



# **FAMILY AND STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**UPDATED MAY 2025**

Meeting Location:  
6470 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061

<https://www.homeschool-life.com/VA/gloarisehomeschool/>

This handbook covers Arise Collaborative Academy (ACA) policies and procedures important to students and their families. All parents and guardians, by virtue of their child’s enrollment at ACA, agree to abide by all policies and procedures contained in this handbook. Parents and guardians of enrolled students will be notified whenever the administration adopts new (or significantly changes) policies that may directly affect the students or parents.

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# Welcome to Arise Collaborative Academy

## *Letter from the Directors*

Dear ACA Families,

Welcome. We're so glad you're here.

When we first began dreaming about Arise, we weren't just building a place for academics. We were cultivating a community — a gathering of families committed to deep learning, strong character, real connection, and a life rooted in wonder.

Arise exists because we believe education is more than the transfer of information — it's the shaping of lives. It's the slow, beautiful work of growing curious minds, resilient hearts, and communities where each family matters.

As you walk through the halls, join a class, lend a hand, or simply sit and share a conversation, our hope is that you'll feel what makes Arise unique. We are a community built on shared values: commitment, curiosity, clarity, and hope. We learn together. We serve together. We grow together.

This handbook is meant to be a guide — a tool to help you navigate our rhythms, expectations, and opportunities. It's not just a list of policies; it's a reflection of how we choose to walk together with intention and joy.

Thank you for being part of this story. Thank you for bringing your gifts, your energy, and your family's story into ours.

As we step into this year, our hope is that you find more than classes here — that you find belonging, beauty, and a renewed sense of wonder in the journey of learning.

With gratitude and excitement,

*ACA Leadership Team*

## **Our Story: How Arise Began**

Arise began in 2019 around a kitchen counter — with a handful of children, a couple of mamas, and a shared desire to form a passionate homeschool community rooted in educational excellence and authentic relationships.

What started with a simple gathering has, year by year, grown and evolved into a thriving community of families committed to learning, connection, and growth. Along the way, we have adapted, dreamed, and built something that remains true to those early kitchen-table hopes: a place where families could belong, children could flourish, and education could be approached with wonder and depth.

In April 2025, Arise took another important step forward by becoming an official nonprofit organization. With that milestone came a new leadership structure designed to steward our mission with wisdom and care. New roles — including an Executive Director, Academy Director, and Community Director alongside a Board of Directors — were established to support both the community and the academic life of Arise.

The 2025–2026 school year marks our first as a non-stock corporation pursuing 501(c)(3) status, a new chapter that reflects our long-term commitment to serve families with excellence, accountability, and heart.

As we look ahead, we carry with us the same spirit that shaped us in the beginning: curiosity, courage, and a vision for a community where families rise together.

## **Our Mission**

Arise Collaborative Academy exists to create a new path for education by fostering a collaborative environment where families thrive together. We empower homeschoolers to build a rich, community-driven educational experience that upholds parental rights, strengthens relationships, and equips children to excel academically, socially, and emotionally.

## **Our Vision**

Arise Collaborative Academy (ACA) is deeply rooted in central Gloucester County, Virginia, serving local and neighboring communities by offering an innovative first through twelfth grade educational option. ACA empowers homeschool families to work collaboratively to provide their children with enriching opportunities for academic, social, and emotional growth within a thriving, supportive community. ACA integrates and expands by leveraging existing infrastructure and resources through partnerships with the broader community, fostering a symbiotic relationship that benefits all.

## Our Values

**Compassion** - We interact with others with humility, kindness, and empathy, valuing every individual's unique contributions and perspectives. We strive to create a joyful and warm environment where everyone feels seen, supported, and valued.

**Curiosity** - We are committed to fostering creativity, curiosity, and an open-minded approach to learning and relating with others. With flexibility and a willingness to adapt, we inspire families to explore new ideas, embrace challenges, and grow together as a community.

**Clarity** - We prioritize clear communication, transparency, and purposeful actions in everything we do. By fostering understanding and trust, we create a reliable and harmonious environment where goals are pursued with focus and integrity.

## Community Life & Culture

### What it Means to Be Part of Arise

Being part of Arise Collaborative Academy means more than attending classes — it means stepping into a community built on shared purpose, mutual respect, and a spirit of collaboration. We are a collective of families who believe that homeschooling is richer when we work together, and that education thrives in an environment shaped by wisdom, wonder, and relationship.

At Arise, every family plays a vital role. Our success depends not just on our programs, but on the people who bring them to life — students, parents, teachers, and volunteers alike. We expect every member of our community to engage with kindness, humility, patience, and a commitment to the flourishing of others. At Arise we believe each person has something to offer that will bless and encourage our community. We seek for every member to be plugged into a core community contribution whether it's teaching classes, organizing events, preparing materials, supporting communication, welcoming new families, or assisting in their own unique way.

We are not striving for perfection, but for faithfulness: to show up, to serve well, to communicate openly, and to support one another with compassion and encouragement. By choosing to be here, each family agrees to uphold the culture of Arise — a culture that values growth over comparison, service over self, and relationship over rivalry.

When we each bring our best — even imperfectly — Arise becomes more than a place of learning. It becomes a place of belonging, discovery, and hope not just for the students but for entire families.

## Community Motto: *Anchored in wisdom, Rising in wonder.*

At Arise, we believe that education is not just about knowledge — it's about formation. Our motto, *Anchored in Wisdom, Rising in Wonder*, captures the heart of what we strive for every day.

***Anchored in Wisdom*** reminds us that a strong foundation matters. Wisdom isn't simply knowing facts; it's the slow growth of discernment, humility, and character. We seek to anchor our children — and ourselves — in what is true, good, and enduring, cultivating a strength that will sustain a lifetime of learning and living well.

***Rising in Wonder*** calls us upward — to curiosity, creativity, exploration, and hope. We want our children to see the world not as a checklist to master, but as a marvel to discover. Wonder invites us to keep asking questions, to pursue beauty, and to remain open-hearted and courageous in a changing world.

Together, these two ideas — wisdom and wonder — shape everything we do at Arise. They guide how we learn, how we serve, how we build relationships, and how we grow as a community. They are the twin pillars of a life well-lived and an education worth pursuing.

## Community Colors

At Arise Collaborative Academy, we have chosen black, gold, and ivory as our community colors because they reflect the deep, enduring values we seek to nurture in our students, families, and community life.

**Black** symbolizes:

- **Strength** — the ability to stand firm through challenge and change.
- **Wisdom** — the depth of understanding gained through experience and study.
- **Resilience** — the quiet endurance that comes through clarity and purpose.
- **Wonder** — the mystery of the unknown and the invitation to explore what lies beyond.

**Gold** symbolizes:

- **Light** — the spark of truth, beauty, and goodness that shines in every person.
- **Value** — a reflection of what is precious and lasting, beyond the temporary.
- **Joy** — the richness of life when lived in community and purpose.
- **Hope** — a bright reminder that even a small light can shine powerfully in dark places.

**Ivory** symbolizes:

- **Clarity** — a reflection of clear thinking, honest communication, and pure pursuit of truth.

- **Openness** — the spirit of welcome, inclusion, and warmth that defines our community.
- **Lightness** — a reminder that learning and growth, while meaningful, are also joyful and life-giving.
- **New Beginnings** — representing the fresh start each day offers as students explore, wonder, and grow.

Together, black, gold, and ivory tell a story — a story where strength and resilience create space for light and joy to shine, where clarity and openness invite true community, and where every new beginning is approached with courage, curiosity, and wonder.

## Admissions & Registration

Enrollment at Arise Collaborative Academy is an opportunity to join a community committed to collaborative learning, meaningful relationships, and a shared pursuit of educational excellence. Our registration process is designed to ensure that each family understands and embraces the mission, vision, and values of ACA before joining us on this journey.

We welcome families who are excited to participate fully in the life of the academy, contribute to the health of the community, and support the flourishing of all students.

## Membership Requirements

Membership in Arise Collaborative Academy carries shared responsibilities.

Families agree to:

- Be in compliance with Virginia homeschooling laws.
- Uphold the mission, vision, and values of ACA.
- Commit to the full academic year, unless prior arrangements are made with leadership.
- Actively participate in community life, including attending classes, volunteering, and supporting events.
- Complete all volunteer and service commitments as outlined during registration.
- Communicate respectfully and promptly with leadership, volunteers, and other families.
- Honor all financial commitments as outlined during registration.
- Prioritize attendance and reliability, communicating early about absences or emergencies.
- Support their students' participation, preparedness, and positive behavior.
- Approach conflict with humility and integrity, engaging in respectful and solution-oriented conversations.

We serve students entering first through twelfth grade. We welcome families who view education as a family endeavor, who are willing to engage relationally, and who are committed to a collaborative approach to learning.

**Note:** Families may join ACA only if their oldest enrolled student is in first grade or above. However, we joyfully welcome younger siblings of enrolled students. We offer nursery care for ages 0–3 and a structured, play-based Pre-K and Kindergarten program for younger children whose families are part of the academy.

ACA is a community built on trust. If a family consistently struggles to meet membership expectations, leadership will reach out to begin a conversation. The goal is always restoration, clarity, and support—but in some cases, continued enrollment may be reconsidered for the good of the academy.

## Registration Process

Our registration process is designed to thoughtfully welcome families into the ACA community.

The process includes:

1. **Inquiry:** Families are encouraged to review the handbook and other materials to understand ACA's mission and community expectations.
2. **Application:** Families submit an application form with all required information. To register with ACA visit our website.
3. **Family Interview:** Once an application is received, families will be invited to an interview or meeting with leadership to discuss goals, expectations, and fit within the community.
4. **Membership Decision:** Families will be notified of acceptance or waitlist status.
5. **Registration and Orientation:** Accepted families complete final paperwork, pay registration fees, and attend any required orientation sessions.

Enrollment decisions are made thoughtfully and may be based on space availability, class makeup, and alignment with ACA's mission and culture.

**Please note:** Returning families may have their membership status assessed prior to enrolling in classes for the upcoming school year. Continued membership is not guaranteed. ACA retains the right to refuse membership to individuals who have violated community guidelines or whose participation is inconsistent with the mission and values of ACA.

## Financial Policies

Participation in Arise requires a financial commitment to support the sustainability of the academy.

Key financial policies include:

- **Registration Fees:** A **non-refundable registration fee** is required at the time of enrollment to secure your family's place at ACA. This is an annual, per-family fee (not per student) that grants access to ACA classes as well as a variety of community opportunities.
  - *Current Member Yearly Fees: \$250*
  - *New Member Yearly Fees: \$275*
- **Quarterly Class Fees:** Families sign their students up for classes on a quarterly basis. Quarterly class fees are due in full upon acceptance into the classes for which a student has registered. Payment secures the student's spot in each class. Classes are charged per student, per quarter and are priced depending on the curriculum and supplies needed for the class.
- **Refund Policy:** Registration fees are **non-refundable**. Quarterly Class Fees refund policies (if any) will be clearly stated each quarter during the class enrollment process.
- **Late Payments:** Late payments may incur fees or affect enrollment status unless arrangements have been made with leadership.

Families are expected to honor financial commitments as part of their membership responsibilities.

## ACA Format & How We Operate

ACA is a volunteer-run homeschool collaborative, which means everyone involved in ACA plays an active role in making this community one of passion, curiosity, and learning. We aim to create a welcoming, orderly environment where students can learn, explore, and build relationships safely and joyfully. Clear rhythms and routines help ensure that all families feel at home and that our days run smoothly.

# When We Meet

## Meeting Days Overview

At Arise Collaborative Academy, our community life is centered around our **Thursday Enrichment Days** — a weekly gathering dedicated to enrichment, connection, and collaborative learning. Thursdays are designed to foster creativity, encourage exploration, and provide joyful, hands-on experiences. Through these collaborative, interest-based activities, students strengthen friendships, build new skills, and grow within a vibrant, supportive community.

## Thursday Meeting Day Information

*Arise Enrichment Days* take place once a week on Thursdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in the Courthouse Circle.

Address: 6470 Main Street, Gloucester, VA

Our Thursday meeting schedule is as follows:

- **Arrival:** 8:50–8:55 AM
- **Start Time:** 9:00 AM sharp
- **Opening Gathering:** 9:00–9:10 AM (brief all-student welcome and announcements)
- **Class Period 1:** 9:10–10:20 AM
- **Break:** 10:20–10:30 AM (movement/reset)
- **Class Period 2:** 10:30–11:40 AM
- **Closing Gathering:** 11:40–11:50 AM (end-of-day wrap-up and announcements)
- **Dismissal:** 11:50 AM
- **Lunch & Community Time:** 11:50 AM - 12:45 PM

A complete class schedule will be provided to students at the start of each quarter during class enrollment.

## Thursday Class Offerings

Thursday **enrichment-based classes** are designed to:

- Reinforce skills being developed at home in core subjects.
- Offer new experiences and exploration across disciplines.
- Encourage creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration.
- Support the holistic growth of students — academically, socially, and emotionally.

For students in Grades 1 and up, they will choose between **two class options per period**. Class rotations occur **each quarter** (every six weeks). The goal is joyful learning that supports curiosity, collaboration, and exploration beyond core academics.

Examples of past and potential classes include:

### **Creative Arts**

- Nature Art & Journaling
- Perspective Drawing
- Theater & Improv
- Fiber Arts: Knitting, Sewing, or Weaving
- Storybook Illustration
- Music Exploration

### **STEM & Maker Activities**

- Lego Engineering & Simple Machines
- Science Experiment Lab
- Tinkering & Invention Studio
- Kitchen Chemistry
- Bridge Building Challenge

### **Movement & Wellness**

- Homeschool PE & Team Games
- Dance & Creative Movement
- Nature Exploration & Outdoor Skills
- Basketball Skills
- Playground Science & Physics of Play

### **Literacy & Language**

- Book Clubs & Story Circles
- Writing Workshop
- Spelling Games & Word Play
- Public Speaking & Debate
- Foreign Language Explorations (e.g., Spanish, ASL, Latin Roots)

### **Life Skills & Practical Arts**

- Cooking & Baking Basics
- Gardening & Edible Plants
- Money Sense & Entrepreneurship
- Woodworking & Tool Use

- First Aid & Emergency Skills
- Sewing for Beginners
- Animal Care & Pet Science

### **History, Culture, & Curiosity**

- Around the World Geography
- Time Travelers: History through Hands-On Projects
- Folk Tales & Myths
- Famous Inventors & Makers
- Community Service Projects
- Civics & Leadership

**Important Note:** While enrichment classes naturally connect to academic growth and progress, they are not designed to replace core academic instruction. Families remain responsible for meeting their state’s homeschooling requirements.

### **Younger Sibling Programs:**

While ACA is geared toward Grades 1-12, we do provide a welcoming space for younger siblings of enrolled students during Thursday *Enrichment Days*.

- **Nursery (0–3 years):** Safe and caring environment with age-appropriate toys and activities.
- **Pre-K and Kindergarten (ages 4–5):** Structured play-based program focusing on early learning, social development, and movement activities.
- **Eligibility for Younger Sibling Programs:** Available to families with a 1st-grade or older student enrolled in Enrichment Day.

## **Important Arrival Time Expectation**

**Families are expected to arrive and be ready to start by 9:00 AM.**

- Students should be seated in the sanctuary and ready to receive welcome and announcements at 9:00 AM, not arriving at 9:10 AM.
- The Opening Gathering of *Arise Enrichment Days* is an essential part of our day — it sets the tone for community, communication, and learning.
- Late arrivals disrupt the flow of the morning and miss important information.

We ask all families to honor this shared commitment to start strong together by being on time each week.

## Dismissal & Lunch Time Expectations

While our formal classes end before lunch, **Thursdays don't end when the lessons do**. We invite families to stay for *Lunch & Community Time*—a space to unwind, connect, and build relationships across ages.

This time is an important part of our weekly rhythm. It gives space for:

- Unstructured play and meaningful conversation.
- Cross-family connection and friendship-building.
- Rest and reflection after a full morning of learning.

To make this time enjoyable and peaceful for all, we ask families to:

- **Supervise their children actively** on the playground and in shared spaces.
- **Model kindness, inclusivity, and responsible use of the environment.**
- **Clean up thoroughly**—leaving tables, outdoor areas, and the Fellowship Hall better than we found them.
- **Refrain from working, holding meetings, or conducting business** in community spaces during this time.

We believe that shared meals and shared moments are formative. They strengthen the fabric of our community in ways that curriculum alone cannot. Please treat this time as part of your family's day—not an afterthought, but a valuable opportunity to be present with one another.

## Parent Participation & Supervision Requirements

*Arise Enrichment Days* are intended to be vibrant, family-centered experiences — supporting not only the creative and academic development of students, but also the cultivation of meaningful relationships among families. By working, learning, and growing side by side, we create a community marked by belonging, collaboration, and joyful partnership.

Therefore, our Thursday Arise Enrichment Day is **not** a drop-off program. Parents (or designated guardians) are required to remain on-site for the duration of their children's participation in Thursday *Enrichment Days*. This requirement applies to all student groups, including middle school and high school students. On-site presence ensures that students are supported, the community remains connected, and safety protocols are upheld at all times.

## Thursday Volunteer Roles

As stated, Thursday *Enrichment Days* are not a drop-off program, which means all registered families are required to contribute in some way to the success and running of Thursdays.

To ensure even distribution of roles and responsibilities each week, each mom/parent will be assigned a volunteer position each quarter. The following are examples of potential volunteer roles that will need to be filled by our members.

- **Point Teacher** - The Point Teacher leads the class, develops lesson plans prior to the quarter, determines class fees, provides a syllabus, and teaches the class throughout the quarter. They are responsible for setting up and breaking down the classroom at the start and end of each class. Clear communication with the Assistant Teacher is essential to ensure they understand how to best support the class. This proactive communication helps the Assistant Teacher step into the lead role if necessary, ensuring smooth instruction continuity.
- **Assistant Teacher** - The Assistant Teacher supports the Point Teacher throughout the quarter, being familiar with the syllabus and the lesson plans. The Assistant Teacher should check in before the quarter begins and continue to communicate weekly to ensure they can provide the best support. This role includes assisting with set up and breakdown and covering for the Point Teacher when necessary. The Assistant Teacher should be prepared to step in as the lead teacher if needed and should be flexible and proactive in supporting the classroom environment.
- **Nursery Support** - This role is responsible for assisting in the nursery, helping oversee the youngest children during their activities. The Nursery Support team member ensures that children are safe, entertained, and engaged in age-appropriate activities. They assist with any classroom needs, keeping the nursery organized and making sure that all children's needs are met during the day.
- **Monitor** - The Monitor plays a vital role in ensuring the smooth running of Thursday *Enrichment Days*. They are responsible for overseeing hallways and common areas, ensuring safety, answering questions, and assisting with student needs such as behavior management, injuries, or emotional support. Monitors may be called into any classroom to assist on any given week, helping with classroom needs, supporting students, and stepping in where needed. Additionally, the Monitor is responsible for assisting with both classroom setup and breakdown, ensuring that spaces are prepared before classes begin and properly cleaned up afterward. This role is essential for maintaining the flow, safety, and organization of the entire day.

Each quarter these roles will rotate and change, giving everyone an opportunity to serve everywhere. Families will receive their volunteer assignments before the start of each quarter.

### **Volunteer Expectations for Returning Families**

Returning families are expected to:

- Teach or co-teach at least one class during the academic year.
- Volunteer in the Nursery or Pre-K/Kindergarten program at least one class period per quarter, if you have a student enrolled in either of these groups. This structure ensures

that the needs of our youngest learners are met and that the broader program remains well-supported.

## **Volunteer Expectations for New Families**

New families are warmly welcomed into the Arise community with support as they get to know the rhythms of ACA.

- New families are invited — but not required — to submit class proposals if they wish to teach during their first year.
- If new families choose not to teach initially, they will be assigned to a classroom support role or included in the volunteer rotation to assist with the various aspects that make our days run smoothly.

## **Designated Supervising Adults**

Each family must designate their regular supervising adult(s) during registration. This may be a parent, legal guardian, or another approved adult acting in loco parentis.

- Designated adults are expected to be consistent throughout the year.
- Changes to supervising adults must be submitted to leadership for approval prior to Enrichment Day.
- Week-to-week switching of supervising adults without notice is not permitted, as it creates confusion, disrupts community rhythms, and compromises accountability.

Every supervising adult must wear their provided name badge and follow the same participation expectations as all Arise community members.

## **Visitor Policy**

Occasional visits from grandparents, spouses, or extended family are welcome. We love when loved ones want to see the beauty of ACA in action!

Visitors must:

- Be pre-approved by leadership at least 24 hours in advance
- Check in upon arrival
- Wear a visitor badge while on-site
- Remain under the supervision of the hosting family at all times

Visitors are not permitted to teach, supervise students, or serve in assigned volunteer roles unless they have gone through ACA's orientation and background check process.

## Sabbath School Rhythm

ACA follows a Sabbath school rhythm during the academic year. Our *Enrichment Days* are structured in **six-week quarters**, with a built-in **Sabbath Week Break** after each quarter. These breaks are designed to give students, families, and teachers time for **rest, reflection, and renewal** before entering a new learning cycle.

The school year runs from **late August through April**, typically aligning with traditional academic calendars while maintaining our unique rhythm. A **detailed annual calendar**—including quarter start and end dates, Sabbath weeks, holidays, and special events—will be provided to all families at the beginning of the year.

## Additional Community Opportunities

At ACA, what happens outside the classroom is just as important as what happens within it. Events, clubs, field trips, and service projects aren't extras—they're essential threads in the fabric of our community, helping us grow in connection, curiosity, and shared purpose. These opportunities invite families to engage more deeply, build lasting relationships, and live out our values together.

## Events at ACA

Our events are carefully chosen to support our mission of connection, wonder, and belonging — offering families regular opportunities to come together outside the classroom and build lasting relationships.

**Throughout the year, we host a variety of events designed to:**

- Mark meaningful moments in the life of our community.
- Celebrate the rhythms of the seasons.
- Showcase student creativity and accomplishments.
- Strengthen friendships and foster belonging.
- Create joyful memories that anchor our educational journey together.

Events are open to all enrolled families and are an essential part of the vibrant community life at Arise.

## Open House / Kick-Off Event

**What it is:** A community-wide gathering at the start of the year to welcome new families, reconnect returning families, and set the tone for the upcoming season of learning and growth.

**Why it matters:**

- Provides a joyful and welcoming start to the year.
- Helps students and parents meet their Guides, classmates, and other families.
- Sets vision, expectations, and excitement for the months ahead.
- Builds immediate community momentum and belonging from Day 1.

**Seasonal Celebrations**

**What they are:** Community-wide events that celebrate the changing seasons — such as fall harvest gatherings, winter festivities, and springtime events.

**Why they matter:**

- Help anchor the year in the natural rhythms of creation.
- Offer joyful, relaxed times of fellowship across all age groups.
- Create traditions that students look forward to each year.
- Build inter-age relationships between students and families.

**Handicraft Fair**

**What it is:** A showcase event where students create handmade goods to display and sell to the community, celebrating creativity, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship.

**Why it matters:**

- Highlights student talents and efforts outside of academics.
- Encourages creativity, diligence, and pride in hard work.
- Teaches practical skills such as planning, presenting, and communicating with others.
- Fosters appreciation for handmade beauty and the value of work.

**Gingerbread House Competition**

**What it is:** This is a fun and festive annual Christmas celebration opportunity! This event is a community competition where students, families, or teams design and create gingerbread houses based on a theme.

**Why it matters:**

- Offers a playful, family-centered creative outlet.
- Encourages teamwork, design thinking, and artistic imagination.
- Builds joyful memories around the holiday season.
- Strengthens the sense of playful, lighthearted community spirit at Arise.

## End of Year Celebration

**What it is:** A culminating gathering at the end of the academic year to celebrate the journey we've traveled together — honoring the work, growth, and friendships built throughout the year.

### Why it matters:

- Marks and honors the completion of a meaningful year of growth.
- Celebrates student achievements across academics, enrichment, service, and community life.
- Provides a time to reflect, give thanks, and look forward.
- Strengthens community bonds and creates a sense of shared story and tradition.

## Clubs and Meetups at Arise

### Clubs

Clubs are official, structured gatherings designed for students **in sixth grade and above**. Each club has a clear focus, purpose, and set of expectations for participation. Clubs are meant to offer students the opportunity to dive deeper into specific interests, develop skills, work toward shared goals, and collaborate meaningfully with their peers.

### Examples of Clubs Include:

- Creative Writing Club
- Book Club
- Science Club

### Important Notes About Clubs:

- Clubs are **not intended as general social time**.
- Students who join a club are expected to actively participate, take the work of the club seriously, and contribute to the group's shared goals.
- Clubs are open only to students in **sixth grade and older** to ensure a developmentally appropriate level of commitment and focus.

Our goal is to provide an environment where older students can gather around shared interests in a purposeful, enriching, and respectful way.

## Meetups

Meetups are casual, relationship-centered gatherings intended to foster community across all age groups, including younger children. They are less formal than clubs and are designed to encourage connection, movement, and exploration without the structure or academic expectations that clubs require.

### Examples of Meetups Include:

- Crochet Circles
- Nature Walks
- Park Playdates

### Important Notes About Meetups:

- Meetups are **open to all ages** unless otherwise specified.
- Meetups are intended for community building, relational connection, and shared experiences, especially for younger families.
- Participation in meetups is casual and flexible, without formal registration requirements or structured curriculum.

## Why We Structure Clubs and Meetups Differently

We recognize that younger students thrive best through free play, exploration, and relational experiences. For this reason, we believe that **meetups are the best fit** for our younger students, offering them joyful opportunities to build friendships without the pressure of structured academic commitments.

Clubs are intentionally reserved for students in **sixth grade and older**, whose developmental readiness allows them to benefit from structured focus, goal-oriented projects, and deeper peer collaboration.

By providing **both clubs and meetups**, we are committed to supporting the needs of all students and families in a way that is both developmentally appropriate and community-building.

## The Launch at Arise

### What is The Launch?

At ACA, we recognize that the middle and early high school years are a time of tremendous transition, growth, and discovery. **The Launch** is our dedicated space for students in **middle**

**school and high school** to come together for intentional social connection, community building, and joyful shared experiences during this important season of life.

Each Launch event is built around a fun, themed activity — such as game nights, Christmas celebrations, outdoor movie nights, and more. While the events are light-hearted, we intentionally hold this time sacred: offering a safe, consistent environment where students can grow friendships, practice relational skills, and simply enjoy time together in a setting designed just for them.

### **Key Details:**

- **Who:** Students in middle school and high school (Grades 6+)
- **Format:** Intentional social events with rotating themes
- **Supervision:** Each event is led by a consistent adult leader, with at least one additional adult present at all times to provide oversight and ensure safety.
- **Parent Participation:** To encourage independence and authentic peer connection, parents are asked not to directly participate in The Launch events. Families are welcome to gather informally nearby with younger siblings, but Arise will not coordinate alternative activities during Launch time.
- **Location:** Events are primarily hosted at a consistent location to foster familiarity, comfort, and security for students.

## **Why The Launch Matters**

This age is a launching point — a time when students are stepping into new levels of responsibility, identity, and relationship-building. At ACA, we want to hold this space sacred: offering students the opportunity to grow, connect, and thrive together in an environment rooted in trust, joy, and meaningful community.

### **The Launch provides:**

- A safe, welcoming space for middle and high school students.
- Opportunities for authentic connection with peers.
- Consistent adult oversight to ensure a healthy, respectful environment.
- Fun, themed events designed to celebrate and nurture this unique season of life.

## **Mom's Events**

Mom's Events are designed to create intentional spaces for moms to gather, connect, and build meaningful relationships within our homeschool co-op community. These events offer a mix of fun, relaxation, and creativity, providing opportunities to bond over dinners, games, or hands-on activities. The aim is to foster a supportive environment where moms can recharge, share experiences, and build lasting friendships that extend beyond the classroom.

At ACA, we recognize that thriving students come from thriving families. Our Mom Events are intentionally designed to nourish the heart of our community — the women who nurture, guide, and invest daily in their children’s growth and education. These gatherings are more than just a night out; they are a space to exhale, be known, and find encouragement for the journey.

## How Mom Events Will Work:

- **Frequency:** We aim to host two Mom Events throughout the academic year, with a variety of formats and times to meet different needs.
- **Participation:** All ACA moms are warmly invited, whether you're brand new or a longtime part of our community. Events may include sign-ups or RSVPs for planning purposes.
- **Communication:** Events will be announced well in advance through our regular communication channels with full details, including any costs.
- **Atmosphere:** Every event is designed to be welcoming and low-pressure. Whether it's laughter over dinner, a creative craft night, or simply time set aside to rest and reflect, the goal is to connect in life-giving ways.

## Why Mom Events Matter:

### Mom Events:

- Strengthen the bonds of our parent community.
- Provide a space for encouragement, vulnerability, and shared wisdom.
- Create moments of rest and fun in the midst of busy family life.
- Help moms feel seen, supported, and celebrated for the vital role they play.
- Remind us that we're not meant to walk this homeschool journey alone.

## Examples of Mom Events We May Offer:

- Game nights or themed dinners.
- Seasonal craft or DIY nights.
- Potlucks or meet-ups at local restaurants.
- Book swaps, hiking adventures, or shared learning opportunities.

## Important Notes Regarding Mom Events

- **Connection First:** These events are about cultivating real friendships and support systems. Come as you are — no prep required.
- **Low Pressure, High Value:** Whether you attend every event or just one, we want each experience to be a blessing, not a burden.

- **Strengthening Our Foundation:** Healthy, connected moms help form the foundation of our thriving co-op. Investing in one another helps us serve our families and community from a place of abundance.

We believe that when moms flourish, families flourish — and these intentional spaces are one of the many ways we aim to walk alongside one another in both friendship and faith.

## Dad's Events

At ACA, we celebrate the important role dads play in shaping strong families and a vibrant homeschool community. Our Dad Events are designed to give fathers a space to connect, recharge, and share this unique journey with other men walking a similar path. Whether you're a primary educator, a behind-the-scenes supporter, or somewhere in between, these gatherings are for you.

### How Dad Events Will Work:

- **Frequency:** We aim to host two Dad Events throughout the year, offering a range of formats that fit different interests and schedules.
- **Participation:** All ACA dads (and father figures!) are invited. Some events may include father-child components, while others are just for the guys.
- **Communication:** Details will be shared in advance through our regular channels with clear information about time, location, and any needed sign-ups or supplies.
- **Atmosphere:** Dad events are designed to be relaxed and welcoming — a chance to laugh, connect, and enjoy shared interests in a low-pressure environment.

### Why Dad Events Matter at Arise:

#### Dad Events:

- Create space for dads to build genuine friendships within the academy.
- Offer opportunities for meaningful engagement beyond family events.
- Encourage fellowship, fun, and shared experiences that strengthen our whole community.
- Provide a chance to reflect on the unique role of fatherhood and homeschooling.
- Help dads feel connected, valued, and supported in their calling.

### Examples of Dad Events We May Offer:

- Backyard BBQs or firepit nights.
- Game nights or trivia competitions.
- Father-child outings like hikes, bowling, or sports games.
- Service-based gatherings like build days or community clean-up projects.

- Breakfast meetups or local restaurant meetups.

## Important Notes Regarding Dad Events

- **No Pressure, All Welcome:** Whether you're deeply involved in the daily homeschool rhythm or just want to connect occasionally, you are a vital part of this community.
- **Shared Strength:** When dads show up and engage, our families and children benefit in deep and lasting ways.
- **Meaningful Connections:** These events are meant to cultivate a spirit of camaraderie, encouragement, and mutual respect among the men in our community.

We believe that when dads are present and connected, the ripple effects are powerful. These moments of gathering are small investments that strengthen homes, friendships, and the heart of ACA itself.

## Field Trips at Arise

We believe that learning comes alive when students and families step outside the classroom and experience the world firsthand. Field trips are a vital part of our community life — connecting our academic studies to real-world experiences and creating shared memories that deepen relationships.

Each year, we aim to offer a variety of field trips that support both our **academic goals** and our **community spirit**. As a community-based academy, we encourage families to use field trips as opportunities to foster friendships and shared learning among students and parents alike.

### Annual Field Trip Goals:

- **Three Academic Field Trips:** Each year we plan at least three field trips that align closely with our academic themes in history, science, literature, or geography. Academic field trips may also be connected to special interest subjects offered through our Enrichment Day classes, providing students with opportunities to experience hands-on learning that ties directly to their classroom explorations. Each trip is designed to expand and enrich what students are studying, spark curiosity, and create deeper real-world connections.
- **One Community Field Trip:** In addition to our academic trips, we plan at least one field trip each year that is purely for fun, community building, and celebration. These events give families the chance to relax, enjoy one another's company, and create joyful memories together outside of a formal academic context.

## Why Field Trips Matter at Arise:

Field trips allow students to:

- See, touch, and experience the ideas they are learning about.
- Connect classroom knowledge to real-world places and stories.
- Celebrate and deepen interest areas explored during *Enrichment Days*.
- Develop curiosity, wonder, and deeper understanding.
- Strengthen friendships through shared adventure.
- Create lasting family and community memories.

We view field trips as a powerful extension of both our **academic mission** and our **relational vision** at Arise.

## Examples of Field Trip Possibilities:

### Academic Field Trips:

- Historical sites and reenactments
- Science museums or planetariums
- Nature centers and wildlife preserves
- Author talks or theater performances tied to literature
- Art museums linked to historical or cultural studies
- Botanical gardens, cooking schools, STEM labs (supporting enrichment classes)

### Community (Fun) Field Trips:

- Farm visits and pumpkin patches
- Ice skating or roller skating outings
- Beach or lake days

## Important Notes Regarding Field Trips

- **Family Participation:** Field trips are open to all enrolled families. Some trips may have age-specific recommendations based on the venue's content or structure.
- **Planning and Communication:** Field trip opportunities will be communicated well in advance to allow for planning and coordination. Some trips may have limited capacity and require advance sign-up.
- **Parent Responsibility:** Parents are responsible for transporting and supervising their own children during field trips unless otherwise specified.

## Service Projects at Arise

We believe that true education includes not only growing in knowledge, but also in compassion, responsibility, and love for our neighbors. **Service is a natural extension of our mission** — helping students understand that they have a meaningful role to play in their families, their communities, and the wider world.

### How Service Projects Will Work:

- **Frequency:** We aim to offer at least **two service opportunities** each academic year.
- **Participation:** Service projects are open to all enrolled ACA families. Some projects may offer specific roles tailored by age group to ensure everyone can meaningfully participate.
- **Communication:** Opportunities will be shared well in advance with clear sign-up instructions, supply needs (if any), and age recommendations.
- **Partnerships:** Whenever possible, we hope to build ongoing partnerships with local organizations, allowing students to see the long-term impact of their efforts.

### Why Service Projects Matter at Arise:

Service projects:

- Help students see beyond themselves.
- Foster humility, gratitude, and compassion.
- Build a strong sense of community across ages.
- Offer real-world applications for teamwork, leadership, and responsibility.
- Reflect our desire to be a blessing to the world around us.

Serving together strengthens both hearts and hands — and we are excited to watch our students and families grow as we step into this mission together.

### Examples of Service Projects We May Pursue:

- Packing care kits for shelters or hospitals.
- Organizing food drives or clothing collections.
- Partnering with local farms or community gardens.
- Creating holiday cards for nursing homes.
- Volunteering at local service organizations.
- Hosting bake sales or fundraising events for local causes.
- Park or community clean-up days.

- Assembling school supply packs for under-resourced schools.

## Important Notes Regarding Service Projects

- **Community Partnership:** We want students and families to experience the joy of working alongside one another to serve local organizations, meet real needs, and bless our broader community.
- **Hands-On Opportunities:** Service projects will be hands-on, practical, and age-appropriate, offering students visible, tangible ways to make a difference.
- **Family Involvement:** We believe service is most powerful when modeled and shared across generations. Whenever possible, we encourage families to serve together, strengthening both family bonds and community impact.
- **Building a Heart for Service:** Through regular opportunities to give back, we hope to help students develop a heart of gratitude, empathy, and lifelong service.

## Community Standards & Code of Conduct

At ACA, we believe that a thriving community begins with shared expectations for how we interact, learn, and serve together. We ask students, parents, and volunteers to approach their time at Arise with a spirit of responsibility, kindness, and excellence.

### Communication Guidelines

Clear, respectful, and timely communication is the lifeblood of a healthy community. At ACA, we strive to create an environment where questions are welcomed, concerns are addressed promptly, and relationships are strengthened through thoughtful dialogue.

To help foster this culture of communication, we ask all students, parents, and volunteers to commit to the following principles:

#### Communicate Respectfully

- Approach every conversation — whether in person, by phone, or by email — with kindness, patience, and a willingness to listen.
- Assume good intentions whenever possible, and seek clarity before making assumptions.
- Speak to and about others in a way that builds trust and honors their dignity.

#### Communicate Clearly

- Be specific and direct in your communications, especially when asking questions, raising concerns, or requesting help.
- Follow established channels for communication (e.g., contacting a teacher directly about classroom matters before escalating concerns).
- Review announcements, emails, and posted materials carefully to stay informed and minimize confusion.

## **Communicate Timely**

- Respond to communications from ACA Leadership within 48 hours whenever possible.
- Inform the appropriate leader promptly if issues arise (illness, absences, conflicts, etc.).
- Address concerns sooner rather than later, before they grow into larger misunderstandings.

When we approach communication with respect, clarity, and timeliness, we create a community where every voice can be heard, every concern can be addressed, and every member feels valued.

## **Code of Conduct**

Our Code of Conduct outlines the behaviors we expect from all members of our community as we strive to be an excellent organization people love to be part of.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Students at ACA are expected to participate with curiosity, respect, and integrity.

We ask students to:

- Treat teachers, classmates, and volunteers with kindness and courtesy.
- Follow directions with a willing attitude and seek help when needed.
- Engage in learning with focus, effort, and a positive spirit.
- Respect the classroom environment, materials, and shared spaces.
- Take personal responsibility for their words, actions, and belongings.
- Remain within designated areas during class time unless given permission by an adult.

Our goal is to foster a learning community where students can grow academically, socially, and emotionally in a safe and supportive environment. Students are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their actions and to seek support if they face challenges in relationships, learning, or behavior.

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

Parents are vital partners in the life of ACA.

We ask parents to:

- Support the mission, leadership, and policies of ACA with a spirit of unity and trust.
- Communicate promptly, clearly, and respectfully with leaders, volunteers, and other families.
- Approach concerns or conflicts directly, privately, and with a spirit of reconciliation.
- Model respectful, kind, and cooperative behavior toward all members of the ACA community.
- Encourage their children's positive participation in classes and community events.
- Ensure that students are prepared, present, and ready to participate fully in the day's activities.
- Fulfill volunteer, teaching, and support responsibilities with commitment and integrity and participate actively in the shared life of ACA.

By modeling collaboration, kindness, and personal responsibility, parents help shape the culture we are striving to build for our families.

## **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Volunteers serve not just as teachers and helpers, but as role models.

We ask volunteers to:

- Treat students and families with respect, patience, and dignity at all times.
- Communicate instructions and corrections clearly, calmly, and fairly.
- Create safe, welcoming, and structured classroom environments.
- Model curiosity, compassion, and excellence in their teaching and interactions.
- Work collaboratively with leaders, volunteers, and families to support the mission of ACA.
- Uphold ACA policies and model the values of compassion, curiosity, and clarity.
- Handle concerns or conflicts with compassion and a commitment to resolution.
- Honor confidentiality and exercise professionalism in all roles and responsibilities.

We are grateful for the time, energy, and heart that each volunteer brings to our community. Volunteers serve as daily examples of the values and habits we seek to nurture in students.

# Technology and Device Policy

At ACA, we aim to cultivate presence, connection, and focused learning. Our technology policy is designed to minimize distraction and promote meaningful engagement during *Enrichment Days*.

## For Students:

- Personal devices—including phones, tablets, and smartwatches—**must be turned off and stored in backpacks before entering the building** and remain there for the entire day, including lunch.
- **Devices may not be used without explicit teacher permission.** If a student needs to contact a parent, they must ask a teacher or staff member for assistance.
- **Any device used without permission will be collected** and held by leadership until the end of the day.
- **Absolutely no devices may be used in restrooms.** Any violation will be treated as a serious offense.
- **Zero Tolerance Policy:** Accessing or attempting to access inappropriate content on any device while on-site will result in immediate disciplinary action, including possible suspension or expulsion.
- **Classroom Exception:** Teachers may permit device use for specific educational activities. Students must turn off and put away devices as soon as the class ends.

## For Parents and Volunteers:

- Please use phones **discreetly and respectfully** while on campus.
- If you need to take a call or use your device for an extended period, step outside or into a private space.
- Technology used for instruction or communication should support the mission of ACA and model mindful use to students.
- During class time, phones and laptops should only be used for lesson-related purposes. If you need to send a text, take a call, or check an email, please step outside the classroom to do so.
- **Assistant Teachers** play a vital role in the classroom. We expect assistants to be fully present—supporting the lead teacher, engaging with students, and helping create a lively, attentive learning space. Phone use for personal or work-related tasks should wait until after class. If there's a quiet moment where your help isn't needed, we encourage you to participate alongside the students as a model of curiosity and attentiveness.
- **During lunch, we ask that phone use be minimal and that laptops be put away.** This time is designed for community building—for kids *and* adults. Please avoid working, taking calls, or conducting meetings in shared community spaces like the Fellowship Hall or playground. If something urgent arises, step aside and handle it discreetly.

- **Need to work during academy hours?** We understand that life doesn't always pause. If you need a space to work during the day, please contact the Executive Director ahead of time so we can coordinate a designated area that won't disrupt learning or community flow.

## **Bullying, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline Procedures**

Bullying, including cyberbullying, is not permitted by any student, parent, instructor, or administrator while attending Arise. This includes while on campus, at ACA events and activities, and when communicating with ACA administration, directors, instructors, families, and students.

**Examples of bullying include but are not limited to the following:**

- Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
  - Teasing
  - Name-calling
  - Inappropriate sexual comments
  - Taunting
  - Threatening to cause harm
- Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors about someone
  - Embarrassing someone in public
- Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
  - Hitting/kicking/pinching/tripping/pushing
  - Spitting
  - Taking or breaking someone's things
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures

**If conflicts arise:**

- Students are encouraged to seek help from an adult if they cannot resolve an issue peacefully.
- Parents should communicate concerns about classroom behavior promptly to instructors or ACA leadership.
- Leadership will work with all involved parties to address concerns quickly, fairly, and with a spirit of restoration.

In cases of repeated disruptive behavior or serious violations of community expectations, leadership may implement disciplinary actions up to and including suspension or dismissal from the program.

All discipline is handled thoughtfully, privately, and with the goal of restoring healthy community dynamics whenever possible.

## Academic Policies

Our academic policies are designed to support a culture of exploration, excellence, and partnership with homeschooling families — always recognizing that parents are the primary educators.

### Attendance and Participation

At ACA, we believe that consistent participation is vital to both individual growth and the strength of our community. Each family's commitment to regular attendance, punctuality, and full engagement helps ensure a rich, dependable learning experience for all students and supports the flourishing of the broader academy community.

### Attendance Expectations

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes for which they are registered unless illness, emergency, or unavoidable conflicts arise.

Regular attendance:

- Supports continuity of learning.
- Builds strong relationships within the classroom and community.
- Reflects a family's commitment to collaborative education.

If ongoing or frequent absences occur, leadership may request a meeting with the family to discuss the student's participation and ongoing enrollment.

### Absence Notification Procedures

If a student must be absent:

- Parents should notify both the Academy Director and the relevant instructors as soon as possible, preferably at least **24 hours in advance** when possible.
- Notifications should include the student's full name and reason for absence.

- In cases of extended absence (more than one class session missed), families should discuss a plan for making up missed work (if applicable) with instructors.

Prompt communication helps teachers plan effectively and maintain a smooth classroom environment for all students.

## **Tardiness Policy**

Timely arrival is important for the rhythm and focus of our classes:

- Students are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to begin at the designated start time.
- Late arrivals disrupt the learning environment and should be avoided whenever possible.
- If a student arrives late, they should enter quietly and respectfully without drawing attention away from the ongoing class.

Repeated tardiness may result in a conversation with leadership to find a supportive solution.

## **Classroom Participation Expectations**

At ACA, we value an active, positive learning environment.

Students are expected to:

- Come prepared with any required materials or assignments.
- Engage respectfully and attentively during instruction and activities.
- Follow classroom rules and routines as established by instructors.
- Contribute to a spirit of curiosity, kindness, and collaboration.

Participation is not only about completing tasks — it's about bringing a willing heart and mind to the shared learning journey.

## **Student Work Expectations**

Students at ACA are expected to:

- Come prepared for class sessions with needed materials.
- Engage respectfully, attentively, and with a willingness to learn.
- Complete in-class work and any assigned take-home activities (if applicable) with integrity and effort.

Participation is about growth and engagement, not perfection. We encourage students to approach their learning experiences with curiosity, care, and responsibility.

## Homework and Assignments

Homework for Thursday Enrichment Classes will be minimal and purposeful.

Assignments may include:

- Light practice activities to reinforce skills introduced in class.
- Preparation for class discussions, projects, or presentations.

Clear communication about homework expectations will be provided at the start of each class quarter.

## Minimum/Maximum Grade Expectation Policy

As home educators, we understand that grade levels aren't always a perfect fit—every child learns on a unique timeline. That said, ACA classes are designed with specific developmental stages in mind, and **stated grade requirements must be followed** to ensure a strong learning environment and fair enrollment process for all.

If you believe your student would be best served by enrolling in a class **outside the listed grade range**, please reach out **before registering** to request an exception. This helps us avoid scheduling conflicts, enrollment imbalances, and classroom challenges down the road.

## Requesting a Grade-Level Exception

If you'd like to request a grade-level exception for your student, please follow these steps::

1. **Review the class description and prerequisites carefully** to ensure the content and expectations align with your child's readiness.
2. **Reach out to the Academy Director** with a brief explanation of your request. Please include:
  - Your child's name and current age/grade
  - The class you're requesting an exception for
  - Why you believe this class is a good fit
3. The leadership team will review your request and respond with a decision or follow-up questions. In some cases, we may ask for input from the class teacher.

Please note that exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed. Our priority is creating a positive, developmentally appropriate experience for all learners and volunteer teachers.

## **Class Enrollment & Switching Policy**

We understand that sometimes a class may not be the best fit—but to honor the planning and structure that goes into each quarter, **class changes after rosters are finalized must be approved by the Academy Director.**

Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must align with the overall goals and flow of ACA's program. Class switches are only permitted for clearly defined reasons—such as developmental readiness, scheduling conflicts, or significant misalignment with the class's purpose.

To allow for smooth transitions and minimal disruption, **all requests must be submitted and approved by the end of Week 2 of the quarter.** After that point, class changes will not be permitted.

## **Feedback and Communication**

Instructors will provide feedback to students and families about classroom engagement and skills development as appropriate.

- Formal grades are not typically assigned for enrichment classes in grades 1-8.
- Some enrichment classes classified as electives for grades 9-12 *may* have a grading component

Parents remain the ultimate record-keepers and overseers of their child's academic progress.

## **Student Support and Accommodations**

ACA is committed to working with families to support student success whenever possible. While we are not equipped to provide formal special education services, reasonable accommodations within the classroom setting may be made at the instructor's discretion.

Parents are encouraged to share any learning needs, medical considerations, or other supports needed at the time of enrollment or registration so that our staff can plan thoughtfully.

# General Policies

## Lunch and Snack Policies

Families are responsible for providing their own **lunches, snacks, and reusable water bottles** each week.

- **Students must clean up after themselves** and help leave shared spaces better than they found them.
- **Lunch is a social time**, but respectful behavior is expected—students should remain seated while eating and follow communicated guidelines.
- **Snacks may be eaten between classes**, not during instructional time unless directed by a teacher.
- **Special snack days or community lunches** may be announced during the year!

## Outdoor Lunch & Recess

Weather permitting, lunch and recess take place outside. We use the **playground and picnic tables**, but families are encouraged to bring **blankets or portable chairs** for added comfort.

Please note:

- **There are no trash cans outside.** Families must pack out their own trash.
- **Water fountains are available inside**, but each child should bring a refillable water bottle.
- **Do not use water from the church's Fellowship Hall water tank.**

Parents and guardians are expected to **supervise their children during lunch and recess** and to clearly communicate expectations for safe and respectful playground use. As a collaborative, we rely on one another to make this a safe, fun, and welcoming environment for all.

## Indoor Lunch (Inclement Weather)

When weather prevents outdoor lunch, we'll gather in the **Fellowship Hall**. Please refer to the *Fellowship Hall Use Policy* for expectations around food, cleanup, and space use.

## Parking Lot & Playground Safety Guidelines

The safety of our students and families is a top priority at ACA. Both the **parking lot and playground** are shared spaces that require **active supervision and clear boundaries** to ensure everyone's well-being.

### General Safety Expectations:

- Please **drive slowly and cautiously** in all parking areas.
- Children should **never walk through the parking lot unattended**. Parents are responsible for escorting children to and from the building.
- **Playing in the parking lot is not permitted at any time**, even if a parent is present.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for **setting clear safety boundaries** with their children, especially around the parking lot and playground.

### Supervision Requirements:

- **Students may only play outdoors when supervised** by their parent/guardian or an ACA volunteer or teacher.
- **During class hours**, any ACA-approved outdoor activity (e.g., P.E., science experiments, nature walks) will be **actively supervised by a teacher or designated volunteer**.
- Once classes are over, **parents resume full responsibility** for their children's supervision, including during lunch and community time on the playground.

We ask that all families **model and reinforce safe, respectful behavior** in these spaces. By working together, we can maintain a fun and secure environment for everyone.

## Sanctuary Policy

The Sanctuary is a shared sacred space and is used for our **Opening Gathering** before classes and for gathering for dismissal immediately following *Enrichment Days*. To honor this space and maintain a peaceful environment, we ask all families to observe the following guidelines:

- **Students must remain seated** in the designated pews with a parent or guardian during gathering times.
- **No student may leave the Sanctuary** without being accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- **Running, yelling, or roughhousing** is never permitted inside the building, including the Sanctuary.
- **No food or drink** is allowed in the Sanctuary at any time.

- **Classes are not held in the Sanctuary**, and no one should be in the space outside of gathering times unless given **explicit permission from the ACA Leadership Team**.

By treating the Sanctuary with care and reverence, we model respect for shared spaces and support a calm, connected start and end to each Enrichment Day.

## Fellowship Hall Policy

The Fellowship Hall is a shared space we're grateful to use, and we ask all families to treat it with care and consideration. This space is occasionally used for **lunch, indoor recess, and meetings**, but its primary function is for classes.

To keep this space welcoming and functional, please observe the following expectations:

- **Noise levels must remain low at all times**, especially when classes are in session nearby or when church staff are working just outside the doors.
- **Running, yelling, or roughhousing is not permitted** inside the building, including during lunch and recess.
- **In inclement weather**, board games or quiet indoor activities may be brought in for lunch time.
- **During Fellowship Hall use, students must remain in the space** unless given express permission by ACA Leadership. Wandering throughout the building is not permitted.
- **Everyone is responsible for cleanup**. Before leaving the Fellowship Hall, please be sure tables, floors, and shared surfaces are clean and ready for the next group.

This is a collaborative effort, and maintaining a clean, calm, and respectful environment in the Fellowship Hall is something we do together—for the good of our community and our gracious host church.

## Bathroom Policy

Bathrooms are functional spaces and should be used responsibly and respectfully. They are **not** a place for students to gather, play, or hang out.

Please help us care for our host's facility by following these guidelines:

- **Use bathrooms quickly and return to class or your group promptly.**
- **Ensure faucets are turned off and trash is properly disposed of** before leaving.
- **Only toilet paper should be flushed.** Do not flush feminine products, paper towels, wrappers, or excessive amounts of toilet paper.

- If a problem arises in the bathroom (overflow, clog, or mess), please **notify an adult and ACA leadership immediately**.

Thank you for helping us honor and maintain the spaces entrusted to us.

## Buying & Selling Policy

To maintain a safe, focused, and distraction-free environment, **buying or selling items during academy hours or events is not permitted**, unless expressly approved by ACA Leadership. This includes the exchange of personal items, food, merchandise, or other goods.

This policy helps protect our shared space from disruption, supports student safety, and prevents misunderstandings or undue pressure among families.

If you'd like to propose a sale or fundraiser, please reach out to leadership in advance for approval.

## Trading Cards Policy

We understand that trading cards can be a fun and social hobby for many students, and **ACA allows trading cards on a limited basis**.

- **Trading and showing cards is only permitted during lunch or after the co-op day ends.**
- Cards must remain **put away during class time, in hallways, and between transitions.**
- If cards are seen outside of the approved times, **they will be collected by a teacher and returned to a parent at the end of the day.**
- **Trading cards is a privilege**, and ACA Leadership reserves the right to revoke this privilege at any time if it becomes disruptive.

We encourage students to enjoy their hobbies respectfully and in a way that supports our shared learning environment.

## Digital Media & Photo Policy

ACA may take photos and videos during classes, events, and community gatherings throughout the year. These images may be used for promotional purposes, including but not limited to:

- Social media posts
- Website content
- Printed materials (flyers, brochures, etc.)
- End-of-year recaps or community slideshows

Photos and media will only be captured by **authorized members of ACA Leadership or designated volunteers**. We are committed to using all media respectfully and in a way that reflects the heart of our community.

If your family prefers **not to have your child's image used**, you must indicate this on your registration form and communicate directly with leadership. We will do our best to honor media opt-outs, though we cannot guarantee incidental exclusion from wide group shots taken during public events.

By participating in Arise Collaborative Academy, families acknowledge and accept this policy unless an opt-out is formally submitted.

## **Accountability & Consequences for Policy Violations**

At ACA, we believe that clear expectations and loving accountability create a safe and thriving environment for everyone. Participation in ACA is a privilege, and we ask all families and students to uphold our community standards both **during class hours** and at **any ACA-sponsored events or gatherings**.

If a student or family member violates our Code of Conduct, Safety Policies, or other core expectations, the following consequence structure may be used:

- 1st Offense** – Email or conversation with parent(s) from ACA Leadership
- 2nd Offense** – Meeting with parent(s) and student(s) to address the issue
- 3rd Offense** – Temporary removal from ACA for the remainder of the quarter
- 4th Offense** – Permanent dismissal from Arise Collaborative Academy

*Please note: Depending on the nature or severity of the situation, ACA reserves the right to skip steps in this process and apply immediate consequences, including removal or expulsion.*

## **Family Responsibility**

Parents are ultimately responsible for their child's behavior and are expected to help reinforce ACA's community expectations. This includes modeling respectful conduct, supporting follow-up conversations at home, and helping students take ownership of their choices.

## **Immediate Behavior Concerns**

If a student is corrected by an adult during class or free time, they are expected to **respond respectfully and return to appropriate behavior immediately**. If they cannot do so, the

student may be **removed from the class or activity** and supervised by a designated monitor until it concludes. A follow-up conversation with leadership and parents will be scheduled as needed.

## Serious or Repetitive Offenses

Repeated disruptions, unsafe behavior, or serious violations (e.g., bullying, defiance, damage to property, or disrespect toward adults) may result in temporary or permanent dismissal.

**Dismissal from ACA does not release a family from the responsibility to pay tuition or fees already incurred.**

Our goal is always restoration when possible. We're committed to supporting families as they work through challenges while also protecting the learning environment and well-being of the broader community.

## Health and Safety

At ACA, the health, safety, and well-being of our students, families, and volunteers are of the highest importance. We aim to create an environment where all community members feel cared for, respected, and supported — while maintaining clear policies to promote safety and minimize risks.

Leaving your children at any time with Arise and/or on the premises of the hosting church without supervision is at the sole risk of the family. Instructors will be responsible for registered students in their classes for the time periods that their classes cover.

## General Illness Policy

To protect the health of our community:

- Please keep students home if they are experiencing fever (100.4°F or higher), vomiting, diarrhea, significant cough, contagious rash, or any other symptoms of communicable illness.
- Students should be symptom-free for **at least 24 hours without the aid of medication** before returning to classes.
- If a student becomes ill during the day, parents will be contacted and must be prepared to leave campus with their child promptly.

We ask families to exercise both caution and courtesy when making attendance decisions, understanding that one family's choice affects the larger community.

## Allergy Awareness

We are committed to maintaining a safe environment for students with allergies:

- Students should not share food, drinks, or utensils with others during snack or lunch times.
- Any known allergies or medical needs must be clearly communicated during registration so that leadership can plan appropriately.

If a child carries an EpiPen, inhaler, or other emergency medication, it must be available on-site and the parent must ensure that appropriate emergency plans are communicated to leadership.

## Medication Policy

ACA Leadership and volunteers do **not administer medications** of any kind (prescription or over-the-counter) to students, except in documented, pre-approved emergency cases (e.g., EpiPens).

If a child requires medication during an Enrichment Day:

- A parent or designated guardian must be responsible for administering it.
- Emergency medical forms must be completed in advance if necessary.

Parents should ensure that students have access to any essential items (such as inhalers, EpiPens, or other emergency supplies) and that leadership is aware of their location.

## Injury Response

In case of a minor injury:

- Basic first aid (bandages, ice packs, etc.) will be administered by a parent member or volunteer.
- Parents will be notified of any incident involving first aid.

In case of a more serious injury:

- Emergency services will be contacted immediately.
- Parents will be notified as soon as possible.
- A written incident report will be completed and kept on file.

## Communicable Disease Guidelines

In the event of outbreaks of communicable diseases (e.g., COVID-19, flu, or other significant illnesses):

- ACA Leadership will communicate any temporary adjustments to policies or procedures.
- Families are expected to comply with any temporary measures adopted to protect community health.

Arise will follow local public health guidelines when necessary, always seeking to balance caution with respect for individual family needs and choices.

## **Inclement Weather and Closures**

The safety of our students and families is our top priority. In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies:

- ACA Leadership will communicate closures or schedules as early as possible.
- Families are encouraged to use personal discretion regarding travel safety, even if the academy remains open.

In cases of weather-related closures, leadership will communicate any necessary adjustments to the academic calendar or class schedules.

## **Background Checks**

For the safety of all students, **every adult serving in a classroom or supervisory role at ACA is required to complete a background check** prior to participating in our program. This includes all teachers, co-teachers, assistants, nursery workers, and support volunteers. If you will be on campus for Thursday *Enrichment Days*, you are required to submit a background check.

Background checks must be completed through our approved screening service. ACA will provide instructions for completing the process during onboarding each year. Families are responsible for the cost of their background check as part of their community contribution.

Adults who do not complete the background check will not be permitted to serve in classrooms or supervisory roles, though they may remain on-site under their family's supervision in a non-serving capacity.

This policy applies to all *Enrichment Day* participants and ensures that we uphold the highest standards of safety and trust for our students and families

## **MEDICAL TREATMENT AUTHORIZATION:**

Any Instructor or Volunteer at ACA can give minor medical care (including, but not limited to, washing and putting band-aids on, using ice packs for bumps, etc.) as needed while students are at ACA and/or ACA-sponsored activity. This is at the instructor's or volunteer's sole discretion.

The Instructor or Volunteer at ACA can obtain immediate care in the case of a medical emergency as determined solely by them, in the event that the parent cannot be consulted or located, or if the care is believed to be so urgent that there is no time for consultation with the parents/guardians. Parents will be solely responsible for any expenses, which may be incurred in providing treatment to their child.

If needed, parents will provide an Emergency Action Plan for Allergies and/or other Pre-existing Medical Conditions (a step-by-step plan of what someone should do in a medical emergency caused by an allergic reaction or pre-existing medical condition). This plan is for ACA's information only; it doesn't create an obligation to follow it, although every effort may be made to follow it. Parents are responsible for promptly providing a detailed emergency action plan if one is needed, as well as talking to their child(ren)'s instructors regarding allergies/medical conditions before their child begins classes. (Parents are to consult their doctor for information about how to make an Emergency Action Plan for their child.)

ACA assumes no responsibility for any treatment or actions in response to medical incidents, medical emergencies or medical conditions.

## **RELEASES OF LIABILITY:**

When a student enrolls at ACA, they and all family members agree to the following releases of liability:

In consideration of being permitted to participate in Arise in any way, all participants, students and all their family members and guardians [hereinafter referred to as "Family"] agree to the following:

### **RELEASE:**

1. Release, covenant not to sue, waive, and discharge ACA, their volunteer instructors, advisors, administrators, board members, volunteers, participants or other family members, or the hosting church, their officers, employees, board members, administrators, instructors, volunteers, participants or other families participating in ACA or hosting church (hereinafter referred to as "Releasees")

from all liability for any loss or damage and any claim or damage on account of injury to the person or property or resulting in death of a Family member while Family is participating in ACA activities.

**ASSUMPTION OF RISK:**

2. Family agrees to indemnify Releasees from any loss, liability, damage or cost Family may incur due to the presence of Family in or on the premises of the hosting church. Family realizes transportation to and from ACA or any time off campus is the Family responsibility. Family also realizes that times between classes, gaps in schedules, before and after classes, and days and hours that instructors are absent are the Family responsibility. Leaving your children at any time with ACA and/or on the premises of the hosting church without supervision is at the sole risk of the Family.
3. Family assumes full responsibility for and risk of bodily injury, death or property damage while in or on the premises of ACA's hosting church and/or while working for any purpose participating in ACA activities.
4. Family expressly agrees that this release waiver, and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the State of Virginia and that, if any portion of the agreement is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.
5. Family, in consideration of being permitted to participate in ACA, for Family, and Family's heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, releases and forever discharges all Releasees, and their heirs, administrators, and executors of and from any and every claim, demand, action, of whatsoever kind or nature, either in law or in equity arising from or by reason of any bodily injury or personal injuries known or unknown, death or property damage participation in ACA or any activities in connection with ACA or on the host church's property.
6. Family releases all hosting church and ACA officials, administration, instructors, volunteers and all others listed as "Releasees" above from any claim whatsoever on account of first aid, treatment or service rendered to the Family during participation in ACA. I understand that I will be solely responsible for and will pay any expenses which may be incurred in providing treatment to the Family.
7. Family acknowledge and fully understands that each member/participant will be engaging in activities that involve risk of serious injury, including permanent disability and death, and severe social and economic losses which might result not only from their own actions, inactions, or negligence but the action, inaction, and negligence of others, or the condition of the premises or of any equipment used.

8. Further, that there may be other risks not known to us or not reasonably foreseeable at this time. Family assumes all the foregoing risks and accepts personal responsibility for the damages following such injury, permanent disability or death.
9. Family releases, waives, discharges and covenants not to sue ACA, its affiliated clubs, their respective administrators, directors, agents, other members/participants, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, owners and lessors of premises used to conduct the event, all of which are hereinafter referred to as “releasees,” from any and all liability to each of the undersigned, his or her heirs and next of kin for any and all claims, demands, losses or damages on account of injury, including death and damage to property, caused or alleged to be caused in whole or in part by the negligence of the releasees or otherwise.

#### **THE FAMILY ALSO ACKNOWLEDGES:**

10. That the Mother, Father and/or Legal Guardian of Family have carefully read the above release and know and understand the contents of the release and their significance and sign this release as Family’s own free act.
11. This agreement shall be binding on each member of the Family, their personal representatives, assigns, heirs, and next of kin.
12. This release contains the entire agreement between the parties to this agreement and the terms of this release are contractual and not a mere recital.

## **ENROLLMENT CONTRACT:**

When parents enroll their home-schooled child(ren) in a supplemental class, or classes, activities, events, etc, for the school year at ACA, they are agreeing that they:

- Understand that ACA’s commitment is for the school year, as decisions to offer classes are based upon enrollment, and ACA must plan for classroom space and organizational expenses.
- Have read, understand and will abide by the ACA Handbook.
- Have read and understand the ACA Financial Policies as stated in the ACA Handbook. Parents agree to pay all fees in accordance with these policies, and acknowledge that if they withdraw their children or they are dismissed from ACA, they are still responsible for the fees they contracted for as explained in the policies.

**AGREEMENT:**

We have read this handbook together with our student(s) and agree to abide by the policies set forth herein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

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Student Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Leadership & Board of Directors Contact Information**

Our leadership team is here to walk alongside your family. We value open communication and are happy to help with questions, support, or feedback.

### **ACA Leadership**

#### **Executive Director** – Leigh Ann Dutton

Oversight of mission, vision, strategic and financial operations, and communication.

Contact Information:

- Email: [duttonla@gmail.com](mailto:duttonla@gmail.com)
- Phone: (865) 809-7596

#### **Academy Director** – Lindsay Lane

Oversight of academic programs, curriculum development, class schedules, and community day experience.

Contact Information:

- Email: [l.lane757@gmail.com](mailto:l.lane757@gmail.com)
- Phone: (850) 814-4234

#### **Community Director** – Brittany England

Oversight of events, family care, enrichment opportunities, and community support.

Contact Information:

- Email: [brittfawn@gmail.com](mailto:brittfawn@gmail.com)
- Phone: (804) 815-6704

### **Board of Directors**

The ACA Board provides accountability and strategic guidance for the health and future of Arise Collaborative Academy.

President - Mark Dutton

Vice President & Treasurer - Steven Lane

Secretary - Erica Green

Contact information and meeting dates will be available upon request.

## **A Final Word**

### **Heartfelt Thank You**

Thank you for choosing to walk alongside us. ACA exists because families like yours believe that education is more than content — it's connection. Thank you for investing your time, energy, and presence into this community. You matter here, and your gifts help shape who we are.

### **Our Hope for Your Family at ACA**

Our hope is that your family experiences ACA as more than a place to learn. We hope it becomes a place of encouragement, purpose, and belonging — a place where your children are seen and supported, and where you find joy in the journey.

May this be a year of discovery, connection, growth, and wonder — together.