

Ararat's Programs for Extended Learning Handbook 2026-2027



“Climbing Toward College & Career Readiness”



ACS— Campus 1: 6555 Sylmar Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91401 | Office: (818) 994-2904 | Fax: (818) 994-8096

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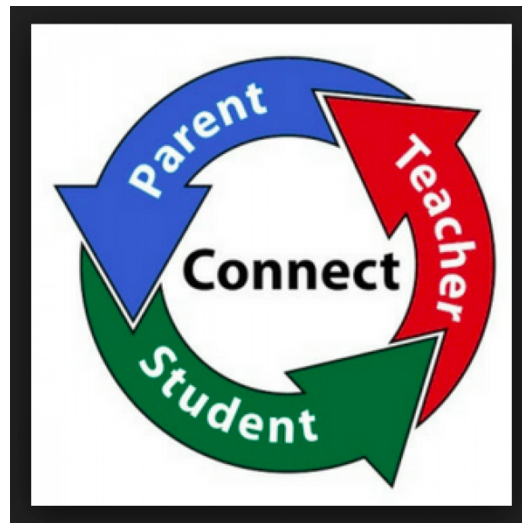
Website: www.araratcharterschool.com

Email: APEX@araratcharterschool.com

Inspiring Collaboration, Innovation, & Fostering a Culture of Care



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



MESSAGE FROM APEX COORDINATORS

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Ararat's Programs for Extended Learning (APEX)!

This handbook includes detailed information about daily activities, procedures, and policies of Ararat's APEX Program. Please read this information carefully and reference it as needed throughout the year.

Should you have any questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

APEX Coordinators





The vision of the APEX Program is to provide after-school and intersession programming to enhance students' skills, knowledge, and abilities that will further develop the whole child.



The mission of the APEX Program is to offer creative programming to students to increase their skills, knowledge, and abilities while supporting parents/guardians with after-school and intersession enriching childcare. The goal of the APEX Program is to broaden students' scope and understanding of the world around them.

APEX Program Goals



The APEX Program aims to:

- 1) Provide a safe and supportive environment through structure and predictability.
- 2) Provide active and engaged learning opportunities through homework club and enrichment classes.
- 3) Work on skill building activities through Lego robotics and sports.
- 4) Develop youth voice and leadership skills through project-enhanced learning.
- 5) Engage in healthy choices and behaviors through outdoor activities and social and emotional learning.
- 6) Address cultural and linguistic diversity through project-enhanced learning and community circles.
- 7) Develop collaborative partnerships with local agencies.
- 8) Engage in continuous quality improvement by using the Quality Standards for Expanded Learning.



- Collaborative partnerships
- Innovative and engaging activities
- Continuous quality improvement



Schedule for School Days

ACS Campus 1 (Sylmar)

Regular School Days – 3:10pm – 5:10pm

Mindful Mondays – 1:40pm – 5:10pm

ACS Campus 2 (Erwin)

Regular School Days – 3:00pm – 5:10pm

Mindful Mondays – 1:30pm – 5:10pm

ALL STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP BY 5:10 PM AS THERE WILL BE NO SUPERVISION AVAILABLE AFTER 5:30 PM¹

Schedule for Summer Camp Days

ACS Campus 1 (Sylmar)

Monday – Friday

7:30am – 4:30pm

ALL STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP BY 4:30 PM AS THERE WILL BE NO SUPERVISION AVAILABLE AFTER 4:40 PM²

Days of Operation

- All days that school is in session.
- Thirty (30) non-school days. See Board Approved APEX Calendar.

¹ If a student is not picked up by 5:10 PM APEX staff will first contact the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, then the student's emergency contacts will be called. If the student is not picked up by 5:40 PM, APEX staff will contact Child Protective Services and/or local law enforcement to ask them to pick up the student and/or report child abandonment.

² If a student is not picked up by 4:30 PM APEX staff will first contact the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, then the student's emergency contacts will be called. If the student is not picked up by 4:40 PM, APEX staff will contact Child Protective Services and/or local law enforcement to ask them to pick up the student and/or report child abandonment.

Professional Development Days – for staff only

- Three (3) Professional Development Days for Staff Only
 - January 9, 2027
 - May 15, 2027
 - June 5, 2027

APEX Staff Coordinators	
Staff:	APEX Position:
Elizabeth Padilla	APEX Lead Coordinator
Mariana Cortes	APEX Coordinator
Kathryn Parisen	Curriculum Coordinator

All communication regarding questions, concerns, or program components should be sent to apex@araratcharterschool.com or call the school's office at (818) 994-2904.

Policies and Procedures

Admission and Enrollment

To participate in the APEX Program, students must be enrolled at Ararat Charter School. Our program is open to students in Transitional kindergarten through fifth grade. As a local educational agency, Ararat provides a safe and inclusive learning environment, ensuring equal access and opportunities for individuals, including enrollment in our expanded learning program.

All registration and enrollment forms must be completed, signed, and submitted physically to the APEX Coordinators at Campus 1 or Campus 2 **BEFORE** a student is permitted to attend. The parent/guardian will receive confirmation of enrollment in APEX. A student may not attend before receiving confirmation of enrollment either verbally or in writing.

Waitlists will be created if APEX capacity has been exhausted. If a student is on the waitlist, the parent/guardian will be notified via email. Once space is available, parents/guardians will receive a phone call to inquire if there is still interest in having the student enroll in the APEX program. Priority for enrollment shall be given to unduplicated students which include Homeless, Foster Youth, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students.



All remaining students shall be placed on a waitlist that will be established to accommodate additional students if space becomes available.

Enrollment in APEX is a privilege. Therefore, adherence to APEX’s policies contained within this Handbook is mandatory. Participation in APEX may be terminated at any time for the following reasons or as otherwise stated in this Handbook:

- Four (4) late pick-ups during the school year.
- Four (4) unexcused early release prior to 4:10 pm.
- Less than 60% attendance per week (less than 3 times attendance per week).
- More than five (5) unexcused/unexplained absences during the school year without notification.
- Disruptive behavior by parents/guardians that negatively affects the program.
- Disruptive student behavior and/or misconduct that negatively affects the program.

Please see below for more information.

Activities

Participants in our program are presented with a wide range of opportunities to foster talent, forge meaningful connections, enhance social skills, and improve academic performance in an inclusive environment. Daily activities encompass both indoor and outdoor learning experiences, offering a diverse and engaging educational journey.

Attendance for School Days

Consistent attendance is vital for maintaining enrollment in the APEX Program. Students must have at least sixty percent (60%) weekly attendance (attend a minimum of three (3) days per week). Students must remain on site at least one hour (1) per day (pick up after 2:40 pm on Mondays and 4:10 pm Tuesday-Friday). Non-compliant participants will be moved to the end of the waitlist. A student will be dropped from the program if the student accumulates five (5) unexcused/unexplained absences during the school year without notification. Definitions of an excused absence and unexcused absences are further explained in the Ararat Charter School’s Attendance Policy, which is available in the main office.

Attendance for Summer Camp

Consistent attendance is vital for maintaining enrollment in the APEX Program. Students must have at least sixty percent (60%) weekly attendance (attend a minimum of three (3) days per week). Non-compliant participants will be moved to the end of the waitlist. A student will be dropped from the program if the student accumulates five (5) unexcused/unexplained absences during the summer without notification. Definitions of an excused absence and unexcused absences are further explained in the Ararat Charter School’s Attendance Policy, which is available in the main office.

Late Pick-Ups for School Days

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to ensure prompt pick-up of their student(s). The APEX Program concludes at 5:10 pm. If students have not been picked up by 5:40 pm, it will be considered abandonment, and the appropriate authorities will be contacted. Excessive late pick-ups during the current year (four (4) cumulative incidents for the current school year) may result in the student being dismissed from the program.

Late Pick-Ups for Summer Camp

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to ensure prompt pick-up of their student(s). The APEX Program concludes at 4:30 pm. If students have not been picked up by 4:40 pm, it will be considered abandonment, and the appropriate authorities will be contacted. Excessive late pick-ups during the summer, may result in the student being dismissed from the program.

If an unforeseen situation arises, and a late pick-up becomes unavoidable, it is imperative to notify the appropriate APEX staff. Please ensure that emergency contact information is kept up to date to establish an effective back-up plan.

Illness

Parents/guardians will be called and MUST have their student picked up when a student is ill or in any significant discomfort.

Signing Out

- Each program day, a parent/guardian or an adult who is at least eighteen (18) years of age and listed on the student's Emergency Contact List is required to sign the student out from the program at the end of each day. All parents/guardians must walk up to the designated sign-out area to sign their child out of the program.
- Changes or updates to the student's emergency contact list can be made in person by a parent/caregiver with proper photo identification. No changes to the Emergency Contact List will be accepted by phone.
- To ensure student safety, a photo ID from the person picking up a student may be required before releasing the student.
- Students will not be released until they are signed out with an APEX staff member.
- Once signed out, Ararat and APEX are no longer responsible for the student and the student and caregiver are expected to leave the Charter School's grounds.
- If a parent, guardian, or authorized adult arrives to pick up a student and a staff member has reasonable concern that the individual may be impaired by alcohol, cannabis, drugs, medication, or another substance to the extent that they may be unable to safely transport or supervise the student, staff will take reasonable steps to protect the student.
 - Staff may delay releasing the student while the situation is assessed and the appropriate next steps are determined.
 - Staff may ask the adult to identify another authorized adult who can safely pick up the student.
 - Staff will handle these situations as discreetly and respectfully as possible. The purpose of this policy is not to judge or discipline a parent or guardian for substance use; it is to ensure that every student is released into the care of an adult who is capable of providing safe supervision.
 - Parents and guardians are encouraged to make alternate pick-up arrangements whenever they believe they may be unable to safely transport or supervise their child.

Emergency Situations: If staff reasonably believe that a student is in immediate danger, the school/program will take appropriate emergency action, which may include contacting emergency services or law enforcement.

Withdrawal From Program

To withdraw your student from the APEX Program, written notice must be provided at least three (3) days in advance. Reenrollment is contingent upon availability of space in the program.

Emergency Contacts

Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining current student records, including accurate telephone numbers, emergency information, and authorized pick-up details.

Communication

Parents/guardians hold the responsibility of staying informed about notices, letters, and other communications pertaining to their student. The APEX Program maintains forms documenting concerning behavior that may pose a threat to self or others. These incidents are reported to parents/guardians promptly to ensure the issues are addressed in a timely manner since the safety of our students is our top priority.

Parent/Guardian Concerns/Questions & Civility

Parents/guardians are kindly requested to raise any concerns or questions with the APEX Program staff in a calm and respectful manner. If a concern pertains to another student or parent within the program, it must be brought to the attention of the APEX Coordinator(s). Students whose parent/guardian inappropriately engage with other students or parent/guardian regarding their actions and behavior may face dismissal from the program within the discretion of the APEX Program Coordinator.

APEX staff will treat parents/guardians and other members of the public with respect and expect the same in return. This policy is not intended to deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of expression, but only to maintain a safe, harassment-free environment for our students, staff, parents, and the public. APEX encourages positive communication and discourages disruptive, volatile, or hostile communications or actions.

Custody or Restraining Orders

It is crucial to maintain up-to-date legal documentation related to student custody and restraining orders, which will be securely filed in the Charter School's main office. Students will only be released to individuals listed on the program's emergency information, which must be completed by the legal parent or legal guardian.

Field Trips

Field trips will take place during non-school days. The same processes and procedures will be followed as field trips scheduled during the school day.

Personal Belongings

The APEX Program will not be held liable for lost, stolen, or damaged items. No toys, permanent markers, candy, or other personal belongings are to be brought to the APEX Program. Cell phones and all electronic devices must be put away.

Supper

Supper is provided daily by Los Angeles Unified School District (“LAUSD”) Food Services department to all student participants. If a student has special dietary needs, parent/guardians must notify APEX Program staff in writing.

Student Health

For students with specific health needs, parents/guardians must inform program staff of health concerns and changes throughout the school year. In some cases, it may be necessary for program staff to meet with parents/guardians to prepare a plan to best meet the needs of the student.

Emergencies

Student and staff safety is the first priority of the APEX program. Safety drills including fire, earthquake, lockdown, etc. will be practiced in the afterschool setting on a regular basis.

In the event of an emergency, APEX staff will follow safety procedures as outlined and practiced. Once it is safe to do so, a message via Schoolwide Dojo will be sent out to all APEX parents/guardians informing them of the latest information regarding the incident. Should hazardous conditions such as, but not limited to severe weather, fire, earthquake, building safety, emergencies, etc. develop during the day or into the afternoon, APEX may close early to maintain safety of students and staff. Parents/guardians will receive communication from APEX if a program needs to close early for safety reasons and if a student requires an early pick-up by a parent/guardian or emergency contact.

Medication Administration/Assistance

Any student who is required to take medication (prescribed or over-the-counter) may be assisted by the designated APEX Program staff 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 Charter School to assist in administration.



Students may not carry or use medication on campus without written consent.

The required forms are available from the APEX Coordinator. Charter School personnel do not prescribe or give advice regarding medication.

Behavior Expectations & Tiered Intervention

Student safety is a high priority for APEX, to the fullest extent possible. Our program focus is the prevention of bullying and/or harassment of any kind. It is our desire to implement strategies and best practices to promote a positive, safe, and enriching climate for all. Students are expected to follow the directions of APEX staff and comply with all rules as stated in this Handbook and/or applicable Ararat Charter School Policies.

The APEX Coordinator may draft an agreement between parent/guardian and APEX staff to remediate any challenges and/or suspend or terminate any student from the Program for up to one year if it is determined that an unsafe situation for students and/or staff exists. An unsafe situation occurs when the health, safety, and well-being of the children and/or staff is compromised.

A family may be dismissed from the Program for using abusive, intimidating, and/or threatening behavior towards an employee or student of the APEX Program. To ensure the safety of all students and staff, any threat will be taken seriously, and a referral may be made to law enforcement.

Participation in the APEX Program is a privilege. The APEX program reserves the right to withdraw a student from the APEX Program within the discretion of APEX staff.

APEX uses positive methods of discipline when possible. We set reasonable goals and limits and encourage each student and the whole group to work out problems.

APEX rules are always enforced. Prohibited student conduct and the basic rules of the APEX Program include, but are not limited to:

- Showing respect for people, the APEX program, and the school facilities we use;
- Hurting of any kind is not allowed (verbal or physical abuse, bullying, intimidation, or harassment will not be tolerated);
- Physical aggressiveness and/or excessive physical contact (fighting);
- Threatening to cause, attempting to cause, or causing physical injury to another;
- Possession, use, or sale of illegal contraband or other prohibited items or substances;
- Leaving the premises of the Program without appropriate sign-out;
- Defiance of authority, refusal to follow instructions of staff and/or administrators – behavior that disrupts the orderly educational environment of the Program;
- Behavior that endangers other students and/or staff;
- Inappropriate language;
- Inappropriate dress;
- Damage to or theft of property of the Program, staff, or students;
- Inside activities require walking and inside appropriate behavior;
- Ask permission to leave for any reason;
- Compliance with staff direction is required; and
- Consequences will be posted at the site.

Basic Consequences (consequences are not punishment, they are the next steps):

- Reflection or Redirection (appropriate for student's age);
- Behavior modifications;
- Natural and logical consequences;
- A Disciplinary Notice or Referral will be provided to the parent/guardian and logged;
- Three (3) or more disciplinary notices requires a parent/guardian conference; and

- Conference with APEX Coordinator, Ararat's Administrator or Designee, and possible termination from the APEX Program.

To address student behavioral issues the following steps will be taken and implemented by APEX staff as necessary:

Tiered Intervention

1. **First Incident**: Student will have a verbal warning from staff. (Communication of behavior with a parent/guardian during pick up);
2. **Second Incident**: Staff/Student conference to discuss behavior and determine appropriate behavioral interventions (Communication of behavior with parent/guardian during pick up). Behavior will be documented as appropriate;
3. **Third Incident**: Parent/Guardian and APEX Staff conference and development of a behavioral contract to address the student's misconduct and behavior. (Parents/Guardians will need to review the contract and sign the contract for the student to continue in the APEX Program);
4. **Fourth Incident**: Student will be suspended from the Program for up to three (3) days when behavior problems persist. Parents/Guardians will need to pick up the student immediately and work with the student to address the student's behavioral issues.
5. **Any Further Incidents**: Will result in the student being dismissed from the APEX Program for the remainder of the school year. Students may be eligible to restart the Program at the beginning of the next school year.
6. If APEX staff are experiencing a problem with a student's behavior, it may be necessary to use different steps, possibly in an accelerated manner. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing of any such change.
7. The discipline log will document behavior that has resulted in a violation of APEX rules and behavioral expectations, as set forth above. The student's parent/guardian will be required to read and sign the incident report. If a student is perceived to be a danger to other students, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student from the program. For their own safety, students that do not comply with staff instructions or leave the site without permission will be removed from the program.
8. If a student engages in behavior that warrants suspension or expulsion from the Charter School, the student will be dismissed from the program.

9. If a student demonstrates excessive, malicious, or dangerous behavior, the parent/guardian or emergency contact must be available to pick the student up immediately. Severe infractions may result in immediate dismissal from the Program and may not follow the steps outlined above.

Homework

Students will have the opportunity to complete assigned homework during homework club. APEX Program staff will make every effort to assist students in completing their homework within the allotted time. However, staff do not guarantee that all homework will be completed and/or corrected. Homework completion remains the responsibility of the student and their parent/guardian.

Participation

This program requires active participation from students. Therefore, all students must participate in the scheduled rotations. Non-participation or refusal to engage in the activities may trigger a parent meeting where continued enrollment may be discussed if the behavior has met tiered-intervention guidelines.