

# Student Handbook and Policy Guide

2026-2027

**Areté**  
Christian Academy

Mechanicsville Baptist Church  
8016 Atlee Rd  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Areté: “striving for moral excellence”

*II Peter 1:3 “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.”*

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*It is expected that all parents and students participating in Arété Christian Academy will read the Arété Christian Academy Handbook and Policy Guide. Each parent and student must sign a confirmation stating that he/she has read, understood, and is/are in agreement with the Handbook and Policy Guidelines.*

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of Arété Christian Academy (Arété) is to provide middle and high school level classes to **supplement the parent-directed education** of home-schooled children. As we seek to glorify God through the facilitation of God-centered classes, we will provide a nurturing environment that encourages parental involvement, strives for academic excellence, and promotes the development of godly character in the students.

### Statement of Faith

We believe there is one God who lives ever in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Bible is the only written Word of God to the world, speaking to us with authority and without error. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. Crucified for our sins, He rose from the dead. He will return in His glory to claim this earth for God’s kingdom. We believe that all mankind is lost in sin and needs to turn from it and trust in Jesus Christ, which is to be born anew by the Holy Spirit’s power into God’s family. We believe in unity for all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ and seek community together. In every way, we want to become more like Him, who is the head of His body, the Church. We are called to love Him and one another and are enabled to do this only as His life flows in and through us. We believe in the traditional, biblical definitions of marriage, gender, and sexual morality. We believe that every person is created by God in His image as male or female.

## **II. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND INVOLVEMENT**

### State of Virginia – Laws Governing Homeschooling

Areté Christian Academy is designed to complement the academic goals of families who have made a commitment to homeschooling their children. All students enrolled in Arété Christian Academy must be in compliance with the Homeschooling Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia (section §22.1 – 254.1 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended) and with those of local school boards. The parents of the students are fully responsible for ensuring they are in compliance with the statutes. Proof of compliance may be requested by the Arété Christian Academy Board prior to admission.

### Parental Involvement

Parents understand that it is their role to act as their child's academic supervisor. The parents are responsible for establishing a study schedule with their child, for checking to be sure that assignments are completed, for helping with time management for successful completion of long-term assignments, and for ensuring that their child comes on-time and prepared for class. Arété Christian Academy is a co-operative program, not a private school.

As a homeschool co-operative, Arété Christian Academy needs the help of all our families in order to provide the best possible educational experience. Our parents provide another set of eyes on the campus, helping wherever needed. Families are asked to take 2 turns per child, serving at Arété as a parent volunteer throughout the year. If there is a conflict, parents need to contact the Aréte admin at [aretemechanicsville@gmail.com](mailto:aretemechanicsville@gmail.com). Parents who fail to fulfill this requirement will pay a \$100 penalty per student before being allowed to enroll their student(s) for the next academic year.

### Partnership for Character Development

Parents are also expected to partner with the Arété Christian Academy community in modeling biblically established moral values in their relationships with Arété students, tutors, directors, and other community members. Actions involving or directed toward other participants of Arété Christian Academy that compromise the spiritual testimony or educational ministry of Arété may result in a mandatory meeting with the Board of Directors in order to resolve the issue. Disciplinary actions may include expulsion from Arété, for the student or family, dependent upon the actions committed.

As parents pay tutors directly, please try to resolve any and all issues with the tutor before bringing matters to the board. We ask that tutors also contact parents first before involving the board. In situations where no resolution has been met with parents and/or tutors, then please contact the board for help in resolution.

## **III. GENERAL ENROLLMENT POLICIES**

### Age Requirements

Students must be at least 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 12 years old to attend. While some younger students may be academically ready for middle and high school classes, we feel that the environment at Arété is not suited for students younger than 12.

### Christian Emphasis

Areté Christian Academy is committed to providing God-centered instruction with Christian distinctives. Arété Christian Academy is made up of a student body that is primarily from Christian families which share the vision and theological commitment of Arété. While we are open to admitting students from families which may not share the Christian faith, all families must be willing to entrust their children to Arété for education and

discipline which reflects Areté's theological, educational, and moral convictions. Areté reserves the right to refuse or remove admission to students whose parent(s), or whose own personal, spiritual, and moral life is inconsistent with biblical teachings, or which may compromise the spiritual testimony and educational ministry of Areté.

#### Non-Discrimination Statement

Areté Christian Academy enrolls students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of this academy. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, enrollment policies, and other school-administered programs.

#### Disciplinary Exclusions

Areté Christian Academy's philosophy of education sees homeschooling as an academic choice, not a solution to disciplinary problems that have occurred in other educational settings. Areté Christian Academy is not able to offer the supervision or support required for students that have been expelled, suspended, dismissed, or withdrawn (either voluntarily or involuntarily) from a public or private school, home school co-operative, or other educational facility for disciplinary reasons. Therefore, Areté cannot enroll any student who has been involved in disciplinary action during a school year. Furthermore, no student who has ever been charged with an offense by the police will be allowed to enroll. Any exceptions to this provision are at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors of Areté Christian Academy.

#### Special Need Students

Parents must consider the age and academic development of their children before enrolling them in Areté Christian Academy. Areté, nor its tutors, have the equipment or special training to help students with disabilities. Areté will review the enrollment requests of students with special needs on a case-by-case basis and will consider Areté's and the tutor's abilities to satisfactorily meet the needs of the student. Our resources limit our ability to meet the needs of some students. Please discuss the needs of your child with the Board of Directors **prior** to beginning the enrollment process to ensure your child's education can be adequately met through a partnership with Areté.

### **IV. NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION**

#### Enrollment Process

- 1) Please complete registration on our website: <https://www.homeschool-life.com/4707/>
- 2) Read through the entire handbook with your student prior to requesting membership. Online payment is accepted or you may mail in your payment to the address below for processing.

Areté Christian Academy  
PMB 141  
8005-C Creighton Pkwy  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111

- 3) New Students: The parents or guardians and the student are required to meet with representatives of the Areté Christian Academy Board of Directors in order to be considered for enrollment. Please contact the Registrar to schedule your appointment. You may not enroll in classes until a family interview and approval process has taken place.
- 4) Enrollment Decision: All Areté enrollment decisions are at the sole discretion of the Areté Christian Academy Board of Directors. New students will be informed of their acceptance/status by the Registrar.

### Course Registration, Pre-test, and Placement Testing

Once notified of acceptance into Areté Christian Academy through the enrollment process, class registration can proceed. Enrollment in Areté does not guarantee that a student's class registration will be accepted. Tutors have the right to set a limit to the number of students in their class; if a requested class is full, the student will be placed on a waitlist. Recent grades, test scores, or a placement test may also be required prior to being accepted into a class, to ensure the student has the foundation required to be successful. Once these things have been acquired, tutors reserve the right to not accept a student's registration based upon their academic level not meeting the class requirements. (Please consider carefully which courses are best suited to your child's academic needs, interests, and schedule and discuss these with the appropriate tutor **prior** to registering in specific classes.) All costs associated with the pre-testing or placement testing are the responsibility of the parent or guardian of the student.

## **V. COURSE REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION**

Returning and New Student Registration may be completed online at our website:  
<https://www.homeschool-life.com/4707/>

Study hall periods are considered normal Areté classes in regard to registration and scheduling procedures. Individuals who wish to participate in a study hall period must follow the normal registration process for that class.

### Areté Orientation

Each year Areté Christian Academy facilitates a Parent/Student Orientation event. This event occurs each August prior to the beginning of the new academic year and provides an opportunity for the families and tutors to meet one another. This meeting, unless announced otherwise, will be held at Mechanicsville Baptist Church, the host church for Areté Christian Academy. It is expected that all parents and students participating at Areté will be in attendance.

### Payment for Classes and Class Supplies

The tutors are individual contractors and will receive the fees for their classes directly from the parents. Unless otherwise announced by the tutors, all fees for textbooks and supplies are **nonrefundable** and are due at Parent/Student Orientation along with the first month's tuition. All subsequent tuition fees are paid to the individual tutors and will be **due on or before the first of each month** unless otherwise arranged with the tutor. The fee for study hall covers a single hour and a half block per week and is payable in full for the year at Orientation. Tuition fees are calculated on the basis of each course and are not subject to adjustment for missed days due to inclement weather, illness, or other planned absences. Please check the class description or contact the tutor if you have questions in regard to the expected payment amounts. Tutors may charge a \$15 penalty to be added to tuition checks paid after the 20th of the month. **Failure to pay after 90 days may be grounds for dismissal.**

### Course Add/Drop Period

- If a parent enrolls a student in a class and later decides to add or drop a course **before July 31<sup>st</sup>**, the parent should contact the Areté Registrar.
- For changes **after July 31<sup>st</sup> but before the first day of class**, the parent must contact the class tutor directly by email. Each request to add a course will be taken into consideration but cannot be guaranteed.
- For changes **after the first day of class**, the parent must **inform the tutor and the Areté Registrar** of the drop. All fees paid for the class are non-refundable.

- The last day that a course may be dropped without a penalty is October 1st. This is also posted on the academic calendar. After that date, the family will owe the full monthly tuition for the entire duration of the course. Parents must sign and comply with the registration agreement concerning payment and for the classes in which their students are enrolled.
- Tutors have the right to utilize the October drop date, should a student be found unable to maintain the academic requirements of the course, or there is a behavioral issue that affects the other students negatively. Should this be required, there will be communication between the tutor and parents prior to a decision being made. If there are behavioral issues that develop beyond the drop date, and a student continues to negatively affect the other students after a meeting is held between the tutor, student, parents, and Board Disciplinary Committee, the tutor reserves the right to dismiss the student from the class. Tuition will still be due to the tutor.
- Because tutors have the right to utilize the drop date, this includes canceling a class if the required number of students fails to be maintained. If there is a concern, we ask that you please discuss it with your child's tutor before dropping the class, as it could affect the class as a whole.

## VI. CODE OF CONDUCT

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:17

### Tutor Responsibilities

- Each tutor is in charge of his or her classroom and designated areas, and has the responsibility of maintaining guidelines and standards in accordance with the handbook. Tutors are also required to maintain the guidelines set by the Board of Directors for the conduct of the students and tutors during their presence at Areté.
- It is at the discretion of the tutor to set the minimum and maximum to their class, depending upon the requirements of the course.
- On October 1st, each tutor has the right to cancel a class if enrollment falls below the predetermined minimum number of students needed in order to move forward with that class.
- Tutors have the discretion to limit the number of students participating in their classes based on a student's academic level, grades, required prerequisites, and placement testing results.
- Tutors are responsible for attending their own classes without excessive absences. They should provide a course description, syllabus and schedule if applicable. Tutors are to uphold the same standards that are required of all members of Areté.

### Honesty

Areté Christian Academy students and tutors are expected to be honest in every aspect of Academy involvement. It is expected that each student will do his or her own academic work and will use the property of others only with the permission of the owner. Students will at all times be truthful and will use their influence to encourage honorable conduct among all fellow students.

Offenses against the honesty code include, but are not limited to the following:

Lying, stealing, and cheating. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism or the copying of passages from works of other writers, such as books or magazines or websites, without proper credit given; copying homework or class work from another student; cheating on tests in any way, including the use of a cheat sheet or looking at another person's paper. Instances of lying or cheating are very serious and may be grounds for dismissal from Areté.

On occasion, students may be asked by tutors to sign a pledge similar to: "On my honor I pledge that I have neither given nor received any type of prohibited help on this work."

### Respect and Attitude

- Students must be respectful of their tutors, their classmates, and any other adults who volunteer their services during the day. Attitudes, actions, or tendencies of unruliness, physical altercations of any type, and psychological or verbal bullying will not be tolerated.
- All reports of bullying – whether assumed, suspected, or obvious - must be reported to the Areté Board immediately and an investigation and/or disciplinary action will follow.

### Dress Code

Areté Christian Academy's dress code is intended to reflect its commitment to the stated purpose of honoring God and discipling students in moral excellence. The dress code is designed to encourage modesty, decency, and propriety in the area of dress and to discourage the use of clothing as a significant means of establishing self-identity or gaining attention of social status. Students' dress should draw attention to their countenance, not to their body or apparel, and should demonstrate respect for themselves as well as the entire Areté community.

- *Shirts or tops* shall not expose the midriff, cleavage, or any part of the bra, in any position (with hands raised, bending over, etc.) **A good rule of thumb is that shirts should fall approximately 2 finger widths below the collar bone.** No tank tops are permitted, but sleeveless shirts are allowed if the shirt meets the guidelines above.
- *Pants and shorts* shall be worn at the waist so that undergarments are not exposed. Leggings or similarly tight pants are not allowed.
- *Shorts, dresses, and skirts* shall extend to at least the mid-thigh.
- Excessively tight and see-through clothing is inappropriate and not allowed.
- Clothing with inappropriate messages or design is prohibited. This includes, but not limited to, profane, lewd, or anti-Christian language or images.
- *Makeup*: Excessive makeup is not acceptable.
- *Personal Hygiene*: It is expected that participants of Areté will present themselves with good personal hygiene. If instances of poor oral hygiene, wearing clothes that are excessively dirty, or repugnant body odor arise, participants will be asked to correct the issue.
- Beyond what is described above as appropriate or inappropriate, decisions about what qualifies as a dress code violation are at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the tutors.

In any instance of a dress code violation that is not immediately rectified, parents will be contacted and asked to immediately assist in remedying the situation. We have large yellow shirts in the study hall room, which the students will be asked to wear until they have more appropriate clothing. This may include bringing correct clothing or assisting their child in cleansing themselves prior to being able to reenter the classroom to participate in classes. If a satisfactory remedy cannot be found, the student may be required to leave campus. Blatant or repeated disregard of the dress code may result in an orange card. No violation will be tolerated.

### Public Display of Affection

While at Areté, students are expected to refrain from any public displays of affection (PDA). Examples of PDA include, but are not limited to, inappropriate contact such as holding hands, kissing and prolonged frontal hugs. There is to be no PDA at all during the school day, inside or outside the building.

### Attendance, Tardiness, and Participation

It is the parent and student's responsibility to make sure the student arrives on time and prepared for class. In the event that absences or late arrivals are imminent, parents are to notify the facilitators at [aretefacilitation@gmail.com](mailto:aretefacilitation@gmail.com) to ensure tutors receive the message about the absence, and the student is recorded properly on the attendance records. Students and parents are responsible for requesting the make-up work from the tutor.

Due to the disruptive effect of tardiness and absences on a class, excessive unexcused tardies or absences may result in an orange card.

**Students arriving later or arriving earlier than their regular schedule are required to check in and out in study hall.**

### Study Hall

Students registering for Study Hall must be capable of sitting quietly for 90 minutes without talking or disrupting other students during the study hall block. For those students **who require it due to their course schedule**, more than one study hall will be allowed each day. If a student fails to meet these standards for study hall, parents will be required to pick the student up during the study hall block.

### Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Internet

Following are the general guidelines surrounding the use of cell phones, electronic devices, and internet:

- Student use of electronic devices during instructional hours is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**, unless otherwise noted by the tutor for that particular class session(s).
- Electronic devices are not to be used during class for any reason, unless the tutor asks the students to do so. Each class will have a basket for cell phones, and students will leave their phones in the basket until the end of class time. **All phones need to remain on silent, not vibrate, during the school day.**
- **Parents needing to contact their child during class time can call one of the facilitators on-site and they will get the student from class.**
- Internet use is to be limited to studying purposes or in-class assignments only. Social media and video streaming are not permitted. During study halls, music and gaming that do not require the use of the internet will be allowed with the use of earbuds.

### Inappropriate Possessions

Areté Christian Academy will not tolerate possessions of any weapons, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, vapes, or drugs. Additionally, students who have been dismissed from another school because of discipline problems related to these possessions should not seek enrollment in Arété.

### Property Damage - Accidental or Intentional

In the event that property is damaged accidentally or intentionally, the party who caused the damage will be responsible for appropriate repairs and/or payment for such repairs. If it is determined that the damage or destruction was an intentional act of vandalism, parents will be contacted, and these actions will be grounds for automatic expulsion. Students are to refrain from running or wrestling in the hallways. They are to move from one class to another quietly with dignity and promptness.

### Code of Conduct Infractions

Conduct, by any person, that is contrary to the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. Students are encouraged to report any infractions to their tutor, parents, or a Board Member who should then report back to the tutor of the class in which this infraction occurred. Tutors are required to report any form of these infractions to both the parents and a Board Member as described in the Disciplinary procedure listed below.

## **VII. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

Areté Christian Academy uses an Orange Card Disciplinary System of correction for its normal disciplinary procedure. In situations where students are guilty of an infraction against the Arété Christian Academy Code of Conduct, they will be issued an orange card. The name of the tutor who issued it, the student's infraction, as well as a place for parent signature are on the card; if there are any questions, parents are to use this information to contact the tutor. The student is responsible for carrying the card home, presenting it to the parents, and returning the signed card to the issuing tutor the next day of classes. Tutors are to turn in the signed orange cards to the facilitators to file in the student's record.

A record is kept of the orange cards that have been issued to students during their time at Arété. If a student

receives a second orange card, a card is again sent home. In addition to the second card, the parents will be contacted by a member of the Areté Board Disciplinary Committee, and a meeting will be scheduled to include the student, parents, and the Areté Board Disciplinary Committee. Should issuing a third orange card be necessary, it will result in a second meeting with the student, the parents, and the Areté Board Disciplinary Committee. During the meeting the continued violations against the Code of Conduct will be discussed, the meeting will then be discussed with the Areté Board of Directors, and a final determination will be made regarding the student's future at Areté. The result will be determined at the discretion of the Areté Board of Directors. If a student is dismissed from a class, he/she may not be readmitted to that class during the current school year. **Tutor fees for the entire duration of the class, including time not attended due to dismissal, are due in full to the tutor.**

Depending on the severity of the infraction a student has committed, Areté reserves the right to immediately dismiss the student regardless of the student's progression in the Orange Card Disciplinary System.

Students who have received two orange cards may be denied future Areté enrollment and class registration. Board approval for future enrollment will be required.

### **VIII. LUNCH BREAK**

There will be designated areas provided for a lunch break. Students should bring lunch for the time between second and third period, which is 12 NOON – 12:30 P.M. Each student attending lunch is responsible for setting up chairs, cleaning up after themselves, and putting away chairs. A microwave will be available for student and tutor use. The church kitchen IS NOT available for Areté participants' personal use.

#### *Lunch Break Guidelines*

All students must stay in the designated lunch area for the entire half hour lunch period unless they have permission from the Areté monitor to leave the area. There will be no loitering in the hallways, in the bathrooms, in the classrooms, or in the parking lot.

The Areté lunch monitor will be provided with a list of students who are expected to be present during the lunch period. **No students will be allowed to leave during lunch.** Leaving will result in an orange card as outlined in the Code of Conduct section above.

### **IX. PARKING, DROP OFF, & PICK UP PROCEDURES**

Please observe and obey all posted signs on the church and school grounds. Parents may briefly stop in the driving lanes to drop off students, but please **park in the parking lot when picking up students** after class. Please do not park in driving lanes. Student drivers must also park in the assigned parking lot. Congregating for extended periods of time in the parking lot or on the grounds is prohibited. Students should wait to be picked up on the sidewalk area. For the safety of everyone, loitering in the parking lot is prohibited. If a student needs to wait for a ride for more than ten minutes, then he/she will need to wait in the study hall room.

### **X. STUDENT DRIVERS**

- To ensure the safety of students, tutors, and all others within the Areté community, all licensed students driving to Areté must provide a Student Driver Registration form to the facilitators. In the event that a student obtains his/her license after the start of the school year and intends to drive himself/herself to Areté, the form must be provided to the facilitators beforehand.
- Student Drivers will receive a parking tag once the Driver Registration form has been turned in; **there is a cost of \$5.00 for the tags.**
- Student parking will be marked in the back parking lot. No student is to park in the front section by the sidewalk; these spaces are reserved for tutors.

- For any student drivers leaving Areté outside of their normally scheduled time, a parent MUST provide an email to the facilitators, ([aretefacilitation@gmail.com](mailto:aretefacilitation@gmail.com)) prior to the student's dismissal. Any students found forging a parent's signature, leaving without approval, or with unapproved passengers will receive an orange card as outlined in the Code of Conduct section above. If a student driver has permission to drive another student, an email from the driver's parent and the passenger's parent must be provided to the facilitators ([aretefacilitation@gmail.com](mailto:aretefacilitation@gmail.com)).

## **XI. DISAGREEMENTS & RESOLUTIONS**

All matters of concern or disagreement will be handled according to the principles of Matthew 18 and Matthew 5. We seek to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Areté community in conformity with Biblical injunctions of Galatians 6:1-2, I Corinthians 6:1-8, Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-20. Therefore, if a parent is displeased with the way a tutor is teaching or handling his/her class, the parent should first go to the tutor to discuss the issue. If the parent remains concerned after a reasonable amount of time and effort have been put forth in the reconciliation process the parent should then contact a Board Member to further discuss the concern and potential solutions.

All families, tutors, and representatives of the Areté Christian Academy community agree to abide by a system of arbitration in an effort to settle any disputes that may arise and cannot be settled within Areté Christian Academy. The agreement reads as follows: The parties to this agreement believe that the Bible commands them to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian community in conformity with Biblical injunctions of I Corinthians 6:1-8, Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-20. Therefore, the parties agree that any claim or dispute arising out of any aspect of the co-op relationship, including any claim or statutory claims, shall be settled by Biblically based mediation. The parties agree that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of Areté's relationship and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit against one another in any civil court for such disputes, except to enforce a legally binding arbitration decision.

Each party, regardless of the outcome of the matter, agrees to bear the cost of his/her own arbitration and one-half of the fees and costs of the neutral arbitrator and any other arbitration expenses.

## **XII. HANDBOOK CHANGES**

We reserve the right to make any necessary changes to this Student Handbook and Policy Guide at any time, and if so, will provide sufficient notice to tutors, parents, and students.

If you have any questions, please contact: [aretemechanicsville@gmail.com](mailto:aretemechanicsville@gmail.com).

Areté Christian Academy is a registered 501(C)3 Non-Profit Corporation in Virginia

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