA Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 421):

- A school or public health nurse
- A physician
- A principal
- A teacher
- Any other qualified employee of a school assigned to make such verification

School staff authorized to verify absence excuses may, when presented with facts that call into question the authenticity of the excuse, request additional information in support of the absence excuse and/or may refuse to excuse the absence.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies, and justifiable personal reasons, as required by law or permitted under this Attendance Policy.

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness.
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
3. Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments

4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the student's immediate family:
 - a. Excused absence in this instance shall be limited to one (1) day if the service is conducted in California or three (3) days if the service is conducted out of state.
 - b. "Immediate family" shall be defined as parent or guardian, grandparent, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister, or any other relative living in the student's household.
5. Participation in religious instruction or exercises as follows:
 - a. The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four (4) school days per month.
6. For the purposes of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.
7. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child. (The school does not require a note from the doctor for this excusal).
8. To permit the student to spend time with an immediate family member who is an active-duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Charter School.
9. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Election Code section 12302.
10. Attendance at the student's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
11. Authorized parental leave for a pregnant or parenting student for up to eight (8) weeks, which may be extended if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician.
12. Authorized at the discretion of the Principal or designee, based on the facts of the student's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse.
13. A student who holds a work permit to work for a period of not more than five (5) consecutive days in the entertainment or allied industries shall be excused from school during the period that the student is working in the entertainment or allied industry for a maximum of up to five (5) absences per school year subject to the requirements of Education Code section 48225.5.
14. In order to participate with a not-for-profit performing arts organization in a performance for a public-school student audience for a maximum of up to five (5) days per school year provided the student's parent or guardian provides a written note to the school authorities explaining the reason for the student's absence.
15. For the following justifiable personal reasons for a maximum of five (5) school days per school year, upon advance written request by the student's parent or guardian and approval by the Principal or designee pursuant to uniform standards:
 - a. Appearance in court.
 - b. Observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion.

Upon receiving appropriate verification that an absence occurred due to one of the reasons listed above, the school will consider the absence to be excused. A pupil absent from school for the above excused reasons shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can reasonably be provided and, upon satisfactory completion, shall be given full credit. The teacher of any class from which a pupil is absent shall determine what assignments the pupil shall make up and in what period of time the pupil shall complete such assignments. The tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence. Please note that this does not reverse the absence, it changes the otherwise unexcused absence into an excused absence.

Excessive absences may prevent a student from being promoted to the next grade level or from graduating if they fall behind their schoolwork and academic goals. Because of this, we make every effort to encourage daily attendance. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, it is the responsibility of the student to make up all schoolwork they missed. This will include the submissions of any missed daily classwork or homework and other projects as assigned.

Students who accumulate twenty unexcused absences throughout the course of the school year will not receive a passing grade in that class.



***To re-admit a student back into the classroom,
a doctor's note is required if the absence is
3 DAYS/OR LONGER.
Please provide a note for every absence!***

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any absence for reasons other than those listed above as excused absences are deemed unexcused. ACS Parents will receive a form or phone call regarding unexplained absences.



TRUANCY PROCESS

Number of <u>Unexcused</u> Absences or Tardies at School	Consequences
1-2	Phone, email, or Class Dojo message home
3	Student is Truant

Frequency	Action
By the end of Trimester 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter sent home to ALL parents notifying them of the total number of tardies and absences. First Truancy Notices will be sent home
By the end of Trimester 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter sent home to ALL parents notifying them of the total number of tardies and absences. Second Truancy Notices will be sent home
Trimester 3	If no improvement, the school will hold an SST meeting with the parent/guardian, classroom teacher and administrator to discuss further actions and support systems

ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

- When students attend school, they get better grades, score better on assessments, and are more likely to go to college.
- It is our responsibility to teach students the importance of attendance now so they are prepared for the future.
- It's the law. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children go to school. When parents are at work, students should be safe at school.

PARENTS INFLUENCE ATTENDANCE - GET INVOLVED!

- Plan family vacations for non-school days only.
- Schedule non-emergency medical and dental appointments after school hours.
- Make sure your child's school has your accurate daytime contact information, including cell phone number and/or e-mail address.

- Communicate often with your child's teachers.
- Make your school aware of any problems that may be causing your child to miss school.

Every student is expected to attend school on a daily basis unless there is a valid justification for his/her absence. (EC 48200) Do not allow your child to have "parent permitted truanancies." These truanancies are best described as absences for reasons other than what the law allows. They may include the following:

- Personal business
- Car problems
- No clean clothes
- Rain

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Students who attend school regularly derive educational benefits. Independent study contracts will only be approved if the student will miss five (5) or more consecutive days of instruction, not to exceed 14 days in one school year. The school will need at least a 5-day prior notice prior to participation in the independent study. The rule of thumb would be to notify the school as soon as the parent is aware of a condition that may warrant independent study. **Parents must request an Independent Study Contract by emailing info@araratcharterschool.com.** The principal's decision on approval is final. Parents should understand that an Independent Study Contract cannot replicate the education within the classroom and that such absences, and the subsequent missing of important information, can affect a student's grade on tests and projects. It is the student's responsibility to check in with teachers upon return to school for any additional work missed. Teachers will assign work, and that work must be completed and returned according to the independent study Master Agreement.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Any students who will have zero tardies and zero absences for a given period of time will be recognized monthly. As an incentive for perfect attendance, those students who will receive a "Perfect Attendance Certificate" will also be awarded in some way, to be determined by teachers and staff.

Perfect 
Attendance!

TARDY



To develop the value of punctuality in our students, ACS has adopted a strict policy, which is outlined below:

- Tardy arrivals to school are never "excused."
- Each student is allowed two (2) tardies per year that will not have consequences which allow for emergencies and uncontrollable situations.
- Three (3) tardies are considered one unexcused absence.
- Upon your child's sixth tardy arrival, you will be called in for a meeting with the school.

Students arriving after 8:00 am (ACS1) and 7:50 am (ACS2) will be considered tardy.

INVOLUNTARY REMOVAL PROCESS

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) school days before the effective date of the action (“Involuntary Removal Notice”). The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student’s parent or guardian or if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student’s educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include the charges against the student and an explanation of the student’s basic rights, including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action. The hearing shall be consistent with the Charter School’s expulsion procedures. If the student’s parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, “involuntarily removed” includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to the Charter School’s suspension and expulsion policy.



Upon parent/guardian request for a hearing, the Charter School will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student’s parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student’s educational rights holder, and shall include a copy of the Charter School’s expulsion hearing process.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If the parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing the student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student’s last known school district of residence within thirty (30) days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the Charter School from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or re-occur.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

The California Education Code, Section 51101, states that parents/guardians of pupils enrolled in public schools have the right, and should have the opportunity, to work together in a mutually supportive and respectful partnership with schools to help their children succeed, to be informed in advance about a school’s rules, and to be informed of the procedures for visiting schools and observing classrooms.

ACS’s Parent Bill of Rights and Responsibilities is an integral component in the school’s mission which indicates the partnership role of families and schools to achieve student success. It also affirms the rights and responsibilities that parents have in advocating for their children’s academic success.

Parents’ Rights and Responsibilities to Ensure Their Child’s Success

Parents are equal partners in the education of their children. Family strengths and assets are essential to the academic success of students and recognizes parents as the first and most important lifelong teachers of their children. To that end, families and ACS assume their responsibility for student success and commit to a partnership that:

- Maintains high expectations for student achievement

- Ensures all children are ready for college, careers, and life
- Promotes productive conversation and collaboration
- Reflects mutual respect and support

Parents Have the Right To:

- A free education that honors their child's learning and prepares them for college careers, and life
- A welcoming environment that values family assets and contributions to learning
- Information about the school's expectations, educational programs, policies and procedures
- The CA School Dashboard to assess the quality of their child's school
- Visit their child's classroom and develop partnerships with teachers and staff
- Opportunities to learn how best to support education at home and at school
- Intervention classes and other learning supports for their child
- File a formal complaint without fear of reprisal
- Translation/interpretation services to communicate effectively with school staff

Parents Have the Responsibility to:

- Promote literacy, high achievement, and a love for learning
- Ensure their child attends school every day, on time, and ready to learn
- Monitor and guide their child's academic progress to ensure success
- Confer with teachers and other school staff about their child's education
- Attend meetings and learning activities to be informed and support their child's education
- Express their level of satisfaction through the annual School Experience Survey
- Provide all information about their child as needed by the school
- Advocate for their child's education

HOMELESS CHILDREN POLICY

The term "homeless children and youth" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. It includes children and youths who (42 U.S.C. § 11434a):

1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
2. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
3. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and/or
4. Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition of "homeless."

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the Charter School Liaison.

School Liaison: The Principal or designee designates the following staff person as the School Liaison for homeless students (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)):

Samantha Parisen
Assistant Principal

The Charter School Liaison shall ensure that (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at Charter School.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act, early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, any other preschool programs administered by the Charter School, if any, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
4. Parents/guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places frequented by parents or guardians of such youths and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth.
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with the law, the Charter School's charter, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians and any unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.
8. Charter School personnel providing services receive professional development and other support.
9. The Charter School Liaison collaborates with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.
10. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school; have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and that the youths may obtain assistance from the Charter School Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Act.

The California Department of Education publishes a list of the contact information for the Homeless Education Liaisons in the state, which is available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>.

Acceptance of Course Work:

The Charter School will accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by a homeless student.

The Charter School will provide homeless students credit for the partial completion of courses taken while attending a public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. If the student did not complete the entire course, the Charter School shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless the Charter School, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. When partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the homeless student shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course. These students shall not be prevented from taking or retaking a course to meet California State University or the University of California admission eligibility requirements.

For any homeless student who enrolls at the Charter School, a copy of the Charter School's complete policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment. A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office.

EDUCATION OF FOSTER AND MOBILE YOUTH

Definitions: For the purposes of this annual notice the terms are defined as follows:

1. “Foster youth” refers to any child who has been removed from their home pursuant Welfare and Institutions Code section 309 and/or is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code section 300 or 602. This includes children who are the subject of cases in dependency court and juvenile justice court.
2. “Former juvenile court school pupils” refers to a student who, upon completion of the student’s second year of high school, transfers from a juvenile court school to the Charter School.
3. “Child of a military family” refers to a student who resides in the household of an active duty military member.
4. “Currently Migratory Child” refers to a child who, within the last 12-months, has moved with a parent, guardian, or other person having custody to the Charter School from another Local Educational Agency (“LEA”), either within California or from another state, in order that the child or a member of the child’s immediate family might secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity, and whose parents or guardians have been informed of the child’s eligibility for migrant education services. “Currently Migratory Child” includes a child who, without the parent/guardian, has continued to migrate annually to secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity.
5. “Pupil participating in a newcomer program” means a pupil who is participating in a program designed to meet the academic and transitional needs of newly arrived immigrant pupils that has as a primary objective the development of English language proficiency.

Within this notice, foster youth, former juvenile court school pupils, a child of a military family, a currently migratory child, and a pupil participating in the newcomer program will be collectively referred to as “Foster and Mobile Youth.” Within this notice, a parent, guardian, or other person holding the educational rights for a Foster and Mobile Youth will be referred to as a “parent/guardian.”

Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison: The Principal or designee designates the following staff person as the Liaison for Foster and Mobile Youth:

Samantha Parisen
Assistant Principal
sparisen@araratcharterschool.com

The Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison’s responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Ensuring and facilitating the proper educational placement, enrollment in school, and checkout from the school of foster children.
2. Assisting foster children when transferring from one school to another school in ensuring proper transfer of credits, records, and grades.

School Stability: The Charter School will work with foster youth and their parent/guardian to ensure that each pupil is placed in the least restrictive educational programs and has access to the academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all pupils, including, but not necessarily limited to, interscholastic sports. All decisions regarding a foster youth’s education and placement will be based on the best interest of the child and shall consider, among other factors, educational stability, and the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress.

Foster youth, currently migratory children, and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest. The Charter School will immediately enroll a foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family seeking re-enrollment in the Charter School as the student’s school of origin (subject to the Charter School’s capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School’s charter and Board policy). If a dispute arises regarding a foster youth’s request to remain in the Charter School as the school of origin, the foster youth have the right to remain in the Charter School pending the resolution of the dispute. The Charter School will also immediately enroll any foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family seeking to transfer to the Charter School (subject to the Charter School’s capacity and pursuant to

the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy) regardless of the student's ability to meet normal enrollment documentation or uniform requirements (e.g., producing medical records or academic records from a previous school).

Foster youth, currently migratory children, and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin following the termination of the child's status as a foster youth, currently migratory child, or child of a military family, as follows:

1. For students in Kindergarten through eighth grade, inclusive, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through the duration of the academic year in which the student's status changed.
2. For students enrolled in high school, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through graduation.

Acceptance of Course Work: The Charter School will accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by a Foster and Mobile Youth.

The Charter School will provide Foster and Mobile Youth credit for the partial completion of courses taken while attending a public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. If the student did not complete the entire course, the Charter School shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless the Charter School, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the pupil is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. When partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the Foster and Mobile Youth shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course. These students shall not be prevented from taking or retaking a course to meet California State University or the University of California admission eligibility requirements.

Student Records: When the Charter School receives a transfer request and/or student records request for the educational information and records of a foster youth from a new local educational agency ("LEA"), the Charter School shall provide these student records within two (2) business days. The Charter School shall compile the complete educational record of the student, including but not limited to a determination of seat time, full or partial credits earned, current classes and grades, immunization, and other records, and, if applicable, a copy of the student's special education records including assessments, IEPs, and/or 504 plans. All requests for student records will be shared with the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison, who shall be aware of the specific educational record keeping needs of Foster and Mobile Youth.

The Charter School shall not lower a foster youth's grades because of the student's absence due to a verified court appearance, related court ordered activity, or a change the placement of the student made by a county or placing agency. If a foster youth is absent from school due to a decision to change the placement of the student made by a county or placing agency, the grades and credits of the pupil will be calculated as of the date the student left the Charter School.

In accordance with the Charter School's Educational Records and Student Information Policy, under limited circumstances, the Charter School may disclose student records or personally identifiable information contained in those records to certain requesting parties, including but not limited to a foster family agency and state and local authorities within a juvenile justice system, without parent/guardian consent.

Discipline Determinations: If the Charter School intends to extend the suspension of any foster youth pending a recommendation for expulsion, the Charter School will invite the student's attorney and an appropriate representative from the relevant county agency to participate in the meeting at which the extension of the suspension will be discussed.

If the Charter School intends to suspend for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expel a student with a disability who is also a foster youth due to an act for which the recommendation for expulsion is discretionary, the Charter School will invite the student's attorney and an appropriate representative from the relevant county agency to participate in the Manifestation Determination Review meeting.

Complaints of Noncompliance: A complaint of noncompliance with any of the requirements outlined above may be filed through the Charter School's Uniform Complaint Procedures. A copy of the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures is available upon request at the main office.

Availability of Complete Policy: For any Foster and Mobile Youth who enrolls at the Charter School, a copy of the Charter School's complete foster youth policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment. A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Charter School does not discriminate against any person based on actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, immigration status, religion, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes in the California Penal Code.

The Charter School adheres to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEIA").

The Charter School does not discourage students from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the Charter School for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance, disability, neglect or delinquency, English proficiency, for being homeless or a foster/mobile youth, economic disadvantage, nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The Charter School shall not encourage a student currently attending Charter School to disenroll or transfer to another school based on any of the aforementioned reasons except in cases of expulsion and suspension or involuntary removal in accordance with the Charter School's charter and relevant policies.

The Charter School does not request nor require student records prior to a student's enrollment.

The Charter School shall provide a copy of the California Department of Education Complaint Notice and Form to any parent, guardian, or student over the age of 18 at the following times: (1) when a parent, guardian, or student over the age of 18 inquires about enrollment; (2) before conducting an enrollment lottery; and (3) before disenrollment of a student.

The Charter School is committed to providing an educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex); Titles IV, VI, and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, or national origin); The Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the IDEIA; and Section 504 and Title II of the ADA (mental or physical disability). The Charter School also prohibits sexual harassment, including cyber-sexual bullying and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, religious affiliation, creed, color, immigration status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance, or regulation. The Charter School does not condone or tolerate harassment of any type, including discrimination, intimidation, or bullying, including cyber-sexual bullying, by any employee, independent contractor, or other person with whom the Charter School does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This applies to all employees, students, or volunteers and relationships, regardless of position or gender. The Charter School will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action if warranted. Inquiries, complaints, or grievances regarding harassment, as described in this section above, should be directed to the Charter School Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") Compliance Officer:

Dr. Aida Tatiassian
Principal
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: atate@araratcharterschool.com

Ovsanna Keshishyan
Compliance Manager
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401

The lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in the Charter School's programs or activities. The Charter School prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint or who participates or refuses to participate in a complaint investigation.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES



ACS (ACS) is committed to ensuring that employees and all individuals who work with or have contact with students conduct themselves with students in a way that is supportive, positive, professional, and non-exploitative. ACS will not tolerate inappropriate conduct or behavior towards or with students by its employees or any individual who works with or has contact with students. Parents or guardians who have any questions or concerns regarding the conduct or behavior towards or with students by an employee or individual who works with or has contact with students are encouraged to speak to the school administrator.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

ACS (ACS) is committed to creating a climate on campus where every student feels safe and welcome. For more detailed information please refer to ACS's Discipline Policy. Guiding principles for everyone in the school:

- ▶ **Be Respectful**
- ▶ **Be Responsible**
- ▶ **Be Appreciative of Differences**

School Pride Means.....

- ★ Treating others with respect
- ★ Finding peaceful solutions
- ★ Listening to each other
- ★ Being drug free
- ★ Keeping the school clean and beautiful
- ★ Having healthy friendships
- ★ Producing own work
- ★ Maintaining honesty and integrity
- ★ Showing empathy and compassion
- ★ Defending others' rights
- ★ Appreciating differences
- ★ Respecting the property of others
- ★ Engaging in safe activities



STUDENT DRESS CODE/UNIFORMS



ACS faculty, staff, and administration are committed to establishing a positive educational atmosphere in the classroom, on campus, and at school sponsored events. While recognizing the prime responsibility for good grooming is that of the student and parent, the school nevertheless shares in this obligation since it believes that good grooming signifies the difference in character and motivation that should distinguish ACS students from students attending other schools. ACS is the student's place of work and respect for other members of society and oneself places some restrictions on the nature of our dress and grooming. We want our students' dress to reflect the character of our school.

All clothing must be neat, clean and acceptable in appearance. Clothing will be worn as its design is traditionally intended and fit the size of the wearer. The following is a description of the acceptable clothing available to students. Please read and adhere to the following standards of dress. For examples of our Dress Standards, visit ACS's website at www.araratcharterschool.com.

Slacks: Slacks will be uniform-type cotton, solid navy-blue color, properly **tailored to fit at the waist and covering undergarments**. Slacks will be regular cut – non-riveted. ***TIGHTS, LEGGINGS, JEGGINGS, SWEAT PANTS, AND ANY SPANDEX OR PANTS/SHORTS THAT LOOK LIKE SPANDEX (FORM-FITTING) ARE NOT ALLOWED AND ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR UNIFORM-STYLE PANTS OR SHORTS.*** No oversized or "baggy cut" clothing is permitted. This includes baggy-cut trousers and baggy-cut cargo pants. Slacks will be the correct length without bagging at the ankle and will be hemmed (cuffed) without side slits, holes, rips, safety pins, staples or tape. No jean styling (jean styling has sewn-on patch pockets and reinforcing rivets. All clothing must be regular cut). All belt buckles will be plain. All belts will be worn as designed through belt loops without excessive length.



Shorts: Shorts will be uniform-type cotton, solid navy-blue color. **Shorts cannot be shorter than arm length. They must be properly tailored to fit the waist and cover undergarments. No short-shorts, cut-offs or tight, form-fitting shorts (bike-type shorts) will be allowed.** Shorts will be regular cut – non-riveted, no jean shorts (see above).



Skorts: Skorts will be either plain navy blue or navy blue, with light blue and gold checkers and no shorter than arms length. **No short skorts or solid color skorts will be permitted.**



Shirt: Shirts will be solid white or Navy polo (with or without ACS logo) with a **COLLAR** and **SLEEVES** from Monday thru Thursday, and ACS Spirit wear the royal blue T-shirt on Fridays. **Sleeveless shirts, tank tops, graphic design or rhinestones on shirts are NOT allowed. Sheer/"see-through" fabric is NOT allowed.** Shirt will be **BUTTONED** during school hours. **Shirts/T-shirts will be worn as designed.**



T-shirts: T-shirts will be “regular cut.” The T-shirt must be long enough to cover the mid-section and stay below the top of the pants/Skorts at all times. **No bare midriff may be showing at any time.** T-Shirts may not be worn Monday thru Thursday unless specified otherwise. ACS T-shirts are mandatory at every school-sponsored field trip.

Outerwear: Preferred jackets will be royal blue ACS Hoodies. Otherwise, jackets, sweaters and other outerwear will be solid colors – **no prints, stripes, logos, characters, sports insignias, graphic design, or rhinestones.**



Caps: Caps will be ACS caps **only** and may be worn outside for sun protection. Hats, caps, or beanies should not be worn. No backward baseball caps. All caps must be removed when entering any room. Headgear worn for purposes of religious observance will be permitted.

Shoes: Shoes (athletic shoes preferred) will be worn at all times. Safety is of utmost importance. Sandal type (backless, open toed or “flip flops”) or heeled shoes are **NOT** permitted, even on free-dress days.

FREE DRESS: The standards must be followed during dress-free days as well. Refer to slacks, shorts skorts, shirts, T-shirts and shoes sections for more clarification.

THE FOLLOWING ARE ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED:

Apparel with gang-related symbols or insignias, any attire that could be used as a weapon, such as chains, spikes, or studs. This includes chains attached to wallets. SUNGLASSES AND CAPS MAY BE WORN OUTSIDE FOR SUN PROTECTION ONLY.

DRESS REGULATIONS ARE IN EFFECT AT ALL SCHOOL FUNCTIONS AND EVENTS UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE VIA SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS.

THE FOLLOWING CONSEQUENCES OF DRESS STANDARD VIOLATIONS ARE FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR:

For any dress standard violation, the student will be sent to the office. Office staff will then contact the student’s parent and request the appropriate school attire to be brought to school immediately. The student will ONLY return to class after changing into an acceptable school uniform.

In the case of financial hardship, please contact the school’s administration for accommodation. Your information will be kept strictly confidential.

SPIRIT WEAR

ACS has spirit wear! These are custom-made school t-shirts, long sleeve shirts, hooded jackets, and caps with the ACS logo. All students are highly encouraged to wear spirit wear every Friday. Girls can wear their jumpers or skorts and wear spirit wear over them. Boys can wear them instead of polo shirts. All staff will be wearing ACS spirit wear every Friday as well. Parents may

purchase these items if they wish. Spirit wear **MUST** be worn for ALL field trips. A student cannot participate in a school-sponsored field trip without wearing an ACS t-shirt or long-sleeve shirt. Also, a parent may not chaperon students during a field trip without wearing an ACS shirt. For additional information, please refer to Student Dress Code/Uniform Section.

STUDENTS' SMART PHONE AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES



It is the policy of ACS to prohibit the use of cellular phones or any non-school-issued electronic mobile device by students on campus during normal school hours. Students are permitted to possess private devices, including but not limited to cellular phones, or other electronic mobile devices such as cameras, electronic games, radios, MP3 players, computing devices, tablets, etc. on campus, provided that any such device shall remain turned off and stored in a locker, backpack, where it is not visible during normal school hours.

All students are required to adhere to the following guidelines regarding private devices:

Private devices may be used:

- Off-campus.
- Before or after any School sponsored activity occurring before or after the regular school day.
- In the case of an emergency or in response to a perceived threat of danger.
- When an administrator of the Charter School grants permission to a student to possess or use a private device, subject to any reasonable limitation imposed by that administrator.
- When a licensed physician and surgeon determines that the possession or use of a private device is necessary for the health or well-being of the student.
- When the possession or use of a private device is required in a student's individualized education program ("IEP").

Private devices must be turned off and shall not be used:

- During instruction, classroom time, including assemblies, and any other school activity, which takes place during the regularly scheduled school day on or off campus.
- During recess, between class periods, or during lunch.
- During events sponsored by the School held before or after regular school hours.
- On field trips or excursions sponsored by the Charter School.

During State and other assessments, students are prohibited from accessing any unauthorized electronic devices at any time during the entire testing session. **Students must comply any time a request is made by school personnel to cease the use of a cellular telephone and/or other electronic mobile devices, even before or after school.** Cell phone use on the school bus is for emergency purposes only, and the driver's authorization is required. Prior to the use For more information, you may call 818-994-2904. ACS is not responsible for lost or stolen cellular telephones or other electronic mobile devices.

INTERNET ACCESS



ACS provides access to the Internet and email through the school's computer network. The ACS website is located at www.araratcharterschool.com. The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) regulate all uses of ACS computers and networks. The purpose of providing access to the Internet and ACS network resources is for regular instructional or business activity or to compile data necessary for educational research. **No student shall be allowed to access the internet or use school technology until ACS has a signed Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement on file. This Agreement shall be distributed to families at the beginning of each school year.**

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

ARARAT PROGRAM FOR EXTENDED LEARNING (APEX)

Ararat Charter is committed to providing students with a safe and healthy learning environment. Ararat's Program for Extended Learning (APEX) emphasizes student engagement and allows for greater connection to caring adults at school. A safe and supportive environment entails both emotional and physical safety.

Vision: To provide quality after-school programming to enhance students' skills, knowledge, and abilities that will further develop the whole child.

Mission: To offer creative programming that will increase or enhance students' skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Purpose: To broaden students' scope and understanding of the world around them.



The APEX program is Ararat Charter's first after-school program. The LEA, for the first time, provides an after-school program to its community. The program employs trusted adults that understand the students and the culture of the school. Structure and predictability are the cornerstones of a supportive environment. The daily schedule that provides enrichment, nutrition, social and emotional learning (SEL), and team sports provide the structure needed to support students emotionally. School environments that are safe and supportive are successful at connecting students to a network of caring adults, including parents, other primary caregivers, and teachers. Through SEL lessons, the APEX program also cultivates self-esteem and self-efficacy.

APEX program secures the physical safety of students by being a closed campus. Protocols are in place that have supported all Ararat community members in staying healthy and safe. These protocols continue to support the community during the APEX programs.

The APEX program provides instructional block time with homework and intervention support. Enrichment activities enhance the school's offerings with art, creative writing, project-based learning, readers theatre, etc. A block of time also is reserved for social and emotional learning, and mindfulness and team sports build students' skills in physical activities that improve their socialization, coordination, and collaboration skills.

The APEX program is multifaceted and allows students to increase their skills, knowledge, and abilities in various subject areas and avenues:

- Homework, Tutoring, and Intervention: this allows students to better understand grade-level standards and prepare them for the next grade level.
- Enrichment: this allows students to explore their creative side with STEAM, project-based learning, creative writing, reader's theatre, crafts, etc. APEX has partnered with Parker-Anderson Enrichment to provide a plethora of engaging classes for students to choose from.
- Social and Emotional Learning: this immerses students in conversations, community circles, and collaboration with their peers to build their compassion, empathy, and resiliency. APEX will have classes that focus on JEDI - Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through literature, projects, videos, and presentations.
- Team sports: supports students' health by developing their hand-eye coordination, team spirit, and skills in playing team sports and increasing their overall knowledge of nutrition. Structured physical activities allow students to learn and grow through play. Structured play allows students to engage in fun activities, discover themselves - their potential, and build critical social skills. The APEX coaches will lead team activities and sports and allow students to develop gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination, sportsmanship, and physical fitness. Helping students love being active and maintaining a healthy lifestyle are the goals of this program.
- Nutrition: Supper is provided daily for all who are present. Ararat Charter contracts with LAUSD Food Services and will continue with this arrangement for APEX.

APEX classes will be available to all students. The needs of the community, students, parents, and school were identified through various sources: surveys, parent advisory committees, and informal meetings with staff and parents. Furthermore, the school has an ELOP/APEX Committee that has met regularly to intricately plan out the details of the program. The Quality Standards for Expanded Learning will be used to assess program quality and used to revise and refine the areas of improvement. Data will be collected in a variety of ways, and information will be collected from all stakeholders - parents, students, and staff. The results will be used to assess the quality of the program and make the necessary changes.

Field Trips will be part of the APEX program. Visits to aquariums, zoos, county/state/national parks, etc., will provide expanded learning opportunities for all students enrolled in the after-school and Saturday sessions. All expenses, including transportation, fees, and meals, will be provided at no cost to the students.

FOOD SERVICES

LAUSD Food Services Division is responsible for the operation of the cafeterias at both campuses.

The Café LA offers the following U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) federal meal programs; the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Summer Food School Program (SFSP).

Beginning the 2022–23 school year, California’s Universal Meals Program has been provided breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge. Under the CACFP, supper meals are also available to students on school campuses.



If parents/legal guardians have questions regarding meal programs at the school, they can contact the food services manager. They are knowledgeable in all areas of meal service, food preparation, sanitation, safety, and the various programs offered and serving times.

For additional information about the programs as well as nutritional resources, please visit <https://achieve.lausd.net/cafela> or call (213) 241-6419 or (213) 241-6409.

Nutrition & Café LA Menus

A team of nutrition specialists plans the menus, and continue to improve and instill the highest nutritional standards. Menus are available at the school or at: <https://achieve.lausd.net/cafela>.

The menus adhere to the following principles to ensure that every student finds healthy and appealing meal options at school:

- Offer a variety of menu choices, including a daily vegetarian and vegan option, fresh salad, and sandwich options;
- Provide only whole grain-rich products;
- Offer fresh fruits and vegetables daily;
- Offer only antibiotic-free chicken;
- Participate in Meatless Mondays, where the menu consists of only vegetarian items on Monday;
- Meals have no more than 30% of total calories from fat, no more than 10% of total calories from saturated fat, and no added trans fats;
- Meals contain no artificial colors, flavors, monosodium glutamate (MSG), nitrates, or sulfites;
- Use student feedback obtained from student taste-testing of all potential menu items, where only those items with a high student acceptability rating are considered for menu placement.

If a student requires a special diet or has special dietary needs, parents/legal guardians may obtain the “Los Angeles Unified Medical Statement to Request Special Meals” form from the Food Services Manager, school nurse, or website at: <https://achieve.lausd.net/cafela>.

The following forms and information are available under the [Nutritional Information and Special Needs](#) link near the bottom of the “Menu” page:

- Los Angeles Unified Medical Statement to Request Special Meals;
- Parent/Legal Guardian Request to Substitute Soy Milk for Fluid Milk;
- Nutrient Analysis;
- Carbohydrate Count;
- Food Allergen and Ingredient List.

MEAL APPLICATIONS

Meal applications are required to be completed each school year. We highly encourage families to fill out an application to apply for benefits. The meal applications are held as strictly confidential information and used only by the Food Services Division. **Personal information will not be shared with any outside agencies.**



The meal applications are available at the school site when school starts.

- Applications may also be completed online, submitted electronically, and are processed within 48 hours. Please visit the Café LA website at http://cafe-la.lausd.net/new-online_meal_application
- **Only one application per household is required.** Please do not submit multiple applications as this will slow down processing.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE OF FILING A COMPLAINT

ACS is an Independent Charter School, and is governed by its own Governing Board. If an issue arises, it should be pursued by contacting the responsible parties of authority in this order: 1) TEACHER; 2) PRINCIPAL; 3) BOARD CHAIRPERSON; 4) THE GOVERNING BOARD. The decision of the Board will be final. Every effort should be made to address the concerns at the informal level with the child's Teacher and/or Principal. The Governing Board has invested authority in the Principal to deal with complaints and concerns. If concerns are not satisfactory resolved at the teacher level, the Parent/Guardian may request a meeting with the principal or submit a written informal complaint to the Principal. The Principal will work with all parties concerned to investigate and reach a resolution.

For additional information see the policy on the school website or school office.

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE (UCP)

Ararat Charter School has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. The Charter School shall investigate complaints alleging failure to comply with those laws and regulations including but not limited to allegations of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any protected group or noncompliance with laws relating to all programs and activities implemented by the School that are subject to UCP as cited below. Ararat Charter School shall seek to resolve at the local level those complaints in accordance with the UCP set forth in the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sections 4600-4695, and the policies and procedures of the Charter School, including allegations of retaliation for participation in the UCP process and/or to appeal School decisions regarding such complaints. A UCP complaint must be filed as set forth in the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sections 4600-4695.

A UCP complaint may be filed alleging:

- Adult education (Section 8500-8538, 52334.7, 52500-52617);
- After-school education and safety (Section 8482-8484.65);
- Agricultural career technical education (Section 52460-52462);
- Compensatory education (Section 54400);
- Consolidated categorical aid programs [34 CFR Section 299.10-12, Section 64000(a)];
- Migrant education (Section 54440-54445);

- Career technical and technical education and career technical and technical training programs (Section 52300-52462);
 - Childcare and development programs (Section 8200-8498);
 - Every Student Succeeds Act (20 United States Code Section 6301 et seq.; EC Section 52059);
 - Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying of protected groups identified under Section 200 and 220 and Section 11135 of the Government Code, including any actual or perceived characteristic as set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one (1) or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution as defined in Section 210.3, that is funded directly by, or that receives, or benefits from any state financial assistance. (Related to employee-to-student, student-to-student, student-to-employee, third party to student, employee-to-third party);
 - Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students, including reasonable accommodations for lactating students (Section 46015, 222);
 - Regional occupational centers and programs (Section 52300-52334.7);
 - School plans for student achievement (Section 64001);
 - School site councils (Section 65000);
 - School safety plans (Section 32280-32289);
 - State preschools (Section 8235-8239.1);
 - Deficiencies related to preschool health and safety issues for a California state preschool program exempt from licensing (5 CCR Section 1596.7925, EC Section 8235.5); per public notices posted for applicable classrooms;
 - Any other state or federal educational program the state superintendent of public instruction or designee deems appropriate.
1. Unauthorized charging of student fees: a student shall not be required to pay a student fee for supplies, materials, and equipment needed for participation in an educational activity, unless the charge for such a fee is specifically authorized by law and does not violate EC Section 49011. A student fee complaint may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance with laws relating to student fees. The complaint shall be filed no later than one (1) year from the date the alleged violation occurred. A student fee complaint of noncompliance should be filed first with the school principal or the agency superintendent or his or her designee. If merit is found in a student fee complaint, the public school shall provide a remedy to all affected students and/or parents/legal guardians that where applicable includes reasonable efforts by the public school to ensure full reimbursement to all affected students and parents/legal guardians, subject to procedures established through regulations adopted by the state board. The District will attempt in good faith by engaging in reasonable efforts to identify and fully reimburse all students and/or parents/legal guardians who paid a student fee within one (1) year prior to the filing of the complaint.
 2. Failure to comply with legal requirements pertaining to the LCAP: A complaint that a school district has not complied with the requirements of the LCAP may be filed using the UCP complaint procedures (EC Section 52075). A complaint may be filed anonymously if it provides evidence/information leading to evidence to support the complaint. LCAP requirements are found in EC Sections 52060 - 52076.
 3. Failure to comply with adopted courses of study for physical education: Existing law requires the adopted course of study to include instruction in specified areas of study, including physical education for a total period of time.
 4. Failure to ensure the educational rights of students in foster care, students who are homeless, former juvenile court school students, students who are children of military families, migratory students, and students in newcomer programs to immediate enrollment, remaining in the school of origin, being enrolled in their local comprehensive school, obtaining partial credits, graduating with the state's minimum requirements, and access to academic resources, services, and extra-curricular activities allow that a complaint of noncompliance with the requirements of the sections may be filed under the District's UCP (EC Sections 48853, 48853.5, 49069.5, 51225.1, and 51225.2).
 5. Failure to comply with enrollment in courses without educational content and previously completed or graded courses sufficient for satisfying requirements or prerequisites for postsecondary education and receipt of a diploma: Commencing with the 2016-17 school year, the District is prohibited from assigning a student enrolled in grades 9-12 to a course without educational content. Students may not be enrolled in courses without educational content for more than one (1) week in any semester or to a course the student has previously completed and received a grade determined by the District to be sufficient to satisfy requirements and prerequisites for admission to the California public institutions of postsecondary education and the minimum requirements for receiving a diploma of graduation from high school, except under specified conditions.

Complaints Not Under Jurisdiction of the UCP Process:

- Allegations of employment/work, employee-to-employee and/or student-to-employee discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying of protected groups may be referred to the Principal and Compliance Manager, and to the State Department of Fair Employment and Housing.
- Allegations of suspected child abuse shall be referred to Child Protective Services (Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services or an appropriate city or county law enforcement agency, as applicable).
- Allegations of fraud may be referred to the Principal and Compliance Manager
- Personnel action complaints may be referred to the responsible administrator in the Charter School.
- Child nutrition programs are addressed under federal provisions pursuant to 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §§210.19(a)(4), 215.1(a), 220.13(c), 225.11(b), 226.6(n), and 250.15(d). Other provisions governing complaints relative to child nutrition programs are found in the CCR §§15580 through 15584, which allow for a Charter School investigation, an appeal of the Charter School's investigation report to CDE and for direct intervention by CDE in some instances (e.g., meal counting and claiming, reimbursable meals, eligibility of child/adult or use of cafeteria funds and allowable expenses). For assistance with child nutrition complaints, the Food Services division can provide more information at (213) 241-2993.
- Special education programs are addressed under federal provisions pursuant to 34 CFR §§300.151 through 300.153. Other relevant provisions are found in CCR §§3200 through 3205.
- Bullying complaints not based on protected classes may be referred to the School's Title IX/Bullying Complaint Managers, Principal and Compliance Manager regarding implementing the School Discipline Policy.
- Complaints involving classroom assignments, common core, grades, graduation requirements, hiring and evaluation of staff, homework policies and practices, provision of core curricula subjects, public meeting laws, student promotion and retention, student discipline, student records, and other general education requirements may be referred to Principal and Compliance Manager.
- Complaints involving instructional materials, emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to pupils' or staffs' health or safety, and teacher vacancies and misassignments are addressed pursuant to §§4680 through 4687, and may be referred to the Principal and Compliance Manager.
- Complaints alleging noncompliance regarding child nutrition programs established pursuant to Education Code sections 49490-49590 are governed by Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations ("C.F.R.") sections 210.19(a)(4), 215.1(a), 220.13(c), 225.11(b), 226.6(n), and 250.15(d) and Title 5, California Code of Regulations ("C.C.R.") sections 15580 - 15584.
- Complaints alleging noncompliance regarding special education programs established pursuant to Education Code sections 56000-56865 and 59000-59300 are governed by the procedures set forth in 5 C.C.R. sections 3200-3205 and 34 C.F.R. sections 300.151-300.153.

Complaints other than complaints relating to pupil fees must be filed in writing with the following Compliance Officer:

Dr. Aida Tatiossian
Principal
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: atate@araratcharterschool.com

Ovsanna Keshishyan, Compliance Manager
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: okeshishyan@araratcharterschool.com

A complaint may be filed anonymously if it provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance, including student fees and LCAP complaints. The Charter School will attempt in good faith to engage in reasonable efforts to identify and fully reimburse all students and/or parents/legal guardians who paid a student fee within one (1) year prior to the filing of the complaint. If merit is found in a complaint, a remedy shall be provided to the affected student in cases regarding course periods without educational content, reasonable accommodations to a lactating student, education

of students in foster care, students who are homeless, former juvenile court students now enrolled in Ararat Charter School and/or students in military families, a remedy shall be provided to all affected students and parents/legal guardians in cases involving student fees, physical education, instructional minutes, and/or LCAPs.

Compliance Officer: The Principal and Compliance Manager have been designated as the Charter School's Compliance Officers, responsible to receive and direct the investigation of complaints under the UCP, maintaining records of complaints and subsequent related actions, and ensuring School's compliance with the law. For additional information regarding the Charter School's UCP process or assistance in filing a complaint, please contact the Office at 818-994-2904 or at: info@araratcharterschool.com

Notifications: The School shall annually notify in writing its students, parents/legal guardians, employees, advisory committees, of these UCP procedures and the person responsible for processing complaints.

Filing of UCP Complaints: A written complaint of alleged noncompliance with a federal or state law or regulation governing educational programs must be filed with the Charter School's Main Office for responding to such complaints. Complaints shall be filed no later than one (1) year from the date the alleged violation occurred, other than in the case of the exceptions noted above. A complaint may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance. Any person, including but not limited to individuals with a disability requesting to file a complaint and who are unable to prepare a written complaint, will be assisted by School staff in filing the complaint. The Charter School assures confidentiality to the maximum extent possible. Complainants are protected from retaliation. The School prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint or participates in the complaint investigation process. When the subject matter of a complaint is not covered by this policy, the complainant will be so advised in writing. The 60-day timeline for the investigation and Charter School response shall begin when the Compliance Officers receive the written complaint.

UCP forms are available upon request from by contacting the Main Office at 818-994-2904, email at info@araratcharterschool.com, or by accessing the website for Uniform Complaint Procedures information at: www.araratcharterschool.com. A copy of the UCP policy and complaint procedures shall be available free of charge. Complainants are advised of civil law remedies, including but not limited to injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies, or orders may also be available under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying laws (EC Section 262.3).

Appeals of Charter School Decisions:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the Charter School's decision, the complainant may appeal it within 15 days of receiving it. The appeal must be in writing and include a copy of the original complaint, the Charter School's decision, and specific reasons for appeal.

Appeals of District decisions may be sent to:

California Department of Education
1430 N. Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Additional contacts for programs, services, and appeals offices covered by the California Department of Education under the UCP can be found at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cp/uc/>.

Deficiencies related to California state preschool program health and safety issues may be resolved using the UCP (EC Section 8235.5). Otherwise, health and safety complaints regarding licensed facilities operating a Child Development Program may be referred to the Department of Social Services.

See *Williams Uniform Complaints Process* for information regarding filing complaints regarding instructional materials, emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to the health and safety of students, and teacher vacancy or misassignment.

WILLIAMS UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Williams Uniform Complaint Process provides important information to parents/legal guardians, students, teachers, and other stakeholders regarding complaint rights for the following areas (EC Section 35186):

- Every school must provide each student, including English Language Learners, with sufficient textbooks and/or instructional materials to use in class and to take home and/or use after class;
- School facilities must be clean, safe, and maintained in good repair;
- An adequate number of student restrooms should be clean, stocked, and open during school hours;
- Each class should be assigned an appropriately credentialed teacher and not a series of substitutes or other temporary teachers. The teacher should have the proper credential and subject matter training to teach the class, including training to teach English Learners, if present.

Complaints may be filed using the Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures Form or may be filed anonymously. If the form is not used, written complaints will not be rejected. To file a complaint regarding the above matters, forms can be obtained by contacting:

- The school's main office;
- By calling 818-994-2904;
- By email at: info@araratcharterschool.com
- By accessing the website at: www.araratcharterschool.com

To ensure a timely resolution, completed complaint forms should be submitted to the following and indicate whether a response to the complaint is requested:

- School site (main office, principal);
- By email at: info@araratcharterschool.com
 - By U.S. Mail at:
Ararat Charter School
Educational Equity Compliance Officers
Williams Complaints
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Complainants who are not satisfied with the resolution have the right to describe the complaint to the Governing Board of the Charter School at a regularly scheduled meeting of the board. Except for complaints involving a condition of a facility that poses an emergency or urgent threat, there is not a right of appeal to the California Department of Education. Questions regarding the Williams UCP process can be directed to the Educational Equity Compliance Officers at 818-994-2904 or more information regarding Williams can be found at: www.araratcharterschool.com.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports/Restorative Practices (PBIS/RP)

Ararat Charter School's Discipline Foundation Policy states that every student has the right to be educated in a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment. Every educator has the right to teach in an atmosphere free from disruption and obstacles that impede learning. This is achieved through the adoption and implementation of a consistent schoolwide positive behavior support and discipline plan, which includes: teaching school rules and social-emotional skills, reinforcing appropriate student behavior, using effective classroom management, building healthy relationships, and providing early intervention for misconduct and appropriate use of restorative consequences. The Charter School's Governing Board affirms the School's commitment to Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports/Restorative Practices (PBIS/RP) to build community and authentic relationships, increase attendance, improve test scores, reduce the suspension, and support the overall positive culture and climate of the school.

Parents/legal guardians play an integral part in our School's creation and implementation of their PBIS/RP plan. This includes engaging in community-building activities, supporting school/classroom expectations, reinforcing appropriate student behavior, and using consequences that are restorative in nature.

CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

Students who are provided transportation are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner when engaging with the bus driver, school staff, other students, chaperons, or any member of the community. Students who ride school buses are expected to adhere to the same rules of conduct and behavior on the school bus as in school. Ensuring that there is orderly conduct on and around the bus is the responsibility of the school bus driver (Title 5, California Code of Regulations Section 14103). Any student who engages in misconduct disrupts school bus travel, disrespects the school bus driver, or jeopardizes the safety of school bus rides is subject to disciplinary action, including suspension. If parents/legal guardians have questions regarding student conduct on the school bus, contact (818) 994-2904 or email info@araratcharterschool.com.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE: SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Suspension is the removal of a student from ongoing instruction for adjustment purposes. A student may be suspended for no more than five (5) consecutive school days. [EC 48925 (d)].

Expulsion is the removal of a student from (1) the immediate supervision and control or (2) the general supervision of school personnel. [EC 48925 (b)] In Los Angeles Unified, the SDES is charged with ensuring that students recommended for expulsion are afforded a fair and impartial hearing and all due process rights. A student may be expelled without suspended enforcement (straight expelled) and, therefore, not be allowed to attend Ararat Charter School or any of its programs. Students who are recommended for expulsion have a right to an expulsion hearing and to address the Governing Board before the Board makes the final decision to expel them. An expulsion appeal can be made to the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

- A. Jurisdiction to issue suspensions or expulsions extends to misconduct related to school activity or attendance that occurs at any time, including but not limited to:
- While on school grounds;
 - While going to or coming from school;
 - During lunch period, whether on or off the campus;
 - During, or while going to, or coming from a school-sponsored event;
 - While riding on the school bus.
- B. Other Means of Correction (Interventions) (EC Section 48900.5.)

Suspension, including supervised suspension (such as in-school suspension and class suspension), shall be imposed only when other means of correction have failed to bring about proper conduct and/or safety is at risk. Other means of correction used should be documented and kept in the student's discipline file, available to access (EC Section 49069.7).

A teacher may suspend a student from class for any of the acts enumerated in EC Section 48900, except for misconduct of willful defiance as described in EC Section 48900 (k)(1) as stated in the Board Resolution: School Discipline Policy.

GROUND FOR SUSPENSION/EXPULSION (EC SECTION 48900 ET. SEQ.)

- (a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person;
- (b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense;
- (c) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous objects unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the pupil had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the principal or the designee of the principal;
- (d) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind;
- (e) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind, and

then either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant;

- (f) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion;
- (g) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property;
- (h) Stolen or attempted to steal school property or private property;
- (i) Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. However, this Section does not prohibit the use or possession by a pupil of his or her own prescription products;
- (j) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity;
- (k) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code;
- (l) Disrupted school (-wide) activities (suspension only by an administrator; no expulsion) (grades 4-12);
- (m) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property;
- (n) Possessed an imitation firearm;
- (o) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or committed a sexual battery;
- (p) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a pupil who is a complaining witness or a witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of either preventing that pupil from being a witness or retaliating against that pupil for being a witness, or both;
- (q) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma; (q) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing;
- (r) Engaged in an act of bullying, including but not limited to bullying committed by means of an electronic act directed specifically toward a pupil or group of pupils;
- (s) Aided or abetted the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person (suspension only).
48900.2 - Committed sexual harassment (grades 4 - 12).
48900.3 - Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence (grades 4 - 12).
48900.4 - Intentionally engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation directed against school district personnel or pupils (grades 4 - 12).
48900.7 - Made terroristic threats against school officials or school property, or both.

Prior to a suspension from school, the principal/designee will have an informal conference with the student where the student will be informed of the reason for disciplinary action, including other means of correction that were attempted before the suspension, and the evidence as well as the opportunity to present their version and evidence (EC Section 48911). If the school determines there is an emergency, defined as a situation that constitutes a clear and present danger to the life, safety, or health of students or school personnel, an informal conference will not be required.

Circumstances for Recommending Expulsion (EC Section 48915)

The Principal shall recommend the expulsion of a student for any of the following acts committed at a school or at a school activity off school grounds unless the Principal determines that expulsion should not be recommended under the circumstances or that an alternative means of correction would address the conduct:

- (a) Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense;
- (b) Possession of any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student; (c) Unlawful possession of any controlled substance, except for either of the following:
 - i. The first offense for the possession of not more than one (1) avoirdupois ounce of marijuana, other than concentrated cannabis;
 - ii. The possession of over-the-counter medication for use by the student for medical purposes or medication prescribed for the student by a physician;
- (d) Robbery or extortion;
- (e) Assault or battery upon any school employee.

The Principal shall immediately suspend and shall recommend expulsion of a student that they determine has committed any of the following acts at school or at a school activity off school grounds:

- (a) Possessing, selling, or furnishing a firearm;
- (b) Brandishing a knife at another person;

- (c) Unlawfully selling a controlled substance;
- (d) Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery;
- (e) Possession of an explosive.

The Principal may recommend expulsion for the remaining grounds (as noted in EC Section 48900).

Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

For students with disabilities, the law requires additional procedures and considerations:

SUSPENSION

Special Education: When a student who receives special education services is suspended, school staff must determine if an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is needed to create a Behavior Intervention Plan or to review and modify an existing Behavior Intervention Plan to organize more targeted behavioral instruction and intervention to prevent the recurrence of the misconduct. Continued misconduct resulting in suspension will require an IEP team meeting to determine if additional instructional and/or behavioral supports are needed and examine the appropriateness of current placement and services. The student cannot be suspended for more than 10 days in a school year. If the student has been suspended two (2) times, or the total days of suspension accumulate to five (5), eight (8), or 10 school days, an IEP meeting must be convened to determine appropriate services/placement.

Section 504: A student who has a Section 504 plan is considered as a general education student and can be suspended for the same number of days as a general education student, but at 10 days of suspension, there must be an analysis in a Section 504 Manifestation Determination meeting to review and, if appropriate, modify the current Section 504 Plan, including updating or developing appropriate accommodations as warranted.

Expulsion:

Special Education: Before a student who receives special education services can be recommended for expulsion, an IEP team must hold a pre-expulsion IEP meeting and conduct a manifestation determination. If a student with disabilities is expelled, they are entitled to receive the services specified in their IEP during the term of expulsion. The student is also entitled to post-expulsion services (see Rehabilitation and Reinstatement from Expulsion below) during the term of expulsion. If the student is not expelled, they will be placed in the most appropriate setting as determined in the student's IEP.

Section 504: An expulsion of a student being served under Section 504 is considered a disciplinary change of placement and can only be issued if the school's Section 504 team conducts a Section 504 Manifestation Determination meeting and finds the conduct being disciplined is not a direct manifestation of the student's disability and/or a direct result of the District's failure to implement the student's Section 504 Plan, if applicable. However, if the student's expulsion recommendation involves the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol, the student loses the procedural protections provided by Section 504, including the requirement of making a Manifestation Determination analysis prior to a disciplinary change of placement. For more information, please refer to A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)

Appeal for Suspensions and Opportunity Transfers

Appeals of suspensions and opportunity transfers may be addressed directly with the Local District.

Rehabilitation and Reinstatement from Expulsion

Ararat Charter School Title I Coordinator is tasked to oversee that mandated services such as counseling and other supports will be provided and facilitate rehabilitation and reinstatement to the comprehensive school program for all expelled students (EC Sections 48916 and 48916.1 and Assembly Bill 922). This state-mandated program is designed to facilitate the provision of educational and support services for all expelled students. Core program services include:

- Facilitating appropriate and timely educational placements for all expelled students;
- Conducting thorough AB 922 student/parent intake assessments and developing individualized rehabilitation plans;
- Monitoring student social, behavioral, and academic progress;
- Providing direct support service;
- Consulting, collaborating, and coordinating services with District staff and community agency personnel;
- Facilitating the Reinstatement Review Committee for students who have met eligibility criteria in the areas of academic achievement, attendance, and social adjustment;
- Per the Delegation of Authority, recommending reinstatement on behalf of the Governing Board, and placing students in appropriate educational programs after reinstatement;
- Providing ongoing services to students not recommended for reinstatement.

SCHOOL CAMPUS VOLUNTEERS

School volunteers assist our school by providing support to teachers and other staff through a variety of activities. The school's office facilitates the processing of school volunteers, maintains a database of school volunteers, and offers training for the office equipment. School volunteers must meet basic health and safety requirements to ensure the well-being of all students and staff. Volunteers also must familiarize themselves with ACS's Volunteer Policy before they can volunteer. Field trips and on-site fundraising are also subject to the same policy. The purpose of the Volunteer Programs is to augment and enhance educational and support services to schools and offices by leveraging the rich talents and expertise of parents/guardians and members of the school community. Volunteers contribute to schools in the following ways:



- Enrich the school experience for students and staff
- Assist teachers in the classrooms
- Assist students, staff, parents, and community activities
- Promote partnerships between the school, the home, and the community
- Serve as positive role models for students

FOUR-TIERED VOLUNTEER SYSTEM					
Tier 1	On-Demand Safety Parent or Guardian Volunteer	On-Demand Extended Family Volunteer	Single Event Volunteer		
Tier II	Classroom Volunteer	Room Parent	Campus Volunteer	Office Volunteer	Field Trip or Event Chaperone or Volunteer
Tier III	One-on-One Tutor	Cafeteria Volunteer	Overnight Field Trip Chaperone or Volunteer	Student Activities Volunteer	
Tier IV	At-Home Volunteer	Virtual Volunteer			

The four-tiered volunteer system was developed to assist the school with identifying the various health and safety requirements, and duties and responsibilities for volunteers. The duties and responsibilities outlined below are only a summary and are ***NOT intended to be all-inclusive.***

Tier I Volunteers

Required: California Megan's Law Website Clearance

Required: COVID-19 Liability Waiver

Recommended: DOJ Clearance

Not Required: TB Clearance

Must be directly supervised at ALL times by school staff

Volunteers must submit a Single Event or On-Demand Application and sign the Volunteer Commitment Form.

Single Event Volunteer

Volunteers for one day only in the entire school year. Potential volunteers fill out the Single Event Volunteer Application.

On-Demand Safety Parent/Guardian/Extended Family Volunteer

Only parents, guardians, and extended family, at the discretion of the principal, can participate as Tier I "On-Demand Safety Volunteers." Volunteers support schools in case the Principal or Designee declares *an on-demand safety need* that requires safety support from parents, guardians, or an extended family whose child attends the public school.

The volunteer would fill out the On-Demand Volunteer Application and submit it to the Principal or designee. Principals or the designee in anticipation of such a safety demand, may, within a reasonable period, invite parents/guardians/extended family to fill out an On-Demand Safety Volunteer Application with the understanding that their support will not be implemented until the declaration is made by the administration.

Tier II Volunteers

Required: Fingerprint Clearance

Required: California Megan's Law Website Clearance

Required: TB Clearance

Required: COVID-19 Liability Waiver

Must be directly supervised at ALL times by school staff.

Volunteers must fill out the Volunteer Application and sign the Volunteer Commitment Form.

Classroom Volunteer – Supervised by: Principal/Teacher

- **Assists the classroom teacher**
- **Works in the classroom with small groups of students (2 or more) to reinforce skills**
- **Performs clerical or record-keeping tasks for the teacher in the classroom (e.g., classroom assignments, homework collected, etc.)**
- **Volunteers are not to have access to student, family, or employee records.**
- **Present information to the class in areas of specialized expertise**

Room Parent – Supervised by: Principal/Teacher

- **Assists teacher in communicating with parents who agree to be contacted**

- Plans, coordinates, and seeks help from other parents for classroom celebrations in compliance with the School's policy

Campus Volunteer – Supervised by: Leadership Team

- Safety Valet / School Tours / Playground

Office Volunteer – Supervised by: Operations Team

- Assists school staff with duplicating and preparing outgoing or instructional materials
- Volunteers are not to have access to student, family, or employee records

Field Trip/Event Chaperone Volunteer – Supervised by: Teacher/Certificated Staff

- Assists during field trips under the direct supervision of certificated staff

Tier III Volunteers

Required: DOJ Clearance

Required: California Megan's Law Website Clearance

Required: TB Clearance

Must be directly supervised at ALL times by school staff.

Volunteers must fill out the Volunteer Application and sign the Volunteer Commitment Form

One-on-One Tutor (Virtual or On-Campus)

Supervised by: Principal/Teacher/Certificated Staff Assigned by Principal

- Provides directed assistance to assigned students one-on-one virtually or on-campus in identified target academic areas with the teacher or Certificated Staff Assigned by Principal in the classroom or breakout room

Cafeteria Volunteer

Supervised by: Principal/Cafeteria Manager/Teacher/ Staff Assigned by Principal

Assists children and staff with the distribution of food, cleanup, and assists in maintaining an orderly and safe environment during mealtimes in the school cafeteria and during Breakfast in the Classroom.

Overnight Field Trip Chaperone Volunteer

Supervised by: Teacher/ Certificated Staff Assigned by Principal

Assists designated teacher in the supervision of an assigned group of students on overnight field trips

Overnight Field Trip Chaperone Volunteer

Supervised by: Teacher/ Certificated Staff Assigned by Principal

Assists designated teacher in the supervision of an assigned group of students on overnight field trips

Student Activities Volunteer

Supervised by: Principal/Certificated Staff Assigned by Principal

Assists with administratively approved student sports activities, band, clubs, culinary groups, etc.

Tier IV Volunteers

Required: California Megan's Law Website Clearance

Optional: DOJ Clearance

Not Required: TB Clearance

Not Required: Liability Waiver

Volunteers must fill out the Volunteer Application and sign the Volunteer Commitment Form.

Virtual or At-Home Volunteer

- Assists the school or office from home or other non-campus or non-office location
- Does not interact with or have access to students

Note: Volunteers who will interact with students in a virtual environment, such as a classroom, should be processed as Tier II volunteers. Volunteers who will interact with students in a virtual environment in breakout rooms should be processed as Tier III volunteers.

For more information on volunteering please contact the School's Office at 818-994-2904.

INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Individuals interested in volunteering must check with the classroom teacher, administrator, or designee regarding available Tier II, Tier III, and Tier IV volunteer opportunities before submitting an application.

- ▶ All applicants will be asked to accept the School Volunteer Program Waiver of Liability.
- ▶ Virtual volunteers will be cleared to begin service once they receive an approval email from info@araratcharterschool.com.
- ▶ Volunteers do not receive compensation for the services they provide.
- ▶ Volunteers must meet certain health and safety requirements, including Covid-19 and Tuberculosis (TB) clearance.
- ▶ Volunteers may not replace the direct job duties of an Ararat Charter School employee.
- ▶ On-Campus volunteers are not permitted to bring children during their service hours.
- ▶ Volunteers are expected to sign and abide by the ACS Volunteer Commitment Form.
- ▶ Volunteers are expected to follow all school policies, including the ACS Code of Conduct with Students and the ACS Employee Code of Ethics.
- ▶ On-Campus Tier II and Tier III volunteers will receive an official badge once their application has been approved.
- ▶ Tier I, and Tier IV volunteers will be emailed a letter in place of a badge when they are approved to volunteer.
- ▶ Once a person receives the ACS volunteer badge they are cleared to provide on-campus Tier II or Tier III volunteer services at the designated classroom or office until the end of the school year or until the principal or designee determines volunteer services are no longer required.
- ▶ The permanent ACS volunteer badges are non-transferable between volunteers. Badges must be visible while volunteers are providing service on campus.
- ▶ On-Campus Tier II and Tier III school volunteers are required to sign in and pick up their ACS volunteer badges upon entering the campus. School volunteers are to sign out when they exit the campus and leave their ACS volunteer badges at the school at the end of the day.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION ROLLOVER PROCESS

Due to health and safety precautions, the volunteer application forms will not be rolled over from one year to the next.

Designees and approvers must annually enter the date they verified applicants' DOJ clearance and that they do not appear in the CA Megan's Law Online database. TB Clearance dates are valid for up to four years from the initial clearance date. Fingerprint Clearance dates may also be re-entered provided that volunteers have not had more than a two-year gap in volunteer service.

SAFETY CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS CALIFORNIA MEGAN'S LAW WEBSITE CLEARANCE

In compliance with the LAUSD policy, the administrator or administrative designee must check all volunteers, including on-campus and virtual volunteers, against the California Megan's Law Website at <http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/>. Any volunteer applicant whose name appears on the California Megan's Law Website is prohibited from serving as a volunteer on-site in any capacity for any length of time, including Single Event activities.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) FINGERPRINTING CLEARANCE

Tier II and Tier III volunteers must be fingerprinted. Volunteer applicants need to be fingerprinted only once during their volunteer services. However, if the volunteer ceases to volunteer for a period of two years or longer, a new fingerprint clearance is required. ACS adheres to the California State statutes pertaining to supervised volunteerism in public schools. Previous school employees (certificated and classified) who wish to volunteer must be fingerprinted.

HEALTH CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

Health clearances are required for all volunteers except for active ACS employees. Tier II and Tier III volunteers must provide clearance of TB prior to starting on-campus volunteer services. Valid forms of TB clearance include a letter from a medical professional stating that the patient does not have Tuberculosis.

TB test results for new volunteers are valid for up to 60 days prior to starting volunteer services. TB clearance for continuing volunteers is valid for a period of up to four years.

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

The following section describes other types of volunteers and the criteria they must adhere to when volunteering at a school.

Extended Family Members

Extended family members include grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, siblings, etc. Extended Family Members must submit the appropriate application, and sign and submit the ACS Volunteer Commitment Form.

Community Members

Community members are defined as anyone who lives in the surrounding community of a school or is an employee of community-based organizations and agencies or is a business representative from the wider business community or the local community. Community members must submit the appropriate application, and sign and submit the ACS Volunteer Commitment Form.

High School Students

High school students currently enrolled in 10th through 12th grade may volunteer with permission of their parent/guardian and the school administrator or designee. The Student Volunteer Permission Form must be signed by the student and the parent/guardian, and the attending school's administration and submitted to the school administrator.

The student must also sign the ACS Volunteer Commitment Form and submit it to the school administrator. The school must ensure that the volunteer forms, which contain student information, are kept in the school's main office in a secure locked location for five years.

ACS Active Employees

Ararat employees who volunteer must also fill out the Volunteer application. The Charter School requires employees to submit fingerprint and TB clearance prior to the date of hire so the health and safety clearance requirements have been met for active ACS employees.

University Interns and Volunteers from Community Organizations with MOUs

Tier III volunteers associated with community organizations are required to complete the volunteer application and go through the health and safety screening process that includes fingerprint clearance.

University students aged 18 or older who wish to volunteer without compensation or fulfillment of university program requirements are welcome to apply as community members.

SCHOOL VISITORS

ACS is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for its students. The enhanced involvement and assistance of parents, community members, and organization representatives in school programs and activities have increased the number of school campus visitors. In some instances, campus visitors have created concerns for staff. Therefore, all school campus visitors must be informed and must adhere to the laws and school policies of visitors to school campuses, as stated in ACS policy.

- All campus visitors must have the consent and approval of the **Principal or Compliance Manager by completing the classroom observation request form.**
- Permission to visit must be given at the time requested if at all possible or within a reasonable period of time following the request. This does not preclude visits from occurring on the same day as requested.
- Children who are not enrolled at the school are not to be on the campus unless prior approval of the principal/designee has been obtained.

Parents do have the right to:

- 1- Be informed in advance of the procedures for visiting the school;
- 2- Request and obtain approval of the principal/designee to enter a school campus;
- 3- Observe in the classroom in which their child is enrolled for a maximum of 20 minutes after making a request;
- 4- Observe in the classroom or classrooms for the purpose of selecting the school in which their child will be enrolled within a reasonable period of time after making a request;
- 5- Be aware that classroom visitors often distract the students and that what you see may be different than what occurs on a regular basis.
- 6- Request a meeting with the classroom teacher and/or school principal/designee following the observation, and meet with their child's teacher(s) and/or the school principal/designee within a reasonable period of time after making a request.
- 7- Any individual who disrupts a school site or fails to follow school rules and/or procedures is subject to removal from the school site and will be further restricted from visiting the school.



Parents do not have the right to:

- 1- Willfully interfere with the discipline, order, or conduct in any school classroom or activity with the intent to disrupt, obstruct, or inflict damage to property or bodily injury upon any person.
- 2- Disrupt class work or extracurricular activities, or cause disorder in a place where a school employee is required to perform his or her duties.

Parents should:

- Follow the established school policy in requesting a classroom visitation from the principal/designee.
- Complete a visitor's permit and obtain the principal/designee's approval before proceeding to the classroom.
- Sign in and out of the Visitor Book and get a Visitor Pass from the office staff.
- Enter and leave the classroom as quietly as possible.
- Do not converse with the students, teacher, and/or instructional aides during the visitation.
- Do not interfere with the execution of any school activity during the visitation.
- Keep the length and frequency of the classroom visits reasonable (to be determined by the activity being observed).
- Keep the frequency of classroom visits reasonable (to be determined by the activity being observed).
- Follow the school's established procedures for scheduling an appointment with the teacher(s) and/or principal/designee after the classroom visit, if needed.
- Administrator's Authority Adults and minors over 16 years of age who enter a school campus and fail to adhere to the posted "Visitor's Policy" or who defy the principal/designee's authority may be reported to the appropriate police agency and may be subject to criminal charges.
- Visitors may not participate in field trips.
- ACS Policy states that smoking and the use of all tobacco products are prohibited on all school properties.

All volunteers must have a current TB test clearance, be cleared from any criminal charges by the Department of Justice, and have a completed COVID-19 Vaccination card.

NEWS MEDIA ACCESS AND PUBLICITY

Occasionally, reporters and other members of the news media may visit the school to write about, photograph, or videotape activities such as school events, school assemblies, special programs, or newsworthy events. Taking a picture of a student requires consent from a parent/legal guardian. Parents/legal guardians sign the Authorization and Release Form at the time of enrollment to grant that permission. The Permission to Photograph or Videography Form covers publicizing good news that the Charter School may want to share on the School's website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or other social media sites. Parents/legal guardians who do not want their child to be interviewed, videotaped, or photographed should not sign or return that form. However, even with a signed form, students can turn down a request to be interviewed or photographed by telling their teacher.

Student Health and Safety

SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

ACS is committed to ensuring a safe school environment for all students and staff. ASC has developed a Safe School Plan which will be reviewed and revised by the School Leadership Council when needed.

CHILD ABUSE

Any school employee who has a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has occurred or is occurring is required by law to file a suspected child abuse report with the appropriate child protective services agency, such as the local police, sheriff's department, or the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Parents may learn more about the Safe School Plan from **the Compliance Manager or a member** of the School Safety Planning Committee, which is responsible for annually reviewing and updating the Safe School Plan. The site administrator will print out the plan and make enough copies so that it is readily available for inspection to all school staff and the public. Copies should be available from key personnel and such places as the main office, and the emergency bin.

SCHOOL BUS AND PASSENGER SAFETY

All students who are transported in a school bus or school student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety. A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUGS AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND PROHIBITION

ACS does not tolerate the use, possession, or sale of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco by students on school campuses or at school-sponsored activities. School administrators must take immediate action to prevent, discourage, and eliminate the use or possession of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco on campus and at school activities, in cooperation with local law enforcement.

GUN-FREE SAFE SCHOOL

The possession of firearms on school campuses is prohibited by the Federal Gun-Free Safe Schools Act and California law. Students found in possession of a firearm will be subject to arrest, will be suspended, and recommended for expulsion. Possession includes, but is not limited to storage in lockers, purses, backpacks, or automobiles.

CALIFORNIA MEGAN'S LAW NOTIFICATION

Parents/legal guardians and members of the public have the right to review information regarding registered sex offenders at the main office of the local law enforcement agency for this school district. (Penal Code Section 290.4). In accordance with the School's policy, **Compliance Manager must** annually check all volunteer applicants, including ACS employee volunteers and

continuing volunteers, at the beginning of the school year or before volunteer service starts against the California Megan's Law online database for sex offenders at: <http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/>.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Administrators at ACS work diligently to make sure that students and staff are prepared for an emergency. Every school has a detailed Coordinated Safe School Plan that provides guidance for the school staff in an emergency. Regular drills are a part of a school's activities. Every school conducts the following types of drills:

- Fire Drill
- Earthquake or Emergency Drill
- Protected Campus or "Lockdown" Drill
- Duck, Cover and Hold Drill
- Take Cover Drill



Parents are asked to make sure that their students actively participate and take these drills seriously. These drills make the public schools the safest place for students during an emergency. In addition to conducting regular drills, each school stocks emergency supplies to sustain students and staff. These supplies include the following: water, food, first aid supplies, search and rescue supplies and sanitation items. School staff regularly checks these supplies.

HEALTH INFORMATION

A student returning to school following a serious or prolonged illness, injury, surgery, or other hospitalization, must have written permission by the licensed California health care provider to attend school, including any recommendations regarding physical activity.

A student returning to school with sutures (stitches, staples), ace bandage (elastic bandage) casts, splints, crutches, cane, walker, or a wheelchair must have a licensed California health care provider's written permission to attend school that includes any recommendations and/or restrictions related to physical activity, mobility and safety.

An excuse (less than 10 weeks) from a physical education class may be granted to a student who is unable to participate in regular or modified curriculum for a temporary period of time due to illness or injury. A parent's written request for an excuse will be accepted for up to 5 days; thereafter, a written request is needed from the student's health care provider.



Students are allowed to wear protective gear (hats, sun visors) while outdoors at recess. School will regulate the type of sun protective clothing/headgear in accordance with California Education Code Section 35183.5. Students are also allowed to use sunscreen (over the counter) as an allowable sun protection measure for their outdoor activities while at school.

ASTHMA PROGRAM

Asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism that may interfere with student achievement. If your student is frequently absent due to asthma symptoms, frequently in the doctor's office because of asthma, in the emergency room, or recently hospitalized due to asthma, their asthma may not be well controlled. You may refer your student to the Asthma Program by contacting the school nurse. Students referred to the Asthma program improve their control of symptoms and decrease days missed from school.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

Communicable disease inspections may be conducted periodically. A student suspected of having a communicable disease will be excluded from school until guidelines for readmission are met. Guidelines for exclusion and readmission follow policies set forth by ACS, the state Department of Health, and the Department of Education. Guidance in addressing communicable diseases also comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and national organizations.

Temporary exclusion of a student from the school generally occurs for communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, the following conditions: conjunctivitis (pink eye); skin infections (impetigo), strep throat, chickenpox, scabies, head lice, and pertussis (whooping cough). Exclusion may occur immediately or at the end of the school day, depending on the disease, its communicability, and district, county, and state policy. Readmission to school is based on condition and appropriate treatment.

Schools may notify parents/legal guardians about school exposure to chickenpox, head lice, COVID-19, or other communicable diseases that pose a risk to students. In some cases, decisions regarding notification are made by public health officials. The parent/legal guardian for whom certain communicable diseases present a particular hazard should contact the school nurse. Students at risk include those with conditions affecting the immune system and those receiving certain drugs for the treatment of cancers or organ transplants.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, guidance from public health officials may be added or changed. Ararat Charter School will continue to abide by all requirements and guidelines set forth by public health officials.

FEVER/INFLUENZA

Any student excluded from school with flu-like symptoms and/or **a fever of 100 degrees or greater must be free from symptoms and fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to school.**

An effort will be made to notify parents/guardians about school exposure to chickenpox, head lice, or other communicable disease that pose a risk to students. The parent/guardian of a student for whom chickenpox presents a particular hazard should contact the school nurse. Students at risk include those with conditions affecting the immune system and those receiving certain drugs for the treatment of cancers or organ transplants. Information on the treatment and prevention of head lice is available from the school nurse or school health personnel.

DIABETES MELLITUS

Managing Type 1 diabetes at school is most effective when there is a partnership between students, parents/ legal guardians, school staff, health care providers, and administrators. Students can be assisted to perform blood glucose monitoring, hypoglycemia treatment, ketone testing, carbohydrate counting, and insulin administration during school hours when there is written authorization from their licensed California health care provider and parent/legal guardian. Please contact the credentialed school nurse at school to initiate the planning for diabetes management. The California Department of Education (CDE) Fact Sheet can be found at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/type2diabetes.asp>.

IMMUNIZATIONS

New students to Ararat Charter School will not be admitted or enrolled unless a current, complete immunization record provided by a health care provider or the health department is presented at the time of enrollment. Students may be conditionally admitted and enrolled if missing doses of required vaccines are not yet due. Students who are in foster care, experiencing homelessness, migrant, military family, or who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are to be granted Conditional Admission and enrolled immediately, regardless of the availability of immunization records or whether

immunizations are up to date or complete. The immunization requirements do not prohibit students from accessing special education and related services required by their IEPs.

There are no grace periods for students who lack vaccines that are currently due. Students new to Ararat Charter School must show that they have received all currently required immunizations in order to be enrolled. In addition, all students entering or advancing to 7th grade must show evidence that they have received a pertussis-containing vaccine booster (e.g., Tdap) on or after their 7th birthday. The Td vaccine does not meet the requirement; however, DTaP/DTP does meet the requirement if administered after the 7th birthday. All students entering or transferring to a different school at any grade level and/or entering or advancing to 7th grade are required to have a second dose of the varicella vaccine. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are encouraged to visit their child's health care at: www.shotsforschool.org.

The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. Students who do not meet the state guidelines must be excluded from school until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of the public health department. Only a Medical Doctor (MD) or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) licensed in California may exempt a student from some or all immunization requirements due to a medical condition: As of January 1, 2021, all new medical exemptions for school and childcare must be issued through California Immunization Registry-Medical Exemption (CAIR-ME). Parents/legal guardians and physicians can register and create an account in CAIR-ME at any time. Once registered, parents/legal guardians can log in to CAIR-ME to request a medical exemption. Parents/legal guardians take the exemption request number to their child's physician, who can log in to CAIR-ME to issue the exemption. Once the exemption is issued, the physician prints the two (2) page form and provides a copy to the parents/legal guardians to give to their child's school or childcare facility.

A physician will be required to provide the following information on the medical exemption in CAIR-ME:

- The specific nature of the physical condition or medical circumstance of the child for which a licensed physician does not recommend immunization;
- Each specified required vaccine that is being exempted;
- Whether the medical exemption is permanent or temporary;
- If the exemption is temporary, an expiration date of no more than 12 calendar months from the date of signing.

School health personnel are available for consultation. There are many school-based clinics that offer immunizations to students. Parent/legal guardians can contact Student Medical Services for more information.

These required immunizations include:

Child's Grade	List of shots required to attend school
TK/K-12 Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (DTaP) - Five (5) doses• Polio - Four (4) doses• Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) - Two (2) doses• Hepatitis B (Hep B) - Three (3) doses• Varicella (chickenpox) – Two (2) doses <p>NOTE: Four doses of DTaP are allowed if one was given on or after the fourth birthday. Three doses of DTaP meet the requirement if at least one dose of Tdap, DTaP, or DTP vaccine was given on or after the seventh birthday (also meets the 7th-12th grade Tdap requirement.) One or two doses of Td vaccine given on or after the seventh birthday count towards the requirement for DTaP. Three doses of Polio are allowed if one was given on or after fourth birthday. MMR doses must be given on or after first birthday. Two doses of measles, two doses of mumps, and one dose of rubella vaccine meet the requirement, separately or combined. Combination vaccines (e.g., MMRV) meet the requirements for individual component vaccines.</p>

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION/ASSISTANCE

Any student who is required to take, during the regular school day, medication (prescribed or over-the-counter) may be assisted by the school nurse or other designated school personnel if the school receives 1) a written statement from an authorized health care provider licensed by the State of California to prescribe medications detailing the method, amount, and time schedules by which such medication is to be taken, and 2) written consent from a parent/guardian for the school to assist in administration.



Students may not carry or use medication on campus without written consent. However, students may carry and self-administer certain medication (e.g., inhaled asthma medication or auto-injectable epinephrine medication) if the school receives the appropriate documentation. This includes:

1. A written statement from the authorized health care provider detailing the name of medication, method, amount and time schedules by which the medication is to be taken, and confirming that the student is able to self-administer the medication; and
2. A written statement from the parent or guardian of the student consenting to the self-administration, providing release for the school nurse or other health care personnel to consult with the health care provider of the student regarding any questions that may arise with regard to the medication, and releasing the school district and school personnel from liability in the case of adverse reaction.

Certain Asthma Action Plans may be sufficient for students to carry and self-administer asthma medication at school. A student may be subject to disciplinary action if the medication is used in a manner other than as prescribed. The required forms are available from the school nurse or administrator. School health personnel do not prescribe or give advice regarding medication.

ORAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Kindergarten students while enrolled in a public school, or first grade students not previously enrolled in a public school, must present evidence of having received an oral health assessment by May 31st of the school year. This assessment may be performed no earlier than 12 months prior to the date of the initial enrollment of the student into a public school. This law will impact students currently enrolled in kindergarten or first grade. The oral health assessment may be performed by a licensed dentist or other licensed or registered dental health professional. The parents or legal guardian of the student may be excused from complying with the oral health assessment if they sign a waiver stating that they could not find a dental office that accepted their child's insurance, they could not afford to pay for the assessment, or they did not want to have their child's oral health evaluated. There is no penalty for students and families who are not able to comply with the oral health assessment (e.g., students may not be excluded from school for noncompliance with the assessment or waiver).

MEDICAL CARE ON FIELD TRIPS

Each student's parent/legal guardian must provide written permission for a field trip and authorization for medical care. For those students with health issues/medical conditions, parents/legal guardians are responsible to provide all necessary medications, supplies, and equipment needed for the field trip at least five (5) school days prior to departure. In order to administer medication (prescription and over the counter) on the field trip, parents/legal guardians must have submitted a complete "Request For Medication To Be Taken During School Hours" form, which includes the parent/legal guardian signature and the written California licensed health care provider's order with signature and date. If a student needs a Specialized Physical Health Care Service (Protocol), a current completed Parent Consent and Authorized Healthcare Provider Authorization covering the field trip date(s) MUST be in place.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS AND RIGHT TO REFUSE



All students must complete a health screening examination on or before the 90th day after the student's entrance into first grade or such students must have obtained a waiver pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 124040 and 124085. This examination can be obtained from your family physician or possibly through the services provided by your County Health Department. Information and forms are distributed to students enrolled in kindergarten. If your child's medical status changes, please provide the teacher with a physician's written verification of the medical issue, especially if it impacts in any way your child's ability to perform schoolwork.

A parent/guardian having control or charge of any child enrolled in the Charter School may file annually with **the Compliance Manager** a written and signed statement stating that the parent/guardian will not consent to a physical examination of the child. Thereupon the child shall be exempt from any physical examination, but whenever there is a good reason to believe that the child is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, the child shall be sent home and shall not be permitted to return until the school authorities are satisfied that any contagious or infectious disease does not exist.

COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Ararat Charter School is committed to the health and safety of the school community. For the most updated school COVID-19 health and safety protocols, please visit: www.araratcharterschool.com

PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS

The Charter School recognizes that pregnant and parenting students are entitled to accommodations that provide them with the opportunity to succeed academically while protecting their health and the health of their children. A pregnant or parenting student is entitled to eight (8) weeks of parental leave, or more if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician, which the student may take before the birth of the student's infant if there is a medical necessity and after childbirth during the school year in which the birth takes place, inclusive of any mandatory summer instruction, in order to protect the health of the student who gives or expects to give birth and the infant, and to allow the pregnant or parenting student to care for and bond with the infant. The Charter School will ensure that absences from the student's regular school program are excused until the student is able to return to the regular school program.

Upon return to school after taking parental leave, a pregnant or parenting student will be able to make up work missed during the pregnant or parenting student's leave, including, but not limited to, makeup work plans and reenrollment in courses.

Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pregnant or parenting students may be filed under the Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") of the Charter School. The complaint may be filed in writing with the compliance officer:

Dr. Aida Tatiossian
Principal
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: atate@araratcharterschool.com

Ovsanna Keshishyan
Compliance Manager
6555 Sylmar Ave.

Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: okeshishyan@araratcharterschool.com

A copy of the UCP is available upon request at the main office. For further information on any part of the complaint procedures, including filing a complaint or requesting a copy of the complaint procedures, please contact the Principal.

NAME/GENDER CHANGE REQUEST

Student records include a student's legally recognized name and gender. If a parent/legal guardian wishes for the student to be known by a preferred name/gender that differs from the legally recognized one, the parent/legal guardian may complete the Name/Gender Change Request Form, which is available at the School. The preferred name/gender will appear in most but not all School-generated communications and records, although the legal name/gender will continue to be used in records as required by law. If a name/gender change is issued by court order, families may provide a copy to the school so that the student's records can be updated.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Charter School recognizes that when unidentified and unaddressed, mental health challenges can lead to poor academic performance, increased likelihood of suspension and expulsion, chronic absenteeism, student attrition, homelessness, incarceration, and/or violence. Access to mental health services at the Charter School and in our community is not only critical to improving the physical and emotional safety of students, but it also helps address barriers to learning and provides support so that all students can learn problem-solving skills and achieve in school and, ultimately, in life. The following resources are available to your child:

Available on Campus:

- School-Based Counseling Services – your child is encouraged to directly contact a Charter School official by coming into the office during school hours and request an appointment to speak with a counselor. The School's officials will make every effort to arrange the counseling sessions. The counselor supports students by providing individual sessions, group or parent consultations whenever a student is having a difficult time due to academic stress, transition to changes in their environment, or social concerns, including isolation. Counseling services, whether provided by our Charter School or by an outside provider listed herein, are voluntary.
- Special Education Services – if you believe your child may have a disability, you are encouraged to directly contact a [INSERT NAME] at [INSERT PHONE NUMBER] to request an evaluation.
- Prescription Medication while on Campus – if your child requires prescription medication during school hours and you would like assistance from School staff in providing this medication to your child, please contact the school's office at 818-994-2904.

SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, & POSTVENTION

Suicide is a serious public health problem that takes an enormous toll on families, friends, classmates, co-workers, and communities. Suicide prevention is the collective effort of all adults that support and work with students, including parents/legal guardians, caregivers, families, local community organizations, mental health practitioners, and related professionals. The aim is to reduce the incidence of suicide through education, awareness, and services.

If IMMEDIATE assistance is needed due to a life-threatening situation, call 911. For a psychiatric emergency, contact the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health 24-hour ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255, available 24 hours every day.

Available Nationally:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline - This organization provides confidential support for adults and youth in distress, including prevention and crisis resources. Available 24 hours at 1-800-273-8255.
- The Trevor Project - This organization provides suicide prevention and crisis intervention for LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13 and 24. **Available at 1-866-488-7386 or visit <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>.**
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America – This organization is a community- based mentorship program. Community-specific program information can be found online at <https://www.bbbs.org> or by calling (813) 720-8778.

CUSTODY LAW

Under California law (Family Code section 3010), each parent is equally entitled to custody of his or her child. It is the policy of ACS to obey Family Code section 3010 so that either parent, upon showing proper identification, may check the child out of school, or otherwise make decisions regarding the health, education and welfare of the child. Family Code section 3025 provides that a non-custodial parent shall not be denied access to school records pertaining to his or her child. ACS shall allow either parent to access their child's school records, including medical records in the school's possession.

If a court has made order(s) restricting or limiting a parent's rights to visitation or custody of a child and/or access to information about the child, it is the obligation of both parents to immediately provide a legible copy of the court stamped order, signed by the judge, to each child's school site. Copies of court orders can be obtained in the clerk's office at the courthouse where the orders were made.

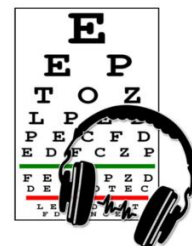
One parent's oral or written assertion, without confirmation by a signed court order, is insufficient reasons for the school to deny the other parent access to the child and/or the child's records.

ACS will follow the most recent signed child custody court order that has been provided, or in the absence of any orders, California law as cited above, giving parents equal rights to custody of the child.

Parents are requested to avoid involving school personnel in child custody disputes. If a parent is uncertain as to whether the school has current information regarding child custody, he or she should contact their child's school site to verify the school has been provided with legible copies of the most recent court orders.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENING

Screening of the students' vision and hearing will be done at the school site in accordance with State mandates. Parents/Guardians will be notified of any findings as a result of the mandated screening tests that require further attention.



NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and EC Sections 49060 and following, afford parents/legal guardians and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within five (5) business days after the day the school receives a request for access.
 - To request access, parents/legal guardians or eligible students should submit to the School Office a written request that identifies the student education records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/legal guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent/legal guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.
 - Parents/legal guardians or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write to the Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/legal guardian or eligible student, the school will notify the parent/legal guardian or eligible student of the decision and of their right to appeal this decision. Additional information regarding the appeal process will be provided to the parent/legal guardian.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA/state law authorizes disclosure without consent.
 - One (1) exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. School officials fall into two (2) broad categories:
 - 1) A school official is most often a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board;
 - 2) A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records. Examples include attorneys, auditors, medical consultants, or therapists; a parent/legal guardian or student volunteering to serve on an official committee such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent/legal guardian, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school or school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office / U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue,
SW Washington, DC 20202

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records without consent of the parent/legal guardian or eligible student if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in Section 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of authorized directory information, and disclosures to the parent/legal guardian or eligible student, Section 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents/legal guardians and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. In accordance with state and federal law, a school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents/legal guardians or the eligible student if the requester has a legitimate educational objective and is in one (1) of the following categories:

- Disclosure to other school officials, including teachers within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other

parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in Section 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(2) are met. [Section 99.31(a)(1)];

- Disclosure to officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of Section 99.34. [Section 99.31(a)(2)] and [EC Section 49068];
- Disclosure to authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state and local educational authorities, such as the California Department of Education in the parent/legal guardian or eligible student's state. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of Section 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of federal- or state-supported education programs or for the enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, enforcement, or compliance activity on their behalf. [Section 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35];
- Disclosure in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. [Section 99.31(a)(4)];
- Disclosure to state and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a state statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to Section 99.38. [Section 99.31(a)(5)];
- Disclosure to organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the school in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. [Section 99.31(a)(6)];
- Disclosure to accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. [Section 99.31(a)(7)];
- Disclosure to parents/legal guardians of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. [Section 99.31(a)(8)];
- Disclosure to a pupil 16 years of age or older or have completed the 10th grade;
- Disclosure to unaccompanied homeless youth age 14 or older;
- Disclosure to appropriate persons in connection with an emergency if the knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of a pupil or other persons. Schools or school districts releasing information pursuant to this subparagraph shall comply with the requirements set forth in Section 99.32(a)(5) of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations;
- Disclosure to accrediting associations in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
- Disclosure to agencies or organizations in connection with the application of a pupil for, or receipt of financial aid. However, information permitting the personal identification of a pupil or his or her parents/legal guardians may be disclosed only as may be necessary for purposes such as determining the eligibility of the pupil for financial aid, determining the amount of the financial aid, to determine the conditions that will be imposed regarding the financial aid, or to enforce the terms or conditions of the financial aid;
- Disclosure to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. [Section 99.31(a)(9)];
- Disclosure to appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency is subject to Section 99.36. [Section 99.31(a)(10)];
- Disclosure of information the school has designated as "directory information" under Section 99.37 [Section 99.31(a)(11)] if the parent/legal guardian/eligible student has not opted out of disclosure.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's/legal guardian's prior written consent. The primary purpose of the directory information is to allow the school or school district to include information from the student's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill showing the student's name and role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs.

Outside organizations include but are not limited to companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, federal law requires school districts receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended ESEA to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the names, addresses, and telephone listings of secondary

students, unless parents/legal guardians have advised the school district that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

All the following items of directory information relating to a student may be released to an authorized recipient unless a written request is on file to withhold its release as indicated in the Information Release Form submitted to the school:

- Name;
- Address;
- Telephone number;
- Date of birth;
- Dates of attendance (e.g., by academic year or semester);
- Current and most previous school(s) attended;
- Degrees, honors, and awards received.

The third-party recipients authorized by the School to receive directory information are listed in the Information Release Form. If parents/guardians do not want the school or school district to disclose the types of information designated below as directory information from the student's education records without the prior parent/legal guardian's written consent, notify the school by using the Information Release Form in this handbook. In addition, parents/legal guardians or eligible students must provide consent for the release of directory information of students who are eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (EC Section 49073). Absent such consent, the directory information concerning the student will not be released.

THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents/legal guardians of elementary and secondary students certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection, and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include, but are not limited to, the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit a survey that concerns one (1) or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent/legal guardian;
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent/legal guardian;
 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law;
 3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, or to sell, or otherwise distributing the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for or to students or educational institutions.)
- Inspect, upon request, and before administration or use:
 1. Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes;
 3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents/legal guardians to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.

The School has adopted policies in consultation with parents/legal guardians regarding these rights as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The District will directly notify parents/legal guardians of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The Charter School will also directly notify, such as through U.S. mail or email, parents/legal guardians of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent/legal guardian to opt a student out of participation of the specific activity or survey. ACS will make this notification to parents/legal guardians at the beginning of the school year if the School has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents/legal guardians will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt the student out of such activities and surveys. Parents/legal guardians will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this direct notification requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution;
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED;
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents/legal guardians who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue,
SW Washington, D.C. 20202

If you do not want the Charter School to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the Charter School in writing at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment.

Please send an email to: info@araratcharterschool.com with your request.

A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office.

GRADE CHANGE REQUEST PROCESS

Parents/legal guardians have a right to request a change of a student's grade on the following grounds:

- Mistake;
- Fraud;
- Bad faith; and/or;
- Incompetency in assigning the grade (EC Section 49066).

When grades are earned for any course of instruction taught in public schools, the grade earned by each student shall be the grade determined by the teacher of the course. In the absence of any of the grounds listed above, the grade shall be final.

Any request for a grade change must start with the classroom teacher within 30 days of the date the grade report was mailed. The next step, if not resolved with the teacher, is a written request to the principal. If not resolved, the decision may be appealed to the Principal and, finally, the Governing Board. At each step, the parent/legal guardian has the right to present information in support of the request.

USE OF STUDENT INFORMATION LEARNED FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

The Charter School complies with all federal, state, and local guidelines regarding the gathering and/or maintenance of information about any enrolled student obtained from social media in the student's educational record. The Charter School gathers student information from social media. Such information shall be maintained in the Charter School's records with regard to the student and shall be destroyed within one (1) year after a student turns 18 years of age or within one (1) year after the student is no longer enrolled in the Charter School, whichever occurs first. A non-minor student or a student's parent or guardian may access the student's records for examination of the information, request the removal of information or corrections made to information gathered or maintained by the Charter School by contacting the Principal.

BLACKBOARD CONNECT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Ararat Charter School uses a schoolwide notification system called Blackboard Connect (BBC) to communicate with parents/legal guardians and employees regarding emergency situations, attendance, school events, and other important issues affecting parents/legal guardians and the student. The BBC service allows the Charter School to send personalized voice messages to the family's home, work, or cell phones and contacts through email, text messaging, and social networks. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for the cost of text messages. Parents/legal guardians can specify on which phone they receive general notifications, attendance, and emergency communications by completing the Student Emergency Information Card. Ararat Charter School is able to reach everyone in the school community within minutes based on BBC's capabilities. Keeping parents/legal guardians more informed and involved leads to higher student achievement and student safety. Please help us by ensuring we have current contact information by completing the Student Emergency Information Card. Should the contact information change or needs to be corrected, please contact the school directly.

There are many instances when the school will attempt to reach parents/legal guardians:

- **General** notification messages are sent throughout the day. These messages are non-emergency in nature and announce upcoming events or reminders;
- **Attendance** notification messages are generally sent in the morning and in the early evening. These messages are sent to inform parents/legal guardians that the child has been reported with an unexcused absence or tardy for one (1) or more periods or an entire day of school. The most appropriate number is a daytime phone number. Working parents/legal guardians are encouraged to provide their work number or cell phone number. It is recommended that the attendance number not be the home number if no one is there during the day;
- **Emergency** notification messages are of an urgent nature and are sent when warranted. The phone number parents/legal guardians should provide is where parents/legal guardians are most likely to be reached during the majority of the waking hours. Blackboard Connect will call every number stored in the notification system, including the numbers for general and attendance notifications, to ensure that the parents/legal guardians are reached. This number should be for the parent/legal guardian and not the alternate contacts provided on the Student Emergency Information Card. The information on the Student Emergency Information Card will be utilized should the school not be able to reach the parent/legal guardian;
- **Teacher** messages are sent to inform parents/legal guardians of the student's academic standing, general behavior, work habits, classroom reminders, and notifications. These messages are sent via phone, email, or text and use the general phone number provided.

Important Call Delivery Tips

- When a call comes from the School, the message recipient's caller ID will display the school's phone number;
- When listening to a message, background noise may cause the system to stop and start over. Blackboard Connect is carefully tuned to determine whether a person or an answering machine/voicemail has been reached, and background noise may affect the delivery of the message. If possible, move to a quiet area, or press the mute button on the phone;

- If any part of a message is missed, please stay on the line, and press the * (star) key on the phone to hear the entire message again.

Opting Out of General Notifications

Every parent/legal guardian can opt-out from receiving general notification messages sent via phone, email, or text message:

- When a call is received, listen to the prompts at the end of the message to opt-out. To opt back into receiving messages, please call 818-994-2904.
- To opt-out of text messages, follow the instructions at the end of the message. To opt back into receiving text messages, please call 818-994-2904;
- To opt out of email messages, follow the instructions at the end of the message. To opt back into receiving email messages, please call 818-994-2904.

Only general notifications will be impacted. Attendance and emergency calls will continue to be sent.

Please have the student return the completed Student Emergency Information Card to the school as soon as possible. Should the contact information change or needs to be corrected, please contact the school directly. Only the school has the ability to change the contact information. It is important that the school has current contact information so parents/legal guardians can receive these important messages. All personal information is maintained in the strictest confidentiality.

APPENDIX: COMPLETE POLICIES

TITLE IX, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, DISCRIMINATION, AND BULLYING POLICY

Discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are all disruptive behaviors, which interfere with students' ability to learn, negatively affect student engagement, diminish school safety, and contribute to a hostile school environment. As such, Discovery Charter School ("ACS" or the "Charter School") prohibits any acts of discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment, intimidation, and bullying altogether. This policy is inclusive of instances that occur on any area of the school campus, at school-sponsored events and activities, regardless of location, through school-owned technology, and through other electronic means.

As used in this policy, discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are described as the intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, written communication or cyber-bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, based on the actual or perceived characteristics of mental or physical disability, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions, and parental status), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, nationality (including national origin, country of origin, and citizenship), race or ethnicity (including ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, ethnic background, and traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twist), religion (including agnosticism and atheism), religious affiliation, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, age or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or based on any other characteristic protected under applicable state or federal law or local ordinance. Hereafter, such actions are referred to as "misconduct prohibited by this Policy."

To the extent possible, the Charter School will make reasonable efforts to prevent students from being discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, and/or bullied, and will take action to investigate, respond, address and report on such behaviors in a timely manner. ACS school staff who witness acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so.

Moreover, the Charter School will not condone or tolerate misconduct prohibited by this Policy by any employee, independent contractor or other person with whom ACS does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This Policy applies to all employees, students, or volunteer actions and relationships, regardless of position or gender. ACS will promptly and thoroughly investigate and respond to any complaint of misconduct prohibited by this Policy in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent and will take appropriate corrective action, if warranted. ACS complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and local ordinances in its investigation of and response to reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

Title IX, Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination and Bullying Coordinator ("Coordinator"):

Dr. Aida Tatiossian
Principal
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: atate@araratcharterschool.com

Ovsanna Keshishyan
Compliance Manager
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: okeshishyan@araratcharterschool.com

Definitions

Prohibited Unlawful Harassment

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments or slurs.
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work or school because of sex, race or any other protected basis.
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.
- Deferential or preferential treatment based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

Prohibited Unlawful Harassment under Title IX

Title IX (20 U.S.C. § 1681 *et seq.*; 34 C.F.R. § 106.1 *et seq.*) and California state law prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex. In accordance with these existing laws, discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex in education institutions, including in the education institution's admissions and employment practices, is prohibited. All persons, regardless of sex, are afforded equal rights and opportunities and freedom from unlawful discrimination and harassment in education programs or activities conducted by ACS.

ACS is committed to providing a work and educational environment free of sexual harassment and considers such harassment to be a major offense, which may result in disciplinary action. Inquiries about the application of Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106 may be referred to the Coordinator, the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

Sexual harassment consists of conduct on the basis of sex, including but not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct on the basis of sex, regardless of whether or not the conduct is motivated by sexual desire, when: (a) Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or a condition of an individual's employment, education, academic status, or progress; (b) submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of employment, educational or academic decisions affecting the individual; (c) the conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment; and/or (d) submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the educational institution.

It is also unlawful to retaliate in any way against an individual who has articulated a good faith concern about sexual harassment against themselves or against another individual.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical assaults of a sexual nature, such as:
 - Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults.
 - Intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another's body, or poking another's body.
- Unwanted sexual advances, propositions or other sexual comments, such as:
 - Sexually oriented gestures, notices, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience.
 - Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment to an individual for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any individual to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward or deferential treatment for rejecting sexual conduct.
 - Subjecting or threats of subjecting a student or employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct or intentionally making the student's or employee's performance more difficult because of the student's or the employee's sex.
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the work or educational environment, such as:

- Displaying pictures, cartoons, posters, calendars, graffiti, objections, promotional materials, reading materials, or other materials that are sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning or pornographic or bringing or possessing any such material to read, display or view in the work or educational environment.
- Reading publicly or otherwise publicizing in the work or educational environment materials that are in any way sexually revealing, sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning or pornographic.
- Displaying signs or other materials purporting to segregate an individual by sex in an area of the work or educational environment (other than restrooms or similar rooms).

The illustrations of harassment and sexual harassment above are not to be construed as an all-inclusive list of prohibited acts under this Policy.

PROHIBITED BULLYING

Bullying is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act. Bullying includes one or more acts committed by a student or group of students that may constitute sexual harassment, hate violence, or creates an intimidating and/or hostile educational environment, directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing a reasonable student or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
2. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
3. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with the student's academic performance.
4. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by ACS.

Cyberbullying is an electronic act that includes the transmission of harassing communication, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Electronic act means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

1. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
2. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
 - a. Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in the definition of "bullying," above.
 - b. Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.
 - c. Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.
3. An act of "Cyber sexual bullying" including, but not limited to:

1 "Reasonable student" is defined as a student, including, but not limited to, an exceptional needs student, who exercises care, skill and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with his or her exceptional needs.

- a. The dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in definition of “bullying,” above. A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
 - b. “Cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
4. Notwithstanding the definitions of “bullying” and “electronic act” above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment means a written document filed and signed by a complainant who is participating in or attempting to participate in ACS’s education program or activity or signed by the Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that ACS investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

Respondent means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures

ACS has adopted the following procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying.

1. Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures

ACS advises students:

- a. To never share passwords, personal data, or private photos online.
- b. To think about what they are doing carefully before posting and by emphasizing that comments cannot be retracted once they are posted.
- c. That personal information revealed on social media can be shared with anyone including parents, teachers, administrators, and potential employers. Students should never reveal information that would make them uncomfortable if the world had access to it.
- d. To consider how it would feel receiving such comments before making comments about others online.

ACS informs Charter School employees, students, and parents/guardians of ACS’s policies regarding the use of technology in and out of the classroom. ACS encourages parents/guardians to discuss these policies with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with such policies.

2. Education

ACS employees cannot always be present when bullying incidents occur, so educating students about bullying is a key prevention technique to limit bullying from happening. ACS advises students that hateful and/or demeaning behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable in our society and at ACS and encourages students to practice compassion and respect each other.

Charter School educates students to accept all student peers regardless of protected characteristics (including but not limited to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identification, physical or cognitive disabilities, race, ethnicity, religion, and immigration status) and about the negative impact of bullying other students based on protected characteristics.

ACS’s bullying prevention education also discusses the differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and includes sample situations to help students learn and practice appropriate behavior and to develop techniques and strategies

to respond in a non-aggressive way to bullying-type behaviors. Students will also develop confidence and learn how to advocate for themselves and others, and when to go to an adult for help.

ACS informs ACS employees, students, and parents/guardians of this Policy and encourages parents/guardians to discuss this Policy with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with this Policy.

3. Professional Development

ACS annually makes available the online training module developed by the California Department of Education pursuant Education Code section 32283.5(a) to its certificated employees and all other ACS employees who have regular interaction with students.

ACS informs certificated employees about the common signs that a student is a target of bullying including:

- Physical cuts or injuries
- Lost or broken personal items
- Fear of going to school/practice/games
- Loss of interest in school, activities, or friends
- Trouble sleeping or eating
- Anxious/sick/nervous behavior or distracted appearance
- Self-destructiveness or displays of odd behavior
- Decreased self-esteem

Charter School also informs certificated employees about the groups of students determined by ACS, and available research, to be at elevated risk for bullying. These groups include but are not limited to:

- Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth (“LGBTQ”) and those youth perceived as LGBTQ; and
- Students with physical or learning disabilities.

ACS encourages its employees to demonstrate effective problem-solving, anger management, and self-confidence skills for ACS’s students.

Grievance Procedures

1. Scope of Grievance Procedures

ACS will comply with its Uniform Complaint Procedures (“UCP”) policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging unlawful harassment, discrimination, intimidation or bullying against a protected group or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one or more of the protected characteristics set forth in the UCP that:

- a. Are written and signed;
- b. Filed by an individual who alleges that that individual has personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, or by one who believes any specific class of individuals has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying prohibited by this part, or by a duly authorized representative who alleges that an individual student has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
- c. Submitted to the ACS UCP Compliance Officer not later than six (6) months from the date the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred, or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The following grievance procedures shall be utilized for reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy that do not comply with the writing, timeline, or other formal filing requirements of a uniform complaint. For formal complaints of sexual harassment, ACS will utilize the following grievance procedures in addition to its UCP when applicable.

2. Reporting

All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, to intervene when safe to do so, call for assistance, and report such incidents. The Board requires staff to follow the procedures in this policy for reporting alleged acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

Any student who believes they have been subject to misconduct prohibited by this Policy or has witnessed such prohibited misconduct is encouraged to immediately report such misconduct to the Coordinator:

Dr. Aida Tatiossian
Principal
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: atate@araratcharterschool.com

Ovsanna Keshishyan
Compliance Manager
6555 Sylmar Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: 818-994-2904
Fax: 818-994-8096
Email: okeshishyan@araratcharterschool.com

Complaints regarding such misconduct may also be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders may also be available to complainants.

While submission of a written report is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to submit a written report to the Coordinator. ACS will investigate and respond to all oral and written reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

Students are expected to report all incidents of misconduct prohibited by this Policy or other verbal, or physical abuses. Any student who feels they are a target of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, the Principal, Coordinator, a staff person or a family member so that the student can get assistance in resolving the issue in a manner that is consistent with this Policy.

ACS acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. All reports shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process to the greatest extent possible. This includes keeping the identity of the reporter confidential, as appropriate, except to the extent necessary to comply with the law, carry out the investigation and/or to resolve the issue, as determined by the Coordinator or administrative designee on a case-by-case basis.

ACS prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who files a report or complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation or proceeding related to misconduct prohibited by this Policy. Such participation or lack of participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades, or work assignments of the individual. Individuals alleging retaliation in violation of this Policy may file a grievance using the procedures set forth in this Policy. Knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

All supervisors of staff will receive sexual harassment training within six (6) months of their assumption of a supervisory position and will receive further training once every two (2) years thereafter. All staff, and any individual designated as a coordinator,

investigator or decision-maker will receive sexual harassment training and/or instruction concerning sexual harassment as required by law.

3. Supportive Measures

Upon the receipt of an informal or formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Coordinator will promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures. The Coordinator will consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and explain the process for filing a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint of sexual harassment or where no formal complaint of sexual harassment has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to ACS's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or ACS's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures available to complainants and respondents may include but are not limited to counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures. ACS will maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of ACS to provide the supportive measures.

4. Investigation and Response

Upon receipt of a report of misconduct prohibited by this Policy from a student, staff member, parent, volunteer, visitor or affiliate of ACS, the Coordinator (or administrative designee) will promptly initiate an investigation. In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than twenty-five (25) school days. If the Coordinator (or administrative designee) determines that an investigation will take longer than twenty-five (25) school days and needs to be delayed or extended due to good cause, the Coordinator (or administrative designee) will inform the complainant of the reasons for the delay or extension and provide an approximate date when the investigation will be complete.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Coordinator (or administrative designee) will meet with the complainant and, to the extent possible with respect to confidentiality laws, provide the complainant with information about the investigation, including any actions necessary to resolve the incident/situation. However, the Coordinator (or administrative designee) will not reveal confidential information related to other students or employees.

For investigations of and responses to formal complaints of sexual harassment, the following grievance procedures will apply:

- Notice of the Allegations
 - Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Coordinator will give all known parties written notice of its grievance process, including any voluntary informal resolution process. The notice will include:
 - A description of the allegations of sexual harassment at issue and to the extent known, the identities of the parties involved in the incident, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident;
 - A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until a final decision is reached;
 - A statement that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be an attorney, and may inspect and review evidence; and
 - A statement that ACS prohibits an individual from knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

- Emergency Removal
 - ACS may place a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of a formal complaint of sexual harassment grievance process in accordance with ACS's policies.
 - ACS may remove a respondent from ACS's education program or activity on an emergency basis, in accordance with ACS's policies, provided that ACS undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.
 - This provision may not be construed to modify any rights under the IDEA, Section 504, or the ADA.

- Informal Resolution
 - If a formal complaint of sexual harassment is filed, ACS may offer a voluntary informal resolution process, such as mediation, to the parties at any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility. If ACS offers such a process, it will do the following:
 - Provide the parties with advance written notice of:
 - The allegations;
 - The requirements of the voluntary informal resolution process including the circumstances under which the parties are precluded from resuming a formal complaint of sexual harassment arising from the same allegations;
 - The parties' right to withdraw from the voluntary informal resolution process and resume the grievance process at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution; and
 - Any consequences resulting from participating in the voluntary informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared; and
 - Obtain the parties' advance voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.
 - ACS will not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

- Investigation Process
 - The decision-maker will not be the same person(s) as the Coordinator or the investigator. ACS shall ensure that all decision-makers and investigators do not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents.
 - In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than twenty-five (25) school days. If the investigator determines that an investigation will take longer than twenty-five (25) school days and needs to be delayed or extended due to good cause, the investigator will inform the complainant and any respondents in writing of the reasons for the delay or extension and provide an approximate date when the investigation will be complete.
 - The parties will be provided with an equal opportunity to present witnesses, to inspect and review any evidence obtained that is directly related to the allegations raised, and to have an advisor present during any investigative meeting or interview.
 - The parties will not be prohibited from discussing the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.
 - A party whose participation is invited or expected at an investigative meeting or interview will receive written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of the meeting or interview with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.
 - Prior to completion of the investigative report, ACS will send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, a copy of the evidence subject to inspection and review, and the parties will have at least ten (10) days to submit a written response for the investigator's consideration prior to the completion of the investigation report.
 - The investigator will complete an investigation report that fairly summarizes all relevant evidence and send a copy of the report to each party and the party's advisor, if any, at least ten (10) days prior to the determination of responsibility.

- Dismissal of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment
 - If the investigation reveals that the alleged harassment did not occur in ACS's educational program in the United States or would not constitute sexual harassment even if proved, the formal complaint with regard to that conduct must be dismissed. However, such a dismissal does not preclude action under another applicable ACS policy.
 - ACS may dismiss a formal complaint of sexual harassment if:
 - The complainant provides a written withdrawal of the complaint to the Coordinator;
 - The respondent is no longer employed or enrolled at ACS; or
 - The specific circumstances prevent ACS from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a decision on the formal complaint or the allegations therein.
 - If a formal complaint of sexual harassment or any of the claims therein are dismissed, ACS will promptly send written notice of the dismissal and the reason(s) for the dismissal simultaneously to the parties.
- Determination of Responsibility
 - The standard of evidence used to determine responsibility is the preponderance of the evidence standard.
 - Determinations will be based on an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence and credibility determinations will not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
 - ACS will send a written decision on the formal complaint to the complainant and respondent simultaneously that describes:
 - The allegations in the formal complaint of sexual harassment;
 - All procedural steps taken including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, and methods used to gather other evidence;
 - The findings of facts supporting the determination;
 - The conclusions about the application of ACS's code of conduct to the facts;
 - The decision and rationale for each allegation;
 - Any disciplinary sanctions the recipient imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the education program or activity will be provided to the complainant; and
 - The procedures and permissible bases for appeals.

5. Consequences

Students or employees who engage in misconduct prohibited by this Policy, knowingly make false statements or knowingly submit false information during the grievance process may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from ACS or termination of employment. The Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies ordered by ACS in response to a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

6. Right of Appeal

Should the reporting individual find ACS's resolution unsatisfactory, the reporting individual may, within five (5) business days of notice of ACS's decision or resolution, submit a written appeal to the Board Chair, who will review the investigation and render a final decision.

The following appeal rights and procedures will also apply to formal complaints of sexual harassment:

- The complainant and the respondent shall have the same appeal rights and ACS will implement appeal procedures equally for both parties.
- ACS will notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed.
- The decision-maker for the appeal will give both parties a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome; issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result; and provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

7. Recordkeeping

All records related to any investigation of complaints under this Policy are maintained in a secure location.

ACS will maintain the following records for at least seven (7) years:

- Records of each sexual harassment investigation, including any determination of responsibility; any audio or audiovisual recording or transcript; any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent; and any remedies provided to the complainant.
- Records of any appeal of a formal sexual harassment complaint and the results of that appeal.
- Records of any informal resolution of a sexual harassment complaint and the results of that informal resolution.
- All materials used to train Title IX coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process.
- Records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment.

TITLE IX, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, DISCRIMINATION & BULLYING COMPLAINT FORM

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Date of Alleged Incident(s): _____

Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: _____

List any witnesses that were present: _____

Where did the incident(s) occur? _____

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e., specific statements; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements; what did you do to avoid the situation, etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

I hereby authorize ACS to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further understand that providing false information in this regard could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Signature of Complainant: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

To be completed by the Charter School:

Received by: _____ Date: _____

Follow up Meeting with Complainant held on: _____

SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

The Board of Directors of Ararat Charter School (“ACS” or the “Charter School”) recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and should be taken seriously. To attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Board of Directors has developed prevention strategies and intervention procedures.

In compliance with Education Code section 215, this policy has been developed in consultation with ACS and community stakeholders, ACS school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses), administrators, other school staff members, parents/guardians/caregivers, students, local health agencies and professionals, the county mental health plan, law enforcement, and community organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating ACS’s strategies for suicide prevention and intervention. ACS must work in conjunction with local government agencies, community-based organizations, and other community supports to identify additional resources.

To ensure the policies regarding suicide prevention are properly adopted, implemented, and updated, ACS shall appoint an individual (or team) to serve as the suicide prevention point of contact for ACS. The suicide prevention point of contact for ACS and the Principal shall ensure proper coordination and consultation with the county mental health plan if a referral is made for mental health or related services on behalf of a student who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary. This policy shall be reviewed and revised as indicated, at least annually in conjunction with the previously mentioned community stakeholders.

Staff Development

ACS, along with its partners, has carefully reviewed available staff training to ensure it promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide.

Training shall be provided for all school staff members. It may also be provided, when appropriate, for other adults on campus (such as substitutes and intermittent staff, volunteers, interns, tutors, coaches, and afterschool staff). Training shall include the following:

1. All suicide prevention trainings shall be offered under the direction of mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists, other public entity professionals, such as psychologists or social workers) who have received advanced training specific to suicide. Staff training may be adjusted year-to-year based on previous professional development activities and emerging best practices.
2. At least annually, all staff shall receive training on the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, suicide prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention.
3. At a minimum, all staff shall participate in training on the core components of suicide prevention (identification of suicide risk factors and warning signs, prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention) at the beginning of their employment or annually. Core components of the general suicide prevention training shall include:
 - a. Suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors.
 - b. How to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide.
 - c. How to respond appropriately to the youth who has suicidal thoughts. Such responses shall include constant supervision of any student judged to be at risk for suicide and an immediate referral for a suicide risk assessment.
 - d. Emphasis on immediately referring (same day) any student who is identified to be at risk of suicide for assessment while staying under constant monitoring by staff member.
 - e. Emphasis on reducing stigma associated with mental illness and that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide.
 - f. Reviewing the data annually to look for any patterns or trends of the prevalence or occurrence of suicide ideation, attempts, or death. Data from the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) should also be analyzed to identify school climate deficits and drive program development. See the Cal-SCHLS Web site at <http://cal-schls.wested.org/>.

- g. Information regarding groups of students judged by the school, and available research, to be at elevated risk for suicide. These groups include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. Youth affected by suicide.
 - ii. Youth with a history of suicide ideation or attempts.
 - iii. Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorders.
 - iv. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.
 - v. Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care.
 - vi. Youth who have suffered traumatic experiences.
4. In addition to initial orientations to the core components of suicide prevention, ongoing annual staff professional development for all staff may include the following components:
- a. The impact of traumatic stress on emotional and mental health.
 - b. Common misconceptions about suicide.
 - c. Charter School and community suicide prevention resources.
 - d. Appropriate messaging about suicide (correct terminology, safe messaging guidelines).
 - e. The factors associated with suicide (risk factors, warning signs, protective factors).
 - f. How to identify youth who may be at risk of suicide.
 - g. Appropriate ways to interact with a youth who is demonstrating emotional distress or is suicidal. Specifically, how to talk with a student about their thoughts of suicide and (based on ACS guidelines) how to respond to such thinking; how to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide and appropriately respond and provide support based on ACS guidelines.
 - h. Charter School-approved procedures for responding to suicide risk (including multi-tiered systems of support and referrals). Such procedures should emphasize that the suicidal student should be constantly supervised until a suicide risk assessment is completed.
 - i. Charter School-approved procedures for responding to the aftermath of suicidal behavior (suicidal behavior postvention).
 - j. Responding after a suicide occurs (suicide postvention).
 - k. Resources regarding youth suicide prevention.
 - l. Emphasis on stigma reduction and the fact that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide.
 - m. Emphasis that any student who is identified to be at risk of suicide is to be immediately referred (same day) for assessment while being constantly monitored by a staff member.

Employee Qualifications and Scope of Services

Employees of ACS must act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. While it is expected that school professionals are able to identify suicide risk factors and warning signs, and to prevent the immediate risk of a suicidal behavior, treatment of suicidal ideation is typically beyond the scope of services offered in the school setting. In addition, treatment of the mental health challenges often associated with suicidal thinking typically requires mental health resources beyond what schools are able to provide.

Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers Participation and Education

- 1. Parents/guardians/caregivers may be included in suicide prevention efforts. At a minimum, the Charter School shall share this Policy with parents/guardians/caregivers by notifying them where a complete copy of the policy is available.
- 2. This Suicide Prevention Policy shall be easily accessible and prominently displayed on the ACS Web page and included in the parent handbook.
- 3. Parents/guardians/caregivers should be invited to provide input on the development and implementation of this policy.
- 4. All parents/guardians/caregivers may have access to suicide prevention training that addresses the following:
 - a. Suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors.
 - b. How to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide.

- c. How to respond appropriately to the student who has suicidal thoughts. Such responses shall include constant supervision of any student judged to be at risk for suicide and referral for an immediate suicide risk assessment.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION

Messaging about suicide has an effect on suicidal thinking and behaviors. Consequently, ACS along with its partners has carefully reviewed and will continue to review all materials and resources used in awareness efforts to ensure they align with best practices for safe messaging about suicide. Suicide prevention strategies may include, but not be limited to, efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with ACS and is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students.

ACS's instructional and student support program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students including, but not limited to, the development of problem-solving skills, coping skills, and resilience. The instruction shall not use the stress model to explain suicide.

ACS's instructional curriculum may include information about suicide prevention, as appropriate or needed. If suicide prevention is included in the Charter School's instructional curriculum, it shall consider the grade level and age of the students and be delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. Under the supervision of an appropriately trained individual acting within the scope of her/his credential or license, students shall:

1. Receive developmentally appropriate, student-centered education about the warning signs of mental health challenges and emotional distress. The content of the education may include:
 - a. Coping strategies for dealing with stress and trauma.
 - b. How to recognize behaviors (warning signs) and life issues (risk factors) associated with suicide and mental health issues in oneself and others.
 - c. Help-seeking strategies for oneself and others, including how to engage school-based and community resources and refer peers for help.
 - d. Emphasis on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and the fact that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide.
2. Receive developmentally appropriate guidance regarding ACS's suicide prevention, intervention, and referral procedures.

Student-focused suicide prevention education can be incorporated into classroom curricula (e.g., health classes, orientation classes, science, and physical education).

ACS will support the creation and implementation of programs and/or activities on campus that raise awareness about mental wellness and suicide prevention (e.g., Mental Health Awareness Week, Peer Counseling, Freshman Success, and National Alliance on Mental Illness on Campus High School Clubs).

INTERVENTION AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

ACS designates the following administrators to act as the primary and secondary suicide prevention liaisons:

1. School Psychologist
2. Principal

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, they shall promptly notify the primary designated suicide prevention liaison. If this primary suicide prevention liaison is unavailable, the staff shall promptly notify the secondary suicide prevention liaison.

The suicide prevention liaison shall immediately notify the Principal or designee, who shall then notify the student's parent/guardian as soon as possible if appropriate and in the best interest of the student. Determination of notification to

parents/guardians/caregivers should follow a formal initial assessment to ensure that the student is not endangered by parental notification.

The suicide prevention liaison shall also refer the student to mental health resources at ACS or in the community.

When a student is in imminent danger (has access to a gun, is on a rooftop, or in other unsafe conditions), a call shall be made to 911.

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported on campus or at a school-related activity, the suicide prevention liaison shall, at a minimum:

1. Ensure the student's physical safety by one or more of the following, as appropriate:
 - a. Securing immediate medical treatment if a suicide attempt has occurred.
 - b. Securing law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened.
 - c. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene.
 - d. Remaining calm, keeping in mind the student is overwhelmed, confused, and emotionally distressed.
 - e. Moving all other students out of the immediate area.
 - f. Not sending the student away or leaving him/her alone, even to go to the restroom.
 - g. Providing comfort to the student, listening and allowing the student to talk and being comfortable with moments of silence.
 - h. Promising privacy and help, but not promising confidentiality.
2. Document the incident in writing as soon as feasible.
3. Follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed and coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan if a referral is made for mental health or related services on behalf of a student who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary.
4. After a referral is made, ACS shall verify with the parent/guardian that the follow up treatment has been accessed. Parents/guardians will be required to provide documentation of care for the student. If parents/guardians refuse or neglect to access treatment for a student who has been identified to be at risk for suicide or in emotional distress, the suicide prevention liaisons shall meet with the parent to identify barriers to treatment (e.g., cultural stigma, financial issues) and work to rectify the situation and build understanding of care. If follow up care is still not provided, ACS may contact Child Protective Services.
5. Provide access to counselors or other appropriate personnel to listen to and support students and staff who are directly or indirectly involved with the incident at ACS.
6. Provide an opportunity for all who respond to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions.

In the event a suicide occurs or is attempted on the ACS campus, the suicide prevention liaison shall follow the crisis intervention procedures contained in ACS's safety plan. After consultation with the Principal or designee and the student's parent/guardian about facts that may be divulged in accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the Principal or designee may provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. ACS staff may receive assistance from ACS counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

In the event a suicide occurs or is attempted off the ACS campus and unrelated to school activities, the Principal or designee shall take the following steps to support the student:

1. Contact the parent/guardian and offer support to the family.
2. Discuss with the family how they would like ACS to respond to the attempt while minimizing widespread rumors among teachers, staff, and students.
3. Obtain permission from the parent/guardian to share information to ensure the facts regarding the crisis are correct.
4. The suicide prevention liaisons shall handle any media requests.
5. Provide care and determine appropriate support to affected students.
6. Offer to the student and parent/guardian steps for re-integration to school. Re-integration may include obtaining a written release from the parent/guardian to speak with any health care providers; conferring with the student and

parent/guardian about any specific requests on how to handle the situation; informing the student's teachers about possible days of absences; allowing accommodations for make-up work (being understanding that missed assignments may add stress to the student); appropriate staff maintaining ongoing contact with the student to monitor the student's actions and mood; and working with the parent/guardian to involve the student in an aftercare plan.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING OR AFTER A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Students shall be encouraged through the education program and in ACS activities to notify a teacher, the Principal, another ACS administrator, psychologist, ACS counselor, suicide prevention liaisons, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions. ACS staff should treat each report seriously, calmly, and with active listening and support. Staff should be non-judgmental to students and discuss with the student, and parent/guardian, about additional resources to support the student.

RESPONDING AFTER A SUICIDE DEATH (POSTVENTION)

A death by suicide in the school community (whether by a student or staff member) can have devastating consequences on the school community, including students and staff. ACS shall follow the below action plan for responding to a suicide death, which incorporates both immediate and long-term steps and objectives:

The suicide prevention liaison shall:

1. Coordinate with the Principal to:
 - a. Confirm death and cause.
 - b. Identify a staff member to contact deceased's family (within 24 hours).
 - c. Enact the Suicide Postvention Response.
 - d. Notify all staff members (ideally in-person or via phone, not via e-mail or mass notification).
2. Coordinate an all-staff meeting, to include:
 - a. Notification (if not already conducted) to staff about suicide death.
 - b. Emotional support and resources available to staff.
 - c. Notification to students about suicide death and the availability of support services (if this is the protocol that is decided by administration).
 - d. Share information that is relevant and that which you have permission to disclose.
3. Prepare staff to respond to needs of students regarding the following:
 - a. Review of protocols for referring students for support/assessment.
 - b. Talking points for staff to notify students.
 - c. Resources available to students (on and off campus).
4. Identify students significantly affected by suicide death and other students at risk of imitative behavior.
5. Identify students affected by suicide death but not at risk of imitative behavior.
6. Communicate with the larger school community about the suicide death.
7. Consider funeral arrangements for family and school community.
8. Respond to memorial requests in respectful and non-harmful manner; responses should be handled in a thoughtful way and their impact on other students should be considered.
9. Identify media spokesperson if needed.
10. Include long-term suicide postvention responses:
 - a. Consider important dates (i.e., anniversary of death, deceased birthday, graduation, or other significant event) and how these will be addressed.
 - b. Support siblings, close friends, teachers, and/or students of deceased.
 - c. Consider long-term memorials and how they may impact students who are emotionally vulnerable and at risk of suicide.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Charter School will include the telephone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) and the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233) on all student identification cards. ACS will also include the number for the Crisis Text Line, which can be accessed by texting HOME to 741741 and a local suicide prevention hotline on all student identification cards.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES: STAFF/STUDENT INTERACTION POLICY

Ararat Charter School (“ACS”) recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing student and employee behavior to bring about the safest and most learning- conducive environment possible.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student.

For purposes of this policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee’s use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to property.

For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of School personnel:

A. Examples of PERMITTED actions (NOT corporal punishment)

- Stopping a student from fighting with another student;
- Preventing a pupil from committing an act of vandalism;
- Defending yourself from physical injury or assault by a student;
- Forcing a pupil to give up a weapon or dangerous object;
- Requiring students to participate in strenuous physical training activities designed to strengthen or condition or improve their coordination, agility, or physical skills;
- Engaging in group calisthenics, team drills, or other physical education or voluntary recreational activities.

B. Examples of PROHIBITED actions (corporal punishment)

- Hitting, shoving, pushing, or physically restraining a student as a means of control;
- Making unruly students do push-ups, run laps, or perform other physical acts that cause pain or discomfort as a form of punishment;
- Paddling, swatting, slapping, grabbing, pinching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical pain.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Acceptable and Unacceptable Staff/Student Behavior

This policy is intended to guide all school faculty and staff in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of Ararat Charter School employees and to specify the boundaries between students and staff.

Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each staff member’s obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, colleagues, or school leaders. One viable standard that can be quickly applied, when you are unsure if certain conduct is acceptable, is to ask yourself, “Would I be engaged in this conduct if my family or colleagues were standing next to me?”

For the purposes of this policy, the term “boundaries” is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member's perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parent point of view. The objective of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct.

Staff must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is crucial that all employees learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to their daily activities. Although sincere, competent interaction with students certainly fosters learning, student/staff interactions must have boundaries surrounding potential activities, locations and intentions.

DUTY TO REPORT SUSPECTED MISCONDUCT

When any employee reasonably suspects or believes that another staff member may have crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, he or she must immediately report the matter to an administrator. All reports shall be as confidential as possible under the circumstances. It is the duty of the administrator to investigate and thoroughly report the situation. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness or concern of student behavior that crosses boundaries or where a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS

The following examples are not an exhaustive list:

Unacceptable Staff/Student Behaviors (Violations of this Policy)

- Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature.
- Kissing of any kind.
- Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation.
- Intentionally being alone with a student away from the school.
- Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
- Sexual jokes.
- Seeking emotional involvement with a student for your benefit.
- Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented.
- Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student in an attempt to gain their support and understanding.
- Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.

Unacceptable Staff/Student Behaviors without Parent and Supervisor Permission

(These behaviors should only be exercised when a staff member has parent and supervisor permission.)

- Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities.
- Being alone in a room with a student at school with the door closed.
- Allowing students in your home.

Cautionary Staff/Student Behaviors (These behaviors should only be exercised when a reasonable and prudent person, acting as an educator, is prevented from using a better practice or behavior. Staff members should inform their supervisor of the circumstance and occurrence prior to or immediately after the occurrence)

- Remarks about the physical attributes or development of anyone.
- Excessive attention toward a particular student.
- Sending emails, text messages or letters to students if the content is not about school activities.

Acceptable and Recommended Staff/Student Behaviors

- Getting parents' written consent for any after-school activity.
- Obtaining formal approval to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
- Emails, text, phone and instant messages to students must be very professional and pertaining to school activities or classes (Communication should be limited to school technology).
- Keeping the door open when alone with a student.
- Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
- Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- Keeping parents informed when significant issue develops about a student.

Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief. • Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries. • Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the student. • Informing the Principal about situations that have the potential to become more severe. • Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later. • Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or coworkers. • Asking another staff member to be present if you will be alone with any type of special needs student. • Asking another staff member to be present when you must be alone with a student after regular school hour

