



ARIZONA AUTISM

CHARTER SCHOOLS, INC.

Parent/Guardian and Student Policy & Responsibility Handbook
Central Phoenix, West Valley & Tucson

School Year 2025-2026

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Our Mission

The mission of the Arizona Autism Charter Schools is to educate students with autism and other neurodiversities using evidence-based strategies grounded in the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). This educational model will be delivered by highly trained teachers and staff. Our goal is to make this high quality, specialized education accessible to students with autism in the Phoenix Metropolitan area and beyond.

Our Vision

Our driving force is to empower students with ASD to reach their full potential in motivating and engaging environments using individualized programs so that each child gains the skills to integrate into the community and become a fulfilled, productive citizen.

The Board of Directors for Arizona Autism Charter Schools

The Board is responsible for meeting the mandates of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools and the Arizona Department of Education and the overall operation of the charter school.

Executive Team

Co-Founder & Interim CEO	Ron Harrison
Chief Financial Officer	Paul Pucino
Chief Operating Officer	Dan McCarty
Chief of Schools	Myla Goyne
Assistant Chief of Schools	Patrick Masson
Senior Director for Data and ABA Programming	Claire Piper
Director of Talent Management	Susan Contino
Director of Wrap Around Services & Special Projects	Megan Vincent
Executive Liaison and Director of Compliance	Annie Loftis

District Support Team

Director of Special Education and English Language Learners	Kristina Christman
Director of STEAM and CTE	Supreet Kaur
Student Information System Manager	Maria Colunga
Registrar	Alondra Jimenez-Herrera
Lead School Nurse and Manager of Health Initiatives	Jessica Mangieri
School Nutrition Manager	Holly Vaughan

Campus Support Teams

Early Learning Center

Early Learning Center (ELC), Grades K-3
1445 E. Indian School Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85014
(602) 883-7500
Office Hours: 7:30 AM-3:30 PM

Early Learning Center Director
Early Learning Center Director of ABA Practices
Office Manager/Receptionist/Attendance Clerk
School Wellness Certified Nursing Assistant

Jacquelyn Oates
Chad Hines
Yessenia Garcia
Jacqueline Austin

Main Campus

Main Campus, Grades 4-12+
4125 N. 14th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85014
(602) 882-5544
Office Hours: 8:00 AM-3:30 PM

Upper Campus Director
Upper Campus Director of ABA Practices
Office Manager
Receptionist/Attendance Clerk
Lead School Nurse and Manager of Health Initiatives
School Wellness Certified Nursing Assistant

Denise Ballard
Carla Smith
Mekayala Gutierrez
Marylu Garica
Jessica Mangieri
Natalie Tricarico

West Valley Campus

West Valley Campus, Grades K-7
11039 W. Olive Ave.
Peoria, AZ 85345
(602) 283-5994
Office Hours: 7:30 AM-3:30 PM

West Valley Campus Director
West Valley Campus Director of ABA Practices
Office Manager
Receptionist/Attendance Clerk
School Wellness Certified Nursing Assistant

Katie Ferback
Christopher Morris
Nisha Teague
Diana Burruell
Monica Ulmer

Tucson Campus

Tucson Campus, Grades K-2 & 6-12+
1300 S Belvedere Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85711
(520) 372-0660
Office Hours: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Tucson Upper Campus Director
Tucson Upper Campus Director of ABA Practices
Tucson Elementary Campus Director
Tucson Elementary Campus Director of ABA Practices
Office Manager
School Wellness Certified Nursing Assistant

Kelly Hardegree-Ullman
Abigail Bligh
Elizabeth-Wede Fahnbulleh
Brittany Parmigiane
Andrea Every
Erica Duarte

Online Campus

Online Campus, Grades K-12+
1430 E. Indian School Rd. Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85014
(602) 346-0300

Online Campus Director
Online School Coordinator
Administrative Assistant

John Paquin
Adele Shemberger
Raquel Hernandez

East Valley Campus

East Valley Campus Director (Opening Fall 2026)

Casey Green

Office

Summer hours for the month of June, all campuses are open Monday-Thursday and are closed Friday.

During school breaks and scheduled holidays, the office will remain closed. Please refer to the school calendar for those dates.

Attendance

School attendance is ultimately the responsibility of the student and their family. Arizona law A.R.S. § 15-803 A requires students to attend school from the ages of 6 – 16. Arizona Autism Charter Schools believes students need to be at school daily to maximize their learning opportunities. As families who have chosen a specialized school, we request that your student attend school daily. This practice provides students with a consistent routine to help them develop a strong work ethic, reduce stress, form lasting relationships, and encourage academic and social progress.

If a student is habitually absent or tardy, AZACS will make every effort to work with the family to improve attendance. School and Arizona state policy requires that we notify the proper state authorities if no improvement is made and attendance continues to be an issue.

Instructional Time Model

A.R.S. § 15-901.08 authorizes charter schools to adopt Instructional Time Models (ITMs) to provide flexibility in the method and manner in which instructional hours are provided to students. AZACS takes advantage of this legislation that allows for some flexibility to traditional seat time and face-to-face instruction. AZACS reviews this option annually to ensure we are providing flexible parent/guardian choices to maximize a student's engagement and success in their education. Annual plans for ITM are approved by the school board and submitted to the Arizona Department of Education. Campus Administration will communicate to eligible families each year regarding any ITM opportunities in your child's grade level and program.

Excused Absences

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-901, excused absences are identified by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). ADE defines an excused absence as an absence due to:

- Illness
- Doctor's appointment
- Mental or behavioral health matters
- Homelessness
- Bereavement
- Family emergencies
- Time necessary to process for the armed forces
- Out-of-school suspensions
- Religious holidays
- Religious purposes
 - For a student to be excused for religious purposes, these conditions must be met:
 - The person who has legal custody of the student has given written consent
 - Any religious instruction or exercise takes place at a suitable place away from school property designated by the church or religious denomination or group

At times, our school may face unexpected closures due to emergencies or safety concerns. Under Arizona law A.R.S. § 15-806, students will be excused from school attendance during the following types of closures:

- Widespread illness for any period of three consecutive days or more.
- Adverse weather conditions for any period of three consecutive days or more.
- Concerted refusal by students to attend classes for any period of three consecutive days or more.
- Threats of violence against school property, school personnel or pupils for any period of one day or more.
- Situations affecting the safety of persons or property resulting from fire, flooding or floodwater, an earthquake, a hazardous material event or another cause if approved by the department of education.

If the school is closed for any of the reasons listed above, your child will not be marked absent and the missed days will not count against their attendance record.

We will communicate all school closures and reopening plans through official school channels (examples: email, phone messages, texts, website, and/or social media). If you have any concerns or questions during a school closure, please contact the school office for assistance.

For an excused absence, parents/guardians must notify Arizona Autism Charter Schools by 9:00 am of each day the student is absent. If the school is not notified within 24 hours of the absence, the absence will be coded as unexcused.

If an absence occurs due to any other term or condition not explicitly specified in this document, it will be considered unexcused.

To report an absence, please email the campus where the student attends or call the school to leave a voice message.

Early Learning Center (K-3) ELCattendance@autismcharter.org

Main Campus (4-12+) Maincampusattendance@autismcharter.org

West Valley (K-7) Westvalleyattendance@autismcharter.org

Tucson Campus (K-2 & 6-12) attendanceTC@autismcharter.org

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences reflect poorly on student achievement, so we strongly encourage students to minimize the number of unexcused absences they incur. AZACS is responsible for a minimum number of instructional minutes for state requirements. AZACS takes this responsibility very seriously and we count every minute of our school day to ensure that students meet these minutes and receive the maximum benefit possible. The following are some examples of missed school days that will be considered unexcused absences:

- Family Trips
- Non-school related activities (e.g. sporting events, cultural activities, celebrations, trips)
- Truancy (non-attendance)

Any student who is absent from school without the permission of the parent/guardian and/or without the knowledge and permission of Arizona Autism Charter Schools is considered TRUANT and may be subject to disciplinary actions in school and/or by local authorities. If a parent/guardian fails to send their child to school, the child will be considered truant. Under Arizona State law, Arizona Autism Charter Schools is required to report excessive truancy to the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS).

Excessive Absences

School attendance is not only a good habit, state law requires it. Arizona State Law (§ 15-802 and § 15-803) requires every person who has custody of a child between the ages of six and sixteen years shall make sure the child attends school for the full time school is in session unless unable to attend due to illness or another legitimate reason.

To encourage and improve school attendance, Arizona Autism Charter Schools has implemented a truancy program in partnership with Maricopa County Juvenile Court. This truancy program is called C.U.T.S. (Court Unified Truancy Suppression). We will be tracking attendance very closely. Your child is expected to be at school every day unless there is an excused reason not to be. An absence is defined as a minimum of one

missed class period per day. An unexcused absence will count as a truant day as defined by law. A student is “habitually truant” if he/she has five or more unexcused absences from school. A student that is absent more than ten percent (18 days) of the required number of school days per year is considered to have “excessive absences” whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

When a student has five or more unexcused absences or 19 excessive absences (excused OR unexcused), the student and family *can* be referred to a CUTS Lite Talk sponsored through the Juvenile Court. The CUTS Lite Talk, led by an officer from the Juvenile Court System, aims to identify the challenges related to school attendance. The talk will be held at the school. A parent or legal guardian must be present with the student at the time of the talk. If you are invited, it is strongly recommended that you take advantage of this opportunity.

The education of your child is extremely important to us. This program is another way that Arizona Autism Charter Schools, is working with the community to ensure a quality education for all students. Please note that the school also reserves the right to have a CUTS Officer speak at orientations and assemblies, as well as to individual groups of students regarding the importance of school attendance. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your campus director.

Should a student reach ten (10) total absences (excused or unexcused) within a semester; the Administrative Staff will meet to align interventions to support the student in regularly attending. A student’s parents/guardians will be notified and asked to participate in this process to review the circumstances that led to the excessive absences. It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to ensure consistent attendance. If the parent/guardian fails to take the necessary steps to provide your child with appropriate education you may receive a citation. If convicted, it is a Class 3 misdemeanor punishable by jail time and/or a fine.

Arizona State law states that any student who has 10 consecutive unexcused absences must be dropped from the school enrollment. If a student misses school more than 15% of the time, the student may be denied promotion due to Arizona state law and receive a failing grade in that class. The student may be required to repeat the grade the following semester, the following school year, or at summer school.

Tardiness

Lateness to school and class is disruptive to instruction. A student will be considered tardy to school if he/she arrives after the campus’s instructional start time. Upon late arrival, the parent/guardian must sign the student in at the front desk. Four (4) unexcused late arrivals to school will be considered habitual and parents may be contacted.

Late Arrival & Pick Up Policy

At Arizona Autism Charter Schools, we understand it takes a lot of commitment to get your child to and from school every day. We appreciate the efforts of our families to arrive on time and pick up your child at the end of the day. We also understand that sometimes unforeseen challenges arise that may result in your child being late for school or you being late to pick them up at the end of the day.

For late arrivals, please bring your child into the campus and sign them in for the day. Appropriate attendance will be documented by staff once your child arrives. Your child should arrive by the campus-specific start times each school day.

If a situation arises where you will be late to pick up your child, all families will be given a 30-minute grace period from the end of the school day where staff will supervise your child and have them ready for pick-up. In

those rare instances where you will be more than 30 minutes late for pick-up from school or an extracurricular activity, your child will continue to be supervised by staff in our late pick-up room. We will charge a fee for a late pick-up that is more than 30 minutes after dismissal. Late pick-ups will be charged a \$10 fee for each 15 minutes late.

If your student is chronically late being picked up, they may lose the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities.

Illness Policy

If your student appears to be ill in the morning before school, please have him/her remain at home. In general, students will be sent home from school if they have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or more if they are experiencing vomiting or diarrhea, or if they have symptoms of a suspected communicable illness or condition. If your student is sent home from school, please keep in mind that he/she should not return to school until he/she has maintained a 98.6-degree (normal) temperature for 24 hours without being given medication for fever reduction (such as Tylenol, Motrin, etc.). The student should have experienced no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. If parents, guardians, or emergency contacts are called to pick up a student due to illness at school, it is expected that your student will be picked up as requested within one (1) hour of notification.

Chronic Illness Policy

When a student is identified as possibly requiring a plan to address significant absences associated with chronic health conditions (via registration, attendance data, parent/guardian or teacher referral) a [Chronic Health Condition Verification form](#) shall be completed and returned to the school within thirty (30) school days. The parent/guardian, teacher, and administrator shall meet within (15) days following the return of the medical certification to develop an Instructional Agreement for students with chronic health conditions.

The parents/guardians shall submit a written medical certification to the campus director, which will include:

1. Medical diagnosis
2. Physical limitations affecting physical education activities and other requirements
3. Anticipated surgeries, treatment or hospitalizations that, although not expected to cause sufficient absences may interfere with regular school attendance.
4. Physician's signature and date signed.

Please contact the Registrar, School Nurse, or Certified Nursing Assistant for a [Chronic Health Condition Verification form](#) to be completed and signed by an appropriately certified health professional and kept on file in our office. This form expires at the end of the academic year, so a new form must be obtained and completed each school year.

Signing Out Early

We strongly discourage parents/guardians from signing students out early for appointments, therapies, or other engagements that can be scheduled during school breaks, half days, or after school hours. Students who must leave school early for unavoidable purposes must have their parent/guardian contact the school and the parent/guardian must sign their child out at the front desk. Parents/guardians must remain in the lobby area until the child is escorted to the lobby from the classroom by staff. A parent/guardian must authorize all

additional family members or others who can sign their child out of school by updating their emergency contact information on their parent portal.

Also, to avoid classroom disruptions, students will not be released for dismissal 15 minutes before regular dismissal time *except on an emergency basis*. This is to ensure that staff members have time to complete all academic lessons and proceed to staff posts to ensure that students can safely be dismissed to the traffic line. Please help us keep all children safe by not routinely picking up your child early from school.

Students who are routinely signed out early will be marked as an unexcused absence for that time.

Identification for Picking up a Child

Parents/Guardians and any authorized adults on the emergency contact list should present identification upon picking up a student at the front desk. Only authorized individuals to pick up your child must be listed on the authorized contact list. If someone who does not routinely pick up your child is picking them up after school they must come into the office and show identification to pick up your child. If you have a new provider who is authorized to pick up your student, please make sure you have updated your household information in your parent portal and authorized us to release your child to the provider. If someone is coming to pick your child up during the school day, please ask them to bring identification into the office so that we can verify the correct name on the pickup list.

Pickup will be conducted with the use of PikMyKid, an app-based pickup system. All parents/guardians or primary pick-up persons are recommended to register themselves via the PikMyKid app on their smartphones. During pickup, individuals must use the PikMyKid app to “Announce” themselves as soon as they arrive on campus. All vehicles must display their pick-up tag while in line preferably near the front visible through the windshield.

The PikMyKid app also allows parents/guardians to delegate pick up of their children to another individual, so long as that individual is listed on the authorized contact list as mentioned above. It's recommended that these individuals also register themselves on PikMyKid as well as have a pickup tag in their vehicle.

Individuals who do not have this information may be asked to park and walk into the building to show ID which may delay the pickup of the student. Each family will be assigned a student number and that number will be identified on the student's pickup tag. Each family will be given 3 tags and can request additional ones from the Registrar.

For any additional help or questions about PikMyKid, please contact the IT Team at itsupport@autismcharter.org or call the helpline at (602) 273-5199.

As a reminder, students are expected to be picked up on time each day. Please understand that a Director will be in contact with the parent or guardian if a student is picked up late more than 3 days within a school year.

Parent Communication

AZACS makes every effort to communicate proactively using different modalities for families. Communication takes on a variety of forms including SchoolMessenger (Informational out dials, email, and/or texts using this service to create automated notifications for communication in the event of a crisis as well as school information), direct email, and direct phone calls just to name a few. We also provide scheduled parent/guardian-teacher conferences in grades K-5. In addition, we offer scheduled observations up to four times per school year to maintain transparency and team collaboration.

For any classroom concerns, the classroom teacher should be your point of contact. For any concerns not resolved through your child's classroom teacher, please reach out to the Director for that campus.

Ways to effectively communicate with your child's teacher include:

- Via Email- Please call the school if you need to know a specific teacher's email address or find the teacher's email address on the website.
- Via Phone- This method may be used outside of instructional hours. Teachers are requested to return calls within 24 hours. Phone calls will not be transferred to the classroom during instructional hours.
- Daily Communication Log - This method will be used by your student's teacher to communicate daily progress, achievements, challenges, and behaviors. This also provides an opportunity for the parent/guardian to give feedback. New for the 25-26 school year, an AZACS Daily Communication Log will be provided at a small cost to families of \$12. To purchase your student's communication log, please visit [our website](#) or the front office can accept cash, check, or credit/debit card.

Communication between school and home should remain respectful and collaborative. Inappropriate or unprofessional communication will not be condoned.

School Messenger is used to communicate important information to families such as emergencies and school events. Please choose to opt-in to SchoolMessenger to receive important school information delivered via text message to your mobile phone by texting "Y" or "Yes" to 67587.

Parents and Guardians

You can take advantage of our Text Messaging Service

Our school utilizes the SchoolMessenger system to deliver text messages, straight to your mobile phone with important information about events, school closings, safety alerts and more.

You can participate in this free service* just by sending a text message of “Y” or “Yes” to our school’s short code number, **67587**.

You can also opt out of these messages at any time by simply replying to one of our messages with “**Stop**”.

We recommend saving this short code and Caller ID to the contacts on your phone. This will help prevent any 3rd party call blocking systems from interfering with your receipt of important messages sent by the school or district.

SchoolMessenger is compliant with the Student Privacy Pledge™, so you can rest assured that your information is safe and will never be given or sold to anyone.



**Opt-In from your
mobile phone now!**



**Just send “Y” or
“Yes” to 67587**

[Information on SMS text messaging and Short Codes:](#)

Our notification provider, SchoolMessenger, uses a true SMS protocol developed by the telecommunications industry specifically for mass text messaging, referred to as “short code” texting. This method is fast, secure and highly reliable because it is strictly regulated by the wireless carriers and only allows access to approved providers. If you’ve ever sent a text vote for a TV show to a number like 46999, you have used short code texting.

***Terms and Conditions** – Message frequency varies. Standard message and data rates may apply. Reply HELP for help. Text STOP to cancel. Mobile carriers are not liable for delayed or undelivered messages. Alerts sent over the wireless Public Alerting system are to take precedence over any notifications sent via the short code. See www.schoolmessenger.com/tm for more info.

Conflict of Interest

Hourly and salaried staff are not permitted to accept any position (e.g. babysitting, home therapy, habilitation, respite, etc.) outside of our organization with a current student without prior written approval by employee's Director. This is considered a conflict of interest to work with a current student outside of the school for any other organization or private funding. This is to protect the privacy of all students and maintain the professional relationship between school personnel and families.

This policy protects the employee from being placed in an uncomfortable situation and a possible ethical dilemma. It is very important to ensure proper and appropriate boundaries for the protection of the students, families, and staff members. If employment with the family occurs before the hiring of the individual, the employee and student that is served can not be housed in the same classroom or cohort. The employee is responsible for letting their Director know of the circumstance.

Once approved by the Director, the employee will be assigned to a classroom where the employee does not have direct contact or supervision with the student.

Employees who are also relatives of AZACS students are responsible for letting their campus director know of the relationship and cannot work in the same classroom or cohort as the student.

Allergies

All students must have an updated AZACS Allergy Information packet on file each year listing all diagnosed allergies. Families are encouraged to inform the school health office if changes occur throughout the year so that additional precautions can be taken in specific classrooms as well as common areas. AZACS reserves the right to request medical documentation to verify listed allergies.

AZACS is a **Peanut Free** environment. No peanut products are permitted on campus. Please do not send students to school with **any** peanut-related products. Some classrooms are entirely nut free. If this effects your student's classroom, your student's teacher will be in communication.

Lice/Nit

If a student is found with active head lice, guardians will be contacted and the student will be sent home for treatment. The guardian will be encouraged to begin treatment of the student immediately. The student shall be checked upon return to school and allowed to remain in school if no active head lice are detected. When it is determined that one or more students in a class or school are infested with head lice, a notice will be sent to families with information about the detection and treatment of lice.

National School Lunch Program

AZACS Central Phoenix and West Valley campuses participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), offering breakfast and lunch to all students. Meals must be ordered monthly by the designated deadline.

We require all families to complete and submit a school meal application to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. This information also helps qualify families for programs such as P-EBT, federal/state school funding, discounted internet services, and more.

If your child requires meal accommodations due to a medical condition, a signed medical statement from a licensed healthcare provider is required, per Arizona Department of Education guidelines. Without this form, we will NOT BE PERMITTED to accommodate your student's dietary needs, and a packed lunch will be necessary.

Nutrition Policy & Food Standards

To promote healthier eating and address concerns around childhood wellbeing, Arizona state law (House Bill 2164, now the Arizona Healthy Schools Act) prohibits public schools that participate in federal meal programs from offering ultraprocessed foods—including items with artificial dyes and additives such as titanium dioxide, propylparaben, potassium bromate, BVO, and various FD&C dyes (Yellow 5 & 6, Blue 1 & 2, Green 3, Red 3 & 40)—during the school day.

Parents/guardians are still allowed to send nutritional choices from home, even if they include ingredients considered ultraprocessed. The Arizona Department of Education will maintain a list of schools that have attested in writing to compliance with this policy and will provide certification forms for use by school administration.

Visitor Procedures, Tour Policy, Parent/Guardian Observation & Volunteer Protocol

Parents, guardians, DDD case managers, and other professionals working with a family are welcome to visit their student's classroom with prior permission. All visits must be pre-approved by a member of the administrative team. Observations by parents and guardians will be limited to one 30-minute visit, per appointment. The time allotted for outside service providers will be determined by the type of observation they have requested and been approved for. Observations are limited to once per quarter, for a maximum of (4) four visits per school year. We ask that all families wait six (6) weeks into the school year before scheduling visits and observations to give students and staff time to adapt to their new school routines without disruptions. Please contact one of the campus directors to make arrangements for observations at least one (1) week in advance of the intended visit.

Arizona State Law mandates that all visitors to any campus, including parents/guardians must check in at the school offices before entering the classroom areas. AZACS requires visitors to provide their government-issued identification card and uses Raptor Technologies to scan the visitor's name, date of birth, and photo for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders and the custom AZACS database before visitors are allowed on campus.

Once checked-in all visitors, will read and complete the [Visitor Observation Protocol Form](#) and must comply with the following conditions:

- Who May Be Observed: The sole purpose of a classroom visit is to observe a student and the instructional program. A 30-minute time frame is allotted for parents and guardians. The time allotted for outside service providers will be determined by the type of observation they have requested and must be approved by a school administrator. Observations are allowed four times per year, once a quarter.
 - At no time should the observer's motive for or focus of a classroom observation be to observe another student in the classroom. If the Director has knowledge that the focus of a visit is to observe another student, they reserve the right to deny a requested observation or to end an observation that is in progress.

- To protect the privacy of all students, visitors must maintain strict confidentiality regarding any other students they may see or hear during the observation. Observers may not discuss, share, or record any information related to other students' behavior, academic performance, or personal interactions. This includes refraining from taking notes, photos, or recordings that include other students. By participating in a classroom observation, visitors agree to respect the confidentiality of all students in accordance with school policy and applicable privacy laws.
- Check-in: Observers must check in at the main office and obtain a visitor's badge from the office staff before the observation period. Due to the need to minimize disruptions, no more than one observer may conduct an observation at one time unless pre-approved by an administrator.
- Conduct during Classroom Observation: Classroom observations are scheduled for 30 minutes per appointment for parents and a predetermined time frame for outside service providers. Observers are expected to enter the class or observation hub at the scheduled start time of the visit. While observing, a designated area will be provided for visitors to sit. (Observers are asked NOT to sit with the student as this could create an unnecessary disruption for the student or other students.) Once in the classroom and seated, observers are asked to remain seated and refrain from interacting with the students or the teacher. Unnecessary noise and/or movement must be kept to a minimum. Please make a note of any questions or comments on a piece of paper for discussion at a later time. If any inappropriate conduct occurs during the observation (inappropriate language, raised voice, etc.), the observation will conclude, and the observer will be asked to leave.
- Questions/Comments: Observers wishing to discuss their student's behavior after the observation should schedule a separate conference with the teacher.
 - Teachers/staff are not required to answer parent questions during class, transitions, or during their planning time the day of the observation. Guests of the campus who fail to adhere to the stated guidelines during their observation may be asked to leave if their presence or conduct interferes with the orderly operation of the classroom. If you have an unusual concern, please ask to speak with the on-site administrator to address your concerns before you leave.
- No Photography or Audio/Video Recording of the School Environment: The use of photography or audio/video recording devices is strictly prohibited during classroom observations by guests. On rare occasions, an administrator may grant prior approval for photographs or audio/video recording of students for whom we have obtained media releases from their parents or guardians. Electronic devices that could be used to take photos or audio/video recordings should not be visible during the observation.
- School Administration: The School Director or their designee will accompany the visitor during the observation to protect the learning environment of all students.
- Children who are not enrolled in the classroom that is being observed will not be permitted in the classroom (e.g., siblings and other small children).

Additionally, a signed [FERPA Student Information Release Form](#) will be requested if a person other than the parent/guardian is observing.

Groups of visitors (more than two (2) persons) may be asked to visit the classroom at separate times, and AZACS requests that siblings or small children are not brought along during scheduled visitations.

The school values collaboration with outside providers to support student success. While we are happy to coordinate and communicate with these professionals if given parent/guardian permission via the [Interagency Release of Information Form](#), outside providers are not permitted to work directly with students onsite during the school day.

All visitors must sign out at the front desk when leaving the school facility. For the safety of all students, there are no exceptions to this requirement.

School administrators, or persons acting in their absence, are authorized to refuse entry to the school to persons who do not have legitimate business at the school or do not have proper signed documentation. Any person or persons engaging in unacceptable conduct will be asked to leave the school grounds.

Tour Policy

Tours are available to the parents/guardians of current and prospective students and outside members of the community, who are interested in learning more about Arizona Autism Charter Schools. During a tour, visitors will be accompanied by a school administrator or other staff members for the entire tour. Visitors will learn about AZACS' program model, be provided with a brief tour of the campus, and receive answers to any questions they may have. Tours must be scheduled in advance through the district or appropriate campus. Visitors who show up to campus to tour will not be permitted without a previous appointment. Regulatory officials that perform the oversight of AZACS operations are exempt from this policy. To schedule a tour please contact the applicable AZACS campus.

Parent/Guardian Volunteer Protocol

All volunteers must comply with the following conditions:

- State Standards/Guidelines: Volunteers will be asked to produce an IVP Fingerprint Clearance Card before scheduling
- Sign the [Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement](#)
- Sign up for structured volunteer efforts through the front desk. All volunteer events must have prior approval from the school administration.
- Volunteers will be provided a workspace for all projects. Additional materials and any other needs should be requested from the front desk.
- Volunteers should remain in the area provided and are prohibited from roaming halls without an escort or going into classrooms.
- All volunteer efforts will be given a specific allotment of time to allow the use of space for other needs.
- Check-In/Out: A staff member will escort volunteers to the specified location upon arrival. A visitor's badge must be worn at all times.
- When projects are completed, the volunteer should check out with the front desk staff.
- Conduct during Volunteer Period: Volunteer projects are generally scheduled for no more than 2 hours per visit. Parents/guardians are expected to remain in the room provided, and report to the front desk

once completed. Parents/guardians should not interact with students in the hallways, etc. This may cause unnecessary disruptions.

- No Photography or Audio/Video Recording of the School Environment: The use of photography or audio/video recording devices is strictly prohibited while volunteering. Electronic devices that could be used to take photos or audio/video recordings should not be visible during the observation.
- Any person not abiding by the above requirements will be asked to leave the school.
- The school administration reserves the right to approve or deny volunteer requests.

Parent/Guardian Chaperone Policy

Parent/guardian chaperones are welcome to attend school sponsored field trips. Chaperones need to provide their own transportation to and from the location and pay their own entrance fee. Parents/guardians chaperoning are discouraged from bringing sibling to AZACS field trips, but may be allowed at the Director's discretion. The parent/guardian will assume all responsibility and liability for siblings brought. Chaperones can supervise their own child, but they cannot be assigned to supervise any other students. If a chaperone wants to take their child with them once the field trip is over, they may do so by signing them out with an AZACS sign-in/sign-out sheet.

Custody

Accurate custody records are vital for maintaining the safety of students in school. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide the school with the most up-to-date custody documentation. Each year, parents or guardians must review and update custody information during re-enrollment, even if there have been no changes to custodial rights. If no updates are submitted, the school will rely on the most recently dated documents on file to determine custody.

Order of Protection

1. If an Order of Protection has been issued, the parent/guardian must provide a copy of that order to the school. The school will update student records accordingly based on the Order of Protection. When Orders of Protection expires, it is the custodial parent's/guardian's responsibility to give a copy of the renewed Order of Protection to the school office.

Guardianship

1. Legal Guardianship and Temporary Legal Guardianship can only be established by Court Order. If a child does not reside with natural parents, the school will request "letters of guardianship," issued by a court, before enrolling a student.

Guardianship for students over 18 years old

In Arizona, a parent/guardian can file for legal guardianship in one or both ways:

- Have the student declared legally incompetent with legal paperwork
- File for legal guardianship and receive legal guardianship of the student

School Paperwork / Payment Deadlines

AZACS operates under the supervision of several different regulatory bodies at both the state and federal levels that impact every procedure from instructional minutes to expenditures and reporting requirements. As a result, we are frequently audited and need to complete reports on tight deadlines.

We will provide three opportunities for you to respond to requests for information (e.g. records, RSVPs for meetings/events, etc.) via email and/or phone. After those three opportunities, your and/or your child's ability to participate in the meeting/event or activity may not be guaranteed.

Uniform Policy

AZACS believes that there is a connection between student dress and the ability to focus on the academic day. Any attire that detracts from the learning environment is not acceptable. Students should dress in a manner that takes into consideration the educational environment, safety, health, and welfare of oneself and others. Campus directors retain the final discretion to determine that the clothing or accessories meets the dress code. Some exceptions may be made for special events, formal attire (dances), spirit week, or costumes.

The AZACS uniform consists of the following:

Tops

- Official blue or maroon polo shirt with the AZACS logo purchased from the Essential Piece Cafe or the [AZACS Official Uniform Online Store](#)
- An official AZACS Spirit Wear shirt may be worn on Fridays
- AZACS zip-up sweatshirt from the [AZACS Uniform Shop](#) or a plain navy or maroon zip-up or button-up sweater or sweatshirt

Bottoms

- Navy or khaki shorts, skorts, or pants. The hemline of shorts and skorts should reach at least the length of the wearer's fingertips when their arms are relaxed at their sides

Shoes

- Must be worn at all times
- Must be closed-toe shoes for physical education or any organized physical activity or sandals with secure straps
- Slippers are not allowed

Accessories

- Must not present a safety hazard
- Must not include sunglasses, spiked jewelry, costume masks, or hats

If the student cannot wear the official uniform due to sensory concerns, please contact your campus director for consideration of an accommodation plan for your student.

If your student is out of dress code, you may be contacted by your campus director to bring the appropriate clothing or pick up confiscated items from the campus.

Information on how to order uniforms can be found on the school website under the "Parent" tab or by contacting the vendor listed below. You may also contact the front desk for more details.

AZACS Uniform Shop at the Essential Piece Cafe
1430 E. Indian School Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85014
Hours are 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM, Monday - Friday

<https://azacs-uniform-shop.spiritsale.com/>

Medication Administration

- Prescription medication may only be administered by trained staff members upon the receipt of a Medication Administration Form completed and signed by the student's physician and legal parent/guardian. See the front office/health office for Medication Administration Forms.
- Medication must be in the original prescription bottle. Your pharmacist may give you a second, labeled bottle for medication administration during school hours.
- Medication should be brought (by an adult only) directly to the school office. It is not acceptable to send it in a child's backpack, lunch box, etc.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make sure there is enough medication in the office. Parents/guardians must be responsible for ensuring medication does not run out at school.
- Parents/guardians will be notified at the end of the school year to collect any remaining medication. Any uncollected medication will be destroyed per protocol by the school nurse.

Immunizations

The state immunization law requires all students to have an immunization record on file for school attendance. If your child is exempt from immunizations, a signed immunization exemption form must be on file. These forms can be found in the school office. All records must be on file before a student attends school.

PLEASE NOTE: The state mandates that a child without an immunization record on file will not be allowed to attend classes until the school receives this information.

Child Abuse

AZACS maintains strict adherence to Arizona laws and statutes governing the reporting of suspected child abuse. All individuals required to report suspected child abuse are protected by state law from criminal liability.

Child Find

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities within their population served who are in need of special education and related services, regardless of the severity of their disability. In its identification process Arizona Autism Charter Schools will include children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education, even though a student is:

- Advancing from grade to grade
- Highly mobile, including a migrant student [34 C.F.R. § 300.111]

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will inform the general public and parents within its population served of the responsibility for special education services for students aged three (3) through twenty-one (21) years, and how those services may be accessed including information regarding early intervention services for children aged birth through two (2) years. Services for an eligible student with a disability shall extend through the conclusion of the instructional year during which the student attains the age of twenty-two (22). [A.A.C. R7-2-401.C] Arizona Autism Charter Schools will require all staff members to review the written procedures related to child identification and referral on an annual basis, and maintain documentation of the staff review. [A.A.C. R7-2-401.D]

For children birth through 2 years 10.5 months, parents will be referred to AzEIP to seek support. For children age 2 years 10.5 months to 5 years old, Arizona Autism Charter Schools will refer any children who are suspected of having a disability to the appropriate Unified District or Elementary District that is their district of residence for evaluation and, if appropriate, for services.

For children 5-21 years old that are enrolled at Arizona Autism Charter Schools, identification screening for possible disabilities shall be completed within forty-five (45) calendar days after:

- Entry of each preschool or kindergarten student and any student enrolling without appropriate records or screening, evaluation, and progress in school; or
- Parent notification of concerns regarding developmental or educational progress.

Screening procedures shall include vision and hearing status and consideration of the following areas:

- Cognitive or academic;
- Communication;
- Motor;
- Social or behavioral; and
- Adaptive development

For a student transferring into Arizona Autism Charter Schools, Arizona Autism Charter Schools shall review enrollment data and educational performance in the prior school. If there is a history of special education for a student not currently eligible for special education or poor progress, the name of the student shall be submitted to the administrator for consideration of the need for a referral for a full and individual evaluation or other services. [A.A.C. R7-2-401.D] If a concern about a student is identified through screening procedures or review of records, the parents of the student shall be notified of the concern within ten (10) school days and informed of Arizona Autism Charter Schools' procedures to follow up on the student's needs. [A.A.C. R7-2-401.D] Arizona Autism Charter Schools shall maintain documentation of the identification procedures utilized, the dates of entry into school, notification by parents of concern, and the dates of screening. The results shall be maintained in the student's permanent records. [A.A.C. R7-2-401.D] If the identification process indicates a possible disability, the name of the student shall be submitted to the administrator for

consideration of the need for a referral for a full and individual evaluation or other services. A parent or a student who has reached the age of majority (18) may request an evaluation of the student. [A.A.C. R7-2-401.D] If, after consultation with the parent, Arizona Autism Charter Schools determines that a full and individual evaluation is not warranted, Arizona Autism Charter Schools shall provide prior written notice and procedural safeguards notice to the parent in a timely manner. [A.A.C. R7-2-401.D]

Annual Notification of Rights under FERPA for Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/guardians and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights concerning the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Arizona Autism Charter Schools (the "School") receives an access request.

Parents/guardians or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school Director a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make access arrangements and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parents/guardians or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents/guardians or eligible students who wish to ask the Arizona Autism Charter Schools to amend their child's or their education record should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parents/guardian or eligible student, the school will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA or state law authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be outlined in the school's or school district's annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its employees and who is under the direct control of the school concerning the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent/guardian or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent/guardian, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has

a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

- A. Under state law (A.R.S. § 15-142), the School will not disclose the address, telephone number, or email address of a student ("Contact Information") unless one or more of the following apply:
1. The disclosure is required by state or federal law;
 2. The parent/guardian has affirmatively consented (opted in) to such disclosure in writing; or
 3. To the extent the School elects to designate Contact Information as "directory information," and the parent/guardian has not opted out of disclosure of directory information, such disclosure is made to:
 - a. To other students for educational purposes, or
 - b. To school employees for business purposes.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Arizona Autism Charter Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent/guardian or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents/guardians and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents/guardians or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§ 99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the parent/guardian or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal

requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, enforcement, or compliance activity on their behalf if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)

- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, before adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, to (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))
- To parents/guardians of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10))
- Information the school has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, by State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K)).

Upon request, the School will provide military recruiters the access to secondary students' information.

Enrollment and Lottery Policy

AZACS enrolls all eligible students in grades K-12+ who submit a timely application unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building per A.R.S. § 15-184¹. A lottery, which is a random selection process, will be conducted if demand exceeds capacity. The lottery will use a statistically random method to select students for available seats. All students who have submitted an application between January 1 and March 30 will be included in the lottery. The following categories of students may be exempt from the lottery:

- 1) Siblings of students already admitted or attending Arizona Autism Charter Schools
- 2) Children of our founders, teachers, and staff.

AZACS will ensure such exemptions constitute a small percentage of our school's total enrollment.

Once a student has been admitted to the charter school through the appropriate process, he or she may remain in attendance through subsequent grades without reapplying. Students not selected through the lottery process are placed on a waitlist. If a space becomes available after March 30, students from the wait list will be re-entered into a lottery to fill the spot.

The same procedure takes place each school year. Arizona Autism Charter Schools does not limit admission based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, income level, disabling condition, proficiency in the English language, or athletic ability per ARS 15-184. Arizona Autism Charter Schools will comply with all enrollment and lottery regulations in ESEA §4303(c)(3)(A).

A charter school may refuse to admit any pupil who has been expelled from another educational institution or who is in the process of being expelled from another educational institution.

Animals in Schools

AZACS has established procedures for appropriately and humanely bringing service animals into a classroom. Such procedures shall forbid the transporting of live animals that are not service animals on school vans.

Service animal means any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, and intellectual or other mental disability. Service animals do not include other species of animals, whether wild or domestic or trained or untrained.

Any person or entity that operates a public place shall not discriminate against individuals with disabilities who use service animals if the work or tasks performed by the service animal are directly related to the individual's disability. Work or tasks include assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with

¹ Prior to admitting and enrolling a student, AZACS will not request the student's educational records (e.g., discipline records, evaluations, IEPs, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans, etc.) or inquire about whether a prospective student has a disability (other than autism), behavioral challenges, behavioral supports (e.g., one-on-one assistance or Applied Behavior Analysis therapy), or a behavioral intervention plan. Nothing prohibits AZACS from considering information voluntarily provided by parents/guardians regarding students' needs in order for AZACS to be prepared to serve such needs upon enrollment.

navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing nonviolent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities and helping individuals with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship do not constitute work or tasks. A.R.S. § 11-1024.

To request a service animal accompany your student, please contact your campus director.

Bullying Policy

Arizona Autism Charter Schools does not tolerate bullying of any form - including but not limited to bullying based on disability, sexual orientation; gender identity; or religion. If you know or suspect someone at AZACS is being bullied, please complete the following form:

- [Report a Threat, Concern, or Bullying](#)

Definitions of bullying

From StopBullying.Gov, "Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose."

Types of bullying

- Verbal bullying: saying or writing things that could be mean or hurtful. Things like: name-calling, threats, taunting, teasing, and inappropriate sexual comments
- Social bullying: involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Making someone feel like they don't belong to a group
- Physical bullying: involves hurting a person's body or things that belong to them.
- Cyberbullying: involves bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets.

Process for the investigation by the appropriate school officials of suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Anyone can report bullying using the internal forms for AZACS staff, the [Form to Report Threat, Concern, or Bullying](#) for members of the community, or by notifying a campus director of the suspected bullying via phone, email, or in person.

A campus director will investigate all reported suspected bullying and will:

1. Interviewing all parties involved to get statements.
2. Inform families involved within 1 school day of the report of the situation.
3. Create a follow-up plan to prevent future bullying.

Disciplinary procedures for pupils who have admitted or been found to have committed incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying

Consequences for bullying include but are not limited to: time out of class (Alternative Learning Location), lunch/recess detention, community service, additional staff supervision, peer mediation groups, and suspension. Consequences are determined based on a variety of factors including the student's history and the level of offense.

Electronic Devices and Other Prohibited Items

iPods or other portable music players, cameras, electronic games, iPads/tablets, laser pointers, skateboards, roller blades & skates, wireless/Bluetooth earbuds, and other toys that are not part of the academic, behavioral/emotional, or extracurricular program are prohibited on campus.

Photography, audio and/or visual recording with any device on campus is strictly prohibited.

If the above items are brought to campus and are damaged, AZACS will not be responsible.

We ask for your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe, healthy, and respectful learning environment for all.

AZACS Cell Phone, Smart Device, and Internet Use Policy

The use of cell phones, smartwatches, and other personal wireless communication devices by students during the school day is prohibited, except under limited circumstances outlined below. The school day is defined as beginning at the soft start time, when breakfast is served, and ending at the conclusion of dismissal. This policy is intended to support an uninterrupted academic environment, free from digital distractions that can interfere with learning and social development.

General Expectations

AZACS believes that limiting the use of personal technology during the school day is an essential step in fostering student focus, safety, and interpersonal engagement. While students may possess cell phones or smartwatches on campus, the following restrictions apply:

Device Possession and Storage

Students may bring personal devices to school, but they must remain powered off and stored securely in a backpack during school hours. Devices may not be kept in pockets or on their person. “Silenced” is not sufficient—devices must be completely powered off.

If cell phones, smartwatches, smart devices, and other personal wireless communication devices are brought to campus and are damaged, AZACS will not be responsible.

Permitted Use

- **Medical or Disability-Related Use:** If a student requires access to a personal device for medical purposes (e.g., diabetes monitoring) or as part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, this must be pre-approved. Please contact your campus director to coordinate arrangements.
- **Instructional Use:** Teachers or school staff may allow temporary use of a device for educational purposes under their direct supervision and authorization.

Communication During the School Day

- If a student needs to contact a parent/guardian during the school day, they must request permission to use a school phone located in the main office.
- In emergency situations, parents/guardians should contact the school’s main phone line and request a message be delivered to their student.
- Parents/guardians are advised not to text or call their child’s personal device during school hours, as students are not permitted to access or view personal messages until after dismissal.

GPS Tracking Devices

- A student may be permitted to have a GPS tracker during the school day, provided that: (a) any such use of a GPS tracker is pre-approved by school administration; (b) any recording, broadcasting, or 2-way communication features (collectively, “listen-in features”) are turned off/disabled during the entirety of the school day; and (c) parent agrees to cooperate fully in coordinating with any service provider (e.g., AngelSense) in ensuring compliance with this policy, which may include adding a school staff member as a “school guardian” on the student’s account or otherwise entering into an agreement to manage listen-in features during school hours/activities. Please contact your campus director to coordinate arrangements.
 - [AngelSense Agreement](#)

Internet and Social Media Access

AZACS provides students with supervised internet access to support academic learning. To maintain a safe and appropriate digital environment:

- Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms during school hours, except in cases where a teacher explicitly allows access for educational purposes (e.g., research projects, digital citizenship lessons).
- All student internet activity is subject to monitoring and filtering in accordance with federal and state laws, including the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

- Students are expected to use the school network and internet resources responsibly. Inappropriate use may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of access privileges.

Violations and Consequences

Students who violate this policy may have their device confiscated. Confiscated devices will be turned in to the school office and released only to a parent or guardian. Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary consequences at the discretion of the campus director.

This policy reflects AZACS's commitment to creating a focused and secure learning environment while complying with A.R.S. § 15-120.05. We appreciate your partnership in reinforcing these expectations with your student.

Suspension of Programming

Administrative suspension of programming may occur based on a decision by a Director. If this decision is made then if needed, an IEP meeting may be held. An administrative suspension may be effective immediately, or upon determination of need by administrative review, to determine a course of action through clinical intervention, change of placement or programmatic modification.

ABA Behavioral Strategies and Crisis Prevention

AZACS employs the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to minimize and extinguish maladaptive behaviors. ABA is used as a daily protocol to help students manage their behaviors positively and proactively. If a student escalates into a crisis, becoming a danger to themselves or others, Quality Behavioral Solutions to Complex Challenges (QBS) Safety Care strategies are used. The QBS Safety Care program's proven strategies give human service providers and educators the skills to safely and effectively respond to anxious, hostile, or violent behavior while balancing the responsibilities of care. These strategies include verbal de-escalation, therapeutic holds, calming rooms, or seclusion. Arizona Autism Charter Schools only uses these strategies as a last resort and follows all restraint and seclusion reporting requirements per A.R.S. § 15-105.

Parents/Guardian Right to Know

Following the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), you have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teacher. Specifically, you may request the following:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or substitute status.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.
- Parents/guardian have the right to request information regarding State or LEA Assessment policy

If you would like to receive this information, please talk with the respective campus director of the campus where your child is enrolled.

Extracurricular Activity Guidelines

For students who participate in extracurricular activities (e.g. Special Olympics, choir, clubs, etc.), parents/guardians will be required to sign a consent form acknowledging all guidelines and expectations for their student's participation (e.g., after-school pick-up requirements, attendance requirements, etc.). These guidelines will be made available to parents/guardians at the start of the school year and when a student first signs up to participate in an extracurricular activity.

If your student is chronically late being picked up, they may lose the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities.

Student Assessment Requirements

Arizona Autism Charter Schools is overseen by the Arizona Department of Education as well as the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. All Arizona public schools, including district schools and charter schools, are required to properly administer state and federally mandated assessments. In Arizona, statewide assessments are mandatory for students in grades 3-8, 9, and 11.

The Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) is a standards-based assessment that meets both state and federal requirements to measure students' English language proficiency. AZELLA is used for both placement and reassessment purposes. Students who have been identified as second language learners on the Home Language Survey (HLS) take the AZELLA Placement Test, and the students' proficiency scores determine appropriate placement for instruction. Students who have been placed into an English language learner program will also take the Spring AZELLA Reassessment once per year until they achieve proficiency. Students who have scored proficient on the AZELLA are then monitored for two years to help ensure success after their move into a mainstream classroom.

The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools allows a charter holder that operates a school that serves a special population (e.g. majority homeless, students with disabilities, or a higher than average English Language Learner population) to adopt unique performance through school-specific academic goals. AZACS has adopted multiple school-specific academic goals measuring English Language Arts (ELA) growth, mathematics growth, student engagement, and post-secondary readiness. For the ELA and mathematics goals, students are required to participate in district assessments aligned to the student achievement goals as frequently as quarterly to measure progress. Success on these goals are vital to the success and good standing of AZACS as it relates to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools.

McKinney-Vento/Homeless Resources

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. To ensure access to educational and other services necessary to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held, AZACS has developed policies and procedures to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, and academic success of children and youth experiencing homelessness (42 U.S.C. §§11431-11432). If you are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing, please reach out to our McKinney-Vento liaison, Patrick Masson at pmasson@autismcharter.org.

ESSA Parent/Guardian and Family Engagement Policy

Statement of Purpose

Arizona Autism Charter Schools is committed to providing quality education to every student. Partnerships with parents/guardians, family members, and the community are essential to this goal as neither home nor school can achieve this goal independently. We believe in the importance of working together to make a positive impact on the academic growth, character growth, and development of every child. Everyone gains if school and home work together to promote high student achievement. Parents/guardians and family members play an important role as their children's first teachers, and their support is critical to their children's success. Although the responsibility of making decisions on school policy belongs to the Governing Board and Executive Director, families are involved on an individual level and through organized parent/guardian groups. We recognize that an effective partnership between school and home sets each scholar up for success by garnering family support of our school and reinforcement in the home for the school's activities and expectations.

Arizona Autism Charter Schools agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

- The school will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents/guardians in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Those programs, activities, and procedures are planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents/guardians of participating children.
- Consistent with section 1116, the school will work to ensure that the required parental/guardian involvement policies meet the requirements of section 1116(b) of the ESSA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent/guardian compact consistent with section 1116(d) of the ESSA.
- The school will incorporate this parental/guardian involvement policy into its LEA plan developed under section 1112 of the ESSA. In carrying out the Title I, Part A parental/guardian involvement requirements, to the extent practicable, the school will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/guardians with limited English proficiency, parents/guardians with disabilities, and parents/guardians of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under ESSA in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents/guardians understand.
- If the LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1112 of the ESSA, is not satisfactory to the parents/guardians of participating children, the school district will submit any parent/guardians comments with the plan when the school submits the plan to the State Department of Education.
- The school will involve the parents/guardians of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the one percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parental/guardian involvement is spent, and will ensure that not less than 95 percent of the one percent reserved goes directly to the schools.
- The school is governed by the following statutory definition of parental/guardian involvement, and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition: *Parental/guardian involvement means the participation of parents/guardians in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—*
 - o *that parents/guardians play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;*
 - o *that parents/guardians are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;*
 - o *that parents/guardians are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their*

- child;*
- o the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1116 of the ESSA.*

Develop Jointly

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will develop an annual Site-Based Decision-Making Committee (SBDM) to assist with the annual family engagement efforts. The Site-Based Decision Making Committee will be comprised of parents/guardians, members of the community, teachers, operations staff, and school administration. This committee will annually review the ESSA Parent/Guardian and Family Engagement Policy and revise it as necessary. The Title I principal, with input from the school SBDM committee, will make recommendations as necessary to revisions of the district policy.

Build Capacity of School

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will provide coordination, technical assistance, and other necessary support to assist and build the capacity for our Title I, Part A school in planning and implementing effective parent/guardian and family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance. The school principal and administrative staff will provide support and training to teachers and staff to promote the parent/guardian and family engagement opportunities.

Coordinate Services

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will coordinate and integrate parent/guardian and family engagement strategies, to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other federal, state, and local laws and programs.

Annual Evaluation

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will assess the needs of the parents/guardians and children in the school community using a variety of tools including a survey questionnaire. The findings will be used to revise the Title I program to meet the current needs. Workshops or other training will be made available to educators and parents/guardians to address these needs. Parents/guardians will be notified about training opportunities.

The SBDM committee will review and evaluate all aspects of the parent/guardian and family engagement program. Parents/guardians will be asked for their input on the content and effectiveness of the Title I parent/guardian and family engagement programs through an annual evaluation of the Title I Program. The evaluation will include an assessment of overall parent/guardian and family engagement and identify barriers to parent/guardian and family participation that still need to be overcome, the needs of parents/guardians and family members to assist with the learning, and strategies to support successful school and family interactions. The community will be consulted in the design, development, and implementation of the Title I program. Each year AZACS will assess the needs of parents/guardians and children in the community through a variety of measures, including parental/guardian suggestions. The school will welcome and receive recommendations about the Title I program.

Design Evidence-Based Strategies

Arizona Autism Charter Schools through its Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Integrated Action Plan process will use the findings of the annual evaluation to design and incorporate objectives that will lead to more effective parental/guardian involvement. The SBDM committee will annually review the school's Parent/Guardian and Family Engagement Policy based on the results of an annual review.

Involve Parents/Guardians in Activities

Parents/guardians can become involved in their children's education in a variety of ways. AZACS values both the at-home contributions of parents/guardians and those that take place at the school or in the community. Reading to children at home and talking with them at family meals or other family outings are as important as volunteering at school and serving on advisory committees. Many types of parent/guardian and family engagement are needed in school-home-community partnerships to help all children succeed. AZACS will offer many opportunities for parent/guardian and family engagement in the school including, but not limited to the following:

- Parents/guardians may contribute through volunteer programs;
- Parents/guardians may participate by attending school meetings at a variety of times;
- Parents/guardians may participate in Meet the Teacher;
- Parents/guardians are invited to serve on committees and the PTA;
- Parents/guardians are invited to attend parent/teacher conferences;
- Parents/guardians are surveyed to get their input about school. We ask that parents/guardians engage in all AZACS surveys.
- Parents/guardians are invited to participate in Showcases.
- Parents/guardians are invited to annual Town Halls.

Parents/guardians will be informed about school activities through various avenues of communication throughout the school year. Websites, newsletters, teacher communication logs, the school's Facebook page, AZACS PTA, conferences, personal contacts, phone calls/text messages, emails, and written notices will be used to establish and maintain open lines of communication with parents/guardians. Arizona Autism Charter Schools will welcome and respond to efforts by parents/guardians to communicate with the school.

Parental/Guardian Involvement Statement of Commitment (Compact):

The Head of Schools shall develop a Parental/Guardian Involvement Compact according to Title I requirements, that is presented to families during the initial home visit.

The Parental/Guardian Involvement Compact shall contain:

- The expectations for parental/guardian involvement;
- Specific strategies for effective parent/guardian involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance; and
- A process for continually involving parents/guardians in its development and implementation;
- How parents/guardians, the entire school staff, and students share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement;
- The means by which the school and parents/guardians build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards; and
- Other provisions as required by federal law.

At each parent/guardian conference, teachers walk through all performance metrics with parents/guardians. Each teacher has the data specific to each student. Additionally, we offer two parent/guardian-teacher conferences to make sure all parents/guardians understand the curriculum and give tips on what they can do at home. The School Director shall ensure that the Compact is distributed to parents/guardians of students receiving services, or enrolled in programs, under Title I.

Parent/Guardian-School Compact

This compact outlines how the parents/guardians, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents/guardians will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State's high standards. This school-parent/guardian compact is in effect during the entire academic school year.

School Responsibilities

Because Arizona Autism Charter Schools believes every student can learn and wants to provide every student with a first-class education, Arizona Autism Charter Schools will:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction, in a supportive and effective learning environment, that enables the participating children to meet the State's student academic achievement standards by employing only highly qualified teachers, using only research-based methods in the classroom, and by assessing student progress regularly to determine progress toward meeting those standards.
- Hold parent/guardian-teacher conferences (twice a year) during which this compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement. Specifically, those conferences will be held ***during the fall and spring.***
- Provide parents/guardians with frequent reports on their children's progress using student digital portfolios.
- Provide parents/guardians with reasonable access to staff. Specifically, staff will be available for consultation with parents/guardians after school, by calling the school's office phone number or emailing the staff member directly.
- Provide parents/guardians opportunities to volunteer and participate at their specific campus and access to observe their student's performance upon request.
- Involve parents/guardians in the planning, evaluation, and improvement of the school's Parental/Guardian Involvement Policy, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.
- Involve parents/guardians in the joint development of its Integrated Action Plan, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.
- Hold an annual meeting to inform parents/guardians of the school's participation in Title I, Part A programs, and to explain the Title I, Part A requirements, and the right of parents/guardians to be involved in Title I, Part A programs. The school will convene the meeting at a convenient time for parents/guardians and will offer a flexible number of additional parents/guardians involvement meetings, such as in the morning or evening, so that as many parents/guardians as possible are able to attend. The school will invite to this meeting all parents/guardians of children participating in Title I, and Part A programs, and will encourage them to attend.
- Provide information to parents/guardians of participating students in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon the request of parents/guardians with disabilities, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents/guardians can understand.

- Provide to parents/guardians of participating children information in a timely manner about Title I, Part A programs that include a description and explanation of the school's curriculum, the forms of academic assessment used to measure children's progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
- On the request of parents/guardians , provide opportunities for regular meetings for parents/guardians to formulate suggestions, and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children. The school will respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.
- Provide to each parents/guardians an individual student report about the performance of their child on the State assessment in at least math, language arts, and reading.

Provide each parents/guardians timely notice when their child has been assigned or has been taught for four (4) or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified within the meaning of the term in section 200.56 of the Title I Final Regulations (67 Fed. Reg. 71710, December 2, 2002).

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Because I/we, as parent(s)/guardian(s), believe that education is important, I/we will support our children's learning in the following ways:

- Making sure my child is in attendance every school day, on time.
- Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my children's education.
- Promoting positive use of my child's extracurricular time.
- Staying informed about my child's education and communicating with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school either received from my child, or by mail, and responding as appropriate.
 - AZACS is committed to making school events and meetings accessible to all families. If you or your child require accommodations to participate such as interpretation, translation, mobility assistance, or other support, please contact your campus director so we can ensure your needs are met.
- Serving, to the extent possible, on policy advisory groups, such as being on the Title I Policy Advisory Committee, the "Child Study Team" or other school advisory or policy groups.

Student Responsibilities

Because I believe that my education is important and that I am responsible for being successful in school, I will:

- Be respectful to my teacher and other school staff.
- Put my best effort into my school work.
- Ask for help when I need help and advocate for myself.
- Give to my parents/guardians, or the adult who is responsible for my welfare, all notices and information received by me from my school every day.

By acknowledging this Parent/ Guardian Policy and Responsibility Handbook for the 24-25 school year, I agree to uphold the Parent/Guardian and Family Engagement Policy.

Discipline Matrix

This handbook provides notice regarding behavior standards at Arizona Autism Charter Schools (AZACS). All infractions and violations listed align with the Arizona State Reporting System and AZACS policies.

General Behavioral Expectation: All students are expected to treat others and the property of others, including school property, with respect, and to conduct themselves with appropriate decorum in their personal behavior and in interactions with others. Accordingly, students are prohibited from engaging in behavior (1) that obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any educational, administrative, disciplinary, or other activity sponsored or approved by AZACS, (2) that endangers or threatens the safety of any person, or (3) that inflicts or threatens to inflict damage on property of AZACS, AZACS employees, students, or others. In addition, students who have committed or are believed to have committed a crime may be subject to school discipline, whether or not any criminal proceedings result. Student behavioral expectations apply whenever a student is on school property, including school-provided or sponsored transportation, in the vicinity of the school, at school activities, at school-sponsored activities, on the way to and from school, and in other settings where the student's conduct has a substantial impact on the school environment. Students who fail to abide by this general behavioral expectation will be subject to appropriate discipline, regardless of whether the conduct violates any specific provision of the Discipline Matrix.

AZACS makes reasonable efforts to notify parents or guardians following any disciplinary referral. Parent notification is required, following any infraction that results in formal administrative consequences (i.e., in-school or out-of-school suspension, detention, etc.). School administration reserves the right to exercise discretion when determining appropriate interventions or disciplinary responses, based on the nature and severity of the infraction. Multiple or repeated infractions, or singular but severe infractions, may warrant more intensive interventions. In accordance with state law, school officials must follow specific protocols before issuing out-of-school suspensions extending beyond two days, or expulsions for students in grades kindergarten through 4th grade.

If an incident occurs on an AZACS transportation vehicle, consequences may include suspension or termination of van-riding privileges, either in place of or in addition to other disciplinary actions outlined in the matrix. The behavior matrix serves as a general guide/recommendation and does not represent an exhaustive list of all possible interventions and responses or the specific interventions/responses required in all circumstances. AZACS specifically reserves the right to deviate from specified interventions and responses recommended in the behavior matrix, as appropriate, based on the unique facts in a particular case.

Some behaviors may require referral to law enforcement. AZACS will comply with all applicable reporting requirements as outlined by the Arizona Department of Education and other regulatory agencies. Per Arizona Senate Bill 1437, school personnel are mandated to report suspected child abuse or misconduct, and AZACS will ensure full compliance with these requirements.

Behavior	Definition	Potential Interventions	Potential Responses
Alcohol	The possession, use, distribution or sale of alcohol on school grounds, at	● Conference ● Service Learning	● Confiscation ● Detention

	school-sponsored events and on school-sponsored transportation	• Safety Plan • Behavior Contract • Skill Building	• In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension • Referral to Law Enforcement • Expulsion
Arson	Damaging a structure or property by knowingly causing a fire or explosion	• Conference • Safety Plan • Service Learning • Behavior Contract • Skill Building	• Restitution • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension • Referral to Law Enforcement • Expulsion
Assault / Aggression	Any intentional act or attempted act of physical harm directed toward another student or staff member that creates a reasonable fear of imminent injury. This includes attempts to strike, hit, spit on, etc.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building • Service Learning • Safety Plan • No Contact Agreement • Mediation	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension • Referral to Law Enforcement
Bullying	Unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is generally not a single act, but is repeated over time. Bullying may be physical, verbal, or psychological in nature.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building • Service Learning • Safety Plan • No Contact Agreement • Mediation	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension
Cheating	Act of dishonesty or unfairness intended to gain an academic advantage. This includes, but is not limited to, misrepresenting one's own knowledge or abilities, using unauthorized assistance during assessments, submitting someone else's work as one's own, or allowing	• Conference • Service Learning • Reflection • Skill Building	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Loss of Credit on Assignment or Class • Detention • In-School Suspension

	another person to do so.		
Defiance, Disrespect, and Insubordination Towards Authority	Failure/refusal to comply with the reasonable rules or requests of school personnel. This includes refusing to follow directions, talking back, or engaging in socially rude interactions with school personnel.	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building ● Service Learning ● Mediation ● Reflection	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension
Disruption	Engaging in behavior that causes an interruption of the learning environment. Disruption includes, but is not limited to sustained yelling or screaming, making noise with materials, or sustained out-of seat behavior.	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building ● Service Learning ● Mediation ● Reflection	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension
Dress Code Violation	Clothing that does not fit within the uniform guidelines stated by the school's policy	● Conference ● Behavior Contract	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention
Drugs	The possession, use, distribution or sale of illegal or controlled substances on school grounds, at school-sponsored events and on school-sponsored transportation	● Conference ● Service Learning ● Safety Plan ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building	● Confiscation ● In-School Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension ● Referral to Law Enforcement ● Expulsion
Fighting	Mutual participation in an incident involving physical violence	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building ● Service Learning ● Safety Plan ● No Contact Agreement ● Mediation	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension ● Referral to Law Enforcement

Firearms	Possession of any loaded or unloaded handgun, pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, or other weapon that will expel, is designed to expel or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive	• Safety Plan	• Out-of-School Suspension • Referral to Law Enforcement • Expulsion
Forgery	Falsely and fraudulently making or altering a document, including signing a document as another individual.	• Conference • Service Learning • Reflection • Skill Building	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Loss of Credit on Assignment or Class • Detention • In-School Suspension
Gambling	To play games of chance for money or to bet a sum of money on an event or outcome.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension
Harassment (Non-Sexual)	Conduct that is directed at a specific person and that would cause a reasonable person to be alarmed, annoyed, humiliated or mentally distressed. Harassment may be related, but not limited to, race, religious orientation, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, cultural background, economic status, size, or personal appearance. Harassing behaviors can be direct or indirect and by use of social media	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building • Service Learning • Safety Plan • No Contact Agreement • Mediation	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension
Harassment (Sexual)	Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes, but is broader than, sexual harassment, as defined for purposes of Title IX.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building • Service Learning • Safety Plan • No Contact Agreement	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension

		• Supportive Measures	• Out-of-School Suspension • Referral to Law Enforcement • Expulsion • Title IX Grievance Process
Hazing	Any activity that constitutes a violation of the hazing prohibition under A.R.S. 13-1215 or 13-1216, and any activity that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person and is associated with initiation into, or affiliation with, a group or organization. Hazing can involve actions that cause humiliation, degradation, or ridicule, regardless of whether the person being hazed consents to the activity.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building • Service Learning • Safety Plan • No Contact Agreement • Mediation	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension
Hazing Prevention Policy: Hazing is prohibited. Students may not engage in hazing, as defined in A.R.S. § 15-2301, or solicit other students to engage in hazing. Aiding and abetting another person who is engaged in hazing is also prohibited. All students, teachers and staff must take reasonable measures within the scope of their authority to prevent hazing and violations of this policy. Students engaging in prohibited hazing behavior will be subject to disciplinary action. In such disciplinary proceedings, a student may not rely on the defense that the victim consented to or acquiesced in the prohibited hazing behavior. Reports of alleged hazing may be made to any school administrator and will be investigated, consistent with the school's procedures for investigating alleged misconduct, generally. When appropriate or otherwise required by law, the school will report violations of the hazing prohibition to law enforcement.			
Inappropriate Language	Swearing, name calling, or other use of words in an inappropriate way. Inappropriate language encompasses profanity and obscenities.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension
Indecent Exposure or Public Sexual Indecency	Indecent exposure is the intentional exposure of one's genitals or other private parts in a public place where others are present and likely to be offended.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building • Service Learning • Safety Plan • No Contact	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School

	Public sexual indecency is a person engaging in sexual acts performed in public, including intercourse, oral sex, or other lewd conduct.	Agreement	Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension ● Referral to Law Enforcement ● Expulsion
Leaving School Grounds Without Permission	Leaving school property or being in an “out-of-bounds” area during regular school hours without permission of the campus director or his/her designee.	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building ● Service Learning ● Safety Plan	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension
Plagiarism	Stealing and passing off the ideas or words of another as one's own. This could include the use of AI on assignments where it is prohibited.	● Conference ● Service Learning ● Reflection ● Skill Building	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Loss of Credit on Assignment or Class ● Detention ● In-School Suspension
Public Display of Affection	Holding hands, kissing, sexual touching, or other displays of affection.	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building ● Service Learning ● No Contact Agreement	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension
School Threat	Threat to cause harm to the school or large groups of students using weapons (firearms, chemicals, explosive devices).	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Safety Plan ● No Contact Agreement	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension ● Referral to Law Enforcement ● Expulsion
Sexual Misconduct	Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct with a minor, sexual assault, or rape are all	● Conference ● Behavior Contract	● Temporary Loss of Privileges

	classified as sexual misconduct.	• Safety Plan • No Contact Agreement • Supportive Measures	• Increase in Supervision • Detention • Out-of-School Suspension • Referral to Law Enforcement • Expulsion • Title IX Grievance Process
Tobacco	The possession, use, distribution or sale of tobacco products on school grounds, at school-sponsored events and on school-sponsored transportation.	• Conference • Service Learning • Safety Plan • Behavior Contract • Skill Building	• Confiscation • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension • Referral to Law Enforcement • Expulsion
Tampering with Safety Equipment	The intentional misuse, removal, disabling, or interference with any device or system intended for school safety. This includes fire alarms, fire extinguishers, surveillance cameras, emergency exits, and other protective systems.	• Conference • Service Learning • Safety Plan • Behavior Contract • Skill Building	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension • Out-of-School Suspension • Referral to Law Enforcement • Expulsion
Technology Misuse	Improper use of technology is the failure to use hardware, software, electronic devices, web pages, and network for the intended educational use.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building • Service Learning • Reflection • Safety Plan	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School Suspension
Theft	Taking or attempting to take money or property belonging to another person or the school with the intent to permanently deprive the victim of his or her possession.	• Conference • Behavior Contract • Skill Building • Service Learning • Reflection	• Temporary Loss of Privileges • Increase in Supervision • Detention • In-School

			Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension ● Referral to Law Enforcement
Threat or Intimidation of an Individual	When a person indicates by word or conduct the intent to cause physical injury or serious damage to a person or property.	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building ● Service Learning ● Safety Plan ● No Contact Agreement ● Mediation	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension
Trespassing	Unauthorized presence on school property and/or refusal to leave school property upon request of school authorities.	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building ● Service Learning ● Safety Plan	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension ● Referral to Law Enforcement
Vandalism	Willful destruction or defacement of school or personal property.	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Skill Building ● Service Learning ● Safety Plan	● Restitution ● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension ● Referral to Law Enforcement
Weapons and Dangerous Items	Possession of: 1) Any device that is designed as a weapon and capable of causing bodily harm. Such devices include, but are not limited to, martial arts instruments, razors, brass knuckles,	● Conference ● Behavior Contract ● Safety Plan	● Temporary Loss of Privileges ● Increase in Supervision ● Detention ● In-School

	switchblades, knives, chains, clubs, and pepper spray. 2) Any BB, paintball, pellet-firing, dart, or any other air gun that expels a projectile through the force of air pressure or expanding gases. 3) Look-alike weapons, including, but not limited to, toy guns, water guns, and replica non-guns.		Suspension ● Out-of-School Suspension ● Referral to Law Enforcement ● Expulsion
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Discipline Glossary

- Conference: A conference with staff, student(s) and parents/guardians to collaborate to solve a problem, inform parents and/or guardians aware of early stage interventions that have been used, ask for their insight on behavior, and involve them in the discussion of interventions.
- Behavior Contract: A formal agreement developed with a student and often a parent/guardian alongside the school that outlines specific expectations, behaviors, and appropriate responses.
- Confiscation: The item is taken from the student with no intent to return, except to the parent/guardian.
- Mediation: A tool that creates pathways for reflecting on and resolving conflicts. The blueprint can be facilitated by a neutral person (teacher, manager, campus director). May be peer to peer or student to teacher mediation.
- No-Contact Agreement: An agreement that provides a layer of support for two or more individuals that may need additional support in staying separated from one another. The agreement may be created with input from the staff, students involved, and parent/guardian.
- Reflection: An intentional process to engage the student in thinking about specific incidents to identify the root cause of their feeling and the choice they made. The outcome of the reflection would be to brainstorm replacement behaviors in the event the student is placed in a similar situation.
- Return to School Plan: Supports a student to return onto campus after they have been separated from their community for a given amount of time for a variety of reasons.
- Safety Plan: A plan that provides special protection or additional precautions for a student either during an investigation and/or after discipline. Staff, parent/guardian and the student will provide input in creating the safety plan. The safety plan may include daily check-ins or searches of students.
- Service Learning: Learning that actively involves students in a wide range of experiences, which often benefit others and the community.
- Skill Building Lesson: When an individual or more than one individual meets to focus on a specific skill with the intent of providing the individual with positive strategies to move forward.
- Expulsion: Expulsion is the permanent exclusion of a student from school and school activities. State law allows schools to refuse to enroll students who have been expelled from another school or are in the process of being expelled.
- Loss of Credit: When an individual loses credit for an assignment.
- Notification to Law Enforcement: Arizona law requires school officials to notify law enforcement in certain instances, including, but not limited to: Possessing a deadly weapon on school grounds, a minor in possession of a firearm, any possession, use, sale or transfer of marijuana, peyote, prescription drugs, dangerous drugs or narcotic drugs or manufacture of dangerous drugs in a drug free school zone, or any situation in which school personnel reasonably believe that a minor is or has been a victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect.
- In-School Suspension: Removal of a student from their regular educational schedule, for a given amount of time, for temporary placement in an alternative setting inside the school building. It can be

used as an opportunity to address the cause of a student's behavior, build social and emotional skills, and repair relationships with staff and/or peers.

- Restitution: The return to an original physical condition; reparation made by giving an equivalent or compensation for loss; righting a wrong.
- Out-of-School Suspension: Suspension refers to the temporary removal of a student from his or her regular educational setting for a violation of school policies or rules. During suspension, a student is not allowed to attend school or attend school activities for a set length of time. The site administration has the authority to suspend a student for up to ten days.
- Temporary Loss of Privilege: When a privilege is removed from the child with a given amount of time with an intent to reinstate the privilege.
- Temporary Removal from Classroom: Removal from classroom with a given amount of time with intent to reintegrate.
- Temporary Loss of Technology: When school based technology is removed from the child for a given amount of time with an intent to reinstate the technology use.
- Detention: Detention is a disciplinary measure where students who have violated school rules are required to stay after school hours, typically for a set period of time. It serves as a consequence for misbehavior, often involving staying in a supervised area to complete schoolwork.

Student Due Process Rights in Disciplinary Matters

The school is committed to ensuring that all disciplinary actions are conducted fairly and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, including the due process rights of students. The procedures below outline the rights and protections students are entitled to when subject to disciplinary measures.

Minor Discipline and Short-Term Suspension (10 School Days or Less)

Before a student receives a short-term suspension or other minor disciplinary action, the following due process will be provided:

- Verbal or Written Notice of Alleged Misconduct
The student will be informed of the specific behavior or incident that is alleged to have violated school rules.
- Opportunity to Respond
The student will have the opportunity to explain their side of the story and present any information they believe is relevant before a decision is made.
- Prompt Decision and Notification
The school will make a prompt determination and notify the student (and parent/guardian for suspensions) of the outcome, the reason for the decision, and any consequences.

Long-Term Suspension (More than 10 School Days) or Expulsion

When the proposed disciplinary action is a long-term suspension or expulsion, additional formal protections will apply:

- **Written Notice**

Parents/guardians will receive written notice of:

- The specific charges and factual basis for the proposed discipline.
- The date, time, and location of the hearing.
- The student's rights at the hearing.

- **Formal Hearing**

The hearing will be conducted before an impartial decision-maker (such as a hearing officer or governing board designee) and will include:

- The right to be represented by a parent/guardian or an attorney.
- The right to present evidence and witnesses.
- The right to question (cross-examine) witnesses, consistent with applicable laws.
- The right to receive a written decision stating the outcome and reasons for the decision.

- **Record of Proceedings**

A record of the hearing will be kept, which may be in the form of written notes, audio recording, or other means.

Protections for Students with Disabilities

When a student with a disability (as defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act) is subject to disciplinary action, the school will follow all additional procedural safeguards required by federal and state law, including manifestation determination reviews when applicable.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

A child with a disability may be disciplined for a violation of the student code of conduct, including removal from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, suspension, or expulsion in accordance with IDEA Regulations §§300.530 through 300.536.

Arizona Autism Charter Schools hereby establishes, implements, and makes available to personnel and parents written procedures for the suspension and expulsion of students with disabilities. Procedures for such suspensions and expulsions shall meet the requirements of the IDEA and its regulations, and state statutes. Arizona Autism Charter Schools shall require all school-based staff involved in the disciplinary process to review the policies and procedures related to suspension and expulsion on an annual basis. Arizona Autism Charter Schools shall maintain documentation of staff review. [A.A.C. § R7-2-401(P)]

On a case-by-case basis and in consideration of any unique circumstances, school personnel may remove a child with a disability who violates a student code of conduct from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days (to the extent those alternatives are applied to children without disabilities), and for additional removals of not more than ten (10) consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement under §300.536. [34 C.F.R. 300.530] After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for ten (10) school days in the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal Arizona Autism Charter Schools will provide services to the extent required to:

- Enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting his/her IEP goals; and
- Receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. [34 C.F.R. 300.530]

Arizona Autism Charter Schools is only required to provide services during periods of removal to a child with a disability who has been removed from his or her current placement for the (10) days or less in that school year, if it provides services to non-disabled children similarly removed. [34 C.F.R. 300.530] After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for ten (10) school days, and the current removal is for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days and not a change of placement, school personnel, in consultation with at least one of the child's teachers, determine the extent to which services are needed, so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward meeting the individualized education program (IEP) goals. [34 C.F.R. 300.530] If the removal is a change in placement, the child's IEP Team determines the appropriate services. [34 C.F.R. 300.530] Within ten (10) school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, Arizona Autism Charter Schools, parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team

will review all relevant information in the student's file, the IEP, teacher observations, and any relevant information to determine:

- If the conduct was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- If the conduct in question was the direct result of Arizona Autism Charter Schools' failure to implement the IEP. [34 C.F.R. 300.530]

The conduct will be determined to be a manifestation of the disability if either of the above-named conditions occurred, and, if the IEP was not implemented, Arizona Autism Charter Schools will take immediate steps to remedy that deficiency.

If Arizona Autism Charter Schools, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team determine that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the child will be returned to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and School agree to a change of placement. The IEP Team will either:

- Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless already done, and implement a behavioral intervention plan; or
- If a behavioral intervention plan has already been developed, review the plan and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior. [34 C.F.R. 300.530]

School personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to the manifestation of disability if the child:

- Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the state or Arizona Autism Charter Schools;
- Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the state or Arizona Autism Charter Schools; or
- Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the state or Arizona Autism Charter Schools. [34 C.F.R. 300.530]

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will notify parents and provide notice of procedural safeguards on the day Arizona Autism Charter Schools determines the student has violated the code of conduct, and the violation constitutes a change in placement (i.e., interim alternative education setting). [34 C.F.R. 300.530] The child's IEP Team determines the interim alternative educational setting for services. [34 C.F.R. 300.531]

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement under §§300.530 and 300.531 or the manifestation determination may appeal the decision by requesting an expedited due process hearing in conformance with §§300.310 through 300.314 and A.A.C. R7-2-405.I. [34 C.F.R. 300.532]

When Arizona Autism Charter Schools believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to cause injury to the child or others Arizona Autism Charter Schools may appeal the decision by requesting an expedited due process hearing in conformance with §§300.310 through 300.314 and

A.A.C. R7-2-405.I. [34 C.F.R. 300.532] The student will remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or expiration of the interim setting, whichever comes first unless the parent and School agree otherwise. [34 C.F.R. 300.533]

A student who has not been determined to be eligible for special education and related services, and who has engaged in a behavior that violated a code of student conduct may assert protections available to eligible students if Arizona Autism Charter Schools had knowledge that the child was a child with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. Arizona Autism Charter Schools will be deemed to have such knowledge if:

- The parent of the child expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of Arizona Autism Charter Schools, or a teacher of the child, that the child is in need of special education and related services;
- The parent of the child requested an evaluation of the child pursuant to §§300.300 through 300.311; or
- The teacher of the child, or other personnel of Arizona Autism Charter Schools, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child directly to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel of Arizona Autism Charter Schools. [34 C.F.R. 300.534]

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will not be deemed to have knowledge if the parent of the child:

- Has not allowed an IDEA evaluation of the child;
- Has refused special education services for the child; or
- The child has been evaluated and determined to not be a child with a disability under IDEA. [34 C.F.R. 300.534]

When Arizona Autism Charter Schools does not have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the child, the child may be disciplined as other children without disabilities who engage in comparable behaviors.

If an evaluation is requested during the time in which a child is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation will be conducted in an expedited manner.

- Until the evaluation is completed, the child remains in the educational placement determined by Arizona Autism Charter Schools, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services.
- If the child is determined to be a child with a disability, Arizona Autism Charter Schools will provide special education and related services in accordance with this part, including the requirements of §§300.530 through 300.536. [34 C.F.R. 300.534]

Arizona Autism Charter Schools may report a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities to enable them to exercise their responsibilities. [34 C.F.R. 300.535] When reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability Arizona Autism Charter Schools ensures that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the child are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities

to whom Arizona Autism Charter Schools reports the crime, but only to the extent permitted by FERPA. [34 C.F.R. 300.535]

A change of placement occurs if:

- The removal is for more than ten (10) consecutive school days; or
- The child has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern:
 - because the series of removals total more than ten (10) school days in a school year;
 - because the child's behavior is substantially similar to the behavior in previous incidents that resulted in a series of removals; and
 - because of such additional factors as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another. [34 C.F.R. 300.536]

Arizona Autism Charter Schools will determine on a case-by-case basis whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change of placement, and such determinations are subject to review through due process and judicial proceedings. [34 C.F.R. 300.536]