



**Arizona Autism Charter Schools, Inc.**

**AZACS Online Policy Handbook**

Dear Families,

We would like to extend a warm welcome and thank you for making Arizona Autism Charter Online School your school of choice for the 2024-25 school year. We know that families want quality school options for their children. The Arizona Autism Charter School's (AZACS) Online model aims to provide a personalized learning experience for each child to support their academic progress and growth as we collaborate together with each child's parents and guardian.

In order to support your child in our digital learning environment, please take time to read through this entire Online School Parent Handbook. Reading each section will help you understand the AZACS Online School's policies and practices that support all students and their ability to learn in a supportive digital learning environment.

Stay up-to-date with AZACS Online Schools through our regular communication sent through monthly newsletters. Our learning community is most successful when all the partners are involved and collaborate to support each student's success. Thank you for your involvement and for helping to make AZACS Online Schools a place where all students can learn.

Sincerely,

*John Paquin*

Online Campus Director

### **Our Mission**

The mission of the Arizona Autism Charter Schools, Inc. 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**

Students will be empowered to reach their full potential in motivating, compassionate environments using individualized programs so that every child gains the skills to integrate into the community and become a fulfilled, productive citizen.

### **The Board of Directors for Arizona Autism Charter School**

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.

### **Online School Contact Info**

Online Campus Office  
1430 E Indian School Rd Suite 200, Phoenix, AZ 85014  
(602) 346-0300

## **Family Commitment in Online Learning Environment**

The parent or guardian plays a key role when enrolling their child in an online school. In collaboration with the online Teachers and Special Education Case Manager, the parent or guardian ensures that the child is attending and making progress in their online courses.

The key to student success involves family commitment. Engaging in your child's education will make him/her a more successful student. Examples of parental involvement include:

- Participate in parent orientation sessions
- Build rapport with Teacher
- Help prepare your student for exams and tests
- Encourage involvement in student clubs and activities when offered throughout the school year
- Attend face-to-face events when possible
- Set up a designated work space in the home for your child
- Arrange family activities to honor students for their effort and hard work
- Encourage them to take advantage of free tutoring if they are struggling
- Complete school surveys
- As soon as it is known, communicate information about IEPs and 504s to your child's teacher
- Consider joining the AZACS PTA and participate in other school related volunteer opportunities

## **Parent Communication**

AZACS makes every effort to communicate proactively using different modalities for families. Communication takes on a variety of forms to include text messages, email and phone calls, to name a few.

For any academic course concerns, the classroom teacher should be your point of contact. For any concerns not resolved through your child's classroom teacher or regarding overall progress and school related items, please reach out to school leadership.

Ways to effectively communicate with your child's teacher include email, text and phone.

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

## **Parent/Legal Guardian Learning Coach Agreement** (signed during enrollment process)

As a parent/guardian, you will play a significant role in your student's online school experience, though your level of involvement will vary based on your student's grade, program placement, and level of independence. Our school will provide you and your student with more flexibility than you would find in a traditional school; however, we have high expectations for student behavior and participation.

Please review the following expectations outlined in this Learning Coach Agreement. If you have any questions about parent/guardian responsibilities or the agreement, please reach out to the online school administrator.

## Parent/Guardian Expectations

All parents/guardians who have students enrolled in online instruction will be expected to support both the student and staff by doing the following:

Take an active role in education of child and the school community

- Verify and submit REQUIRED weekly attendance through the parent portal.
- Provide parent/caregiver student support throughout the week as needed.
- Review ongoing school communication.
- Monitor weekly student progress and time on task.
  - This includes the student's attendance in live Zoom classes scheduled (Core Subjects, Electives, 1:1 Sessions, and Speech/OT if applicable).
- Communicate with your AZACS IEP Case Manager and Online Instructors on a regular basis.
- Attend IEP/504 meetings, as scheduled.
- Ensure the student is attending all scheduled Speech and OT session if applicable. If your student is unable to attend their session, please notify the therapist before the scheduled session.
- Ensure that the student has the necessary equipment, internet access/bandwidth, etc., needed to participate in virtual learning.
- Bring child to the REQUIRED AZ State Testing Locations, as scheduled per ARS, 15-808.
- Parent/Guardian has read this Online Parent Handbook as well as the general AZACS parent handbook posted on the AZACS Website.

## Student Expectations

- Students will login, engage and participate in scheduled Zoom sessions with Course Teachers as the student schedule indicates.
  - Students are expected to keep their cameras ON at all times and participate when called upon.
  - Students are expected to keep their microphones on mute when they are not speaking to avoid disruptions
- Students are expected to participate actively in all assigned academic platforms, and to complete class requirements on a weekly basis. Student participation in online courses is essential to their success.
- Students in the Online Program are required to take all Arizona mandated state assessments **In-Person** as required by Arizona state law. The state assessment will be completed at a AZACS designated testing site, and administered by AZACS staff.
- Communicate with teachers to ask questions, receive support, and stay on pace.
- All live lessons will be recorded with video and audio recordings, and will be stored in a secure online platform that is accessible to all students, teachers, and administrators. These recorded live lessons are available for students to review at a later time if they would like to revisit the material. NOTE: Reviewing the recordings of live lessons is not a substitute for attending the live lessons and students will not

receive attendance points for watching recordings of previous lessons. Students are still required to attend all live lessons.

By signing the Learning Coach Agreement, both the parent and the student agree that they understand the requirements set forth above; that they will meet the listed expectations; and that they understand that the student's success depends on their meeting the expectations. The parent and student understand, and agree, that the student's enrollment may be in jeopardy if all expectations are not met. Arizona Revised Statute, 15-808, states that if a pupil's academic achievement declines while participating in Arizona online instruction, the pupil's school leader, teacher(s) and parents shall meet to evaluate whether the pupil should be allowed to continue in Arizona online instruction.

### **Online School Attendance**

Arizona law ARS § 15-808 (ONLINE ATTENDANCE) requires students to attend school from the ages of 6 – 16. Arizona Autism Online Charter School believes students need to be at school daily to maximize their learning opportunities. We strongly request that students and their parents make every effort possible to minimize the number of days they miss school.

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

- Failure to maintain a satisfactory attendance status, and independent work completion could lead to a school-initiated withdrawal from AZACS Online School.
- If a student fails to log in to the learning platform for more than 5 school days, the student will receive an attendance warning. If this happens more than once, the student will receive a withdrawal notification. A meeting will be scheduled and held with the school Director. Lack of attendance to that meeting by the parent/guardian results in the child's withdrawal from AZACS Online Schools.
- If a student fails to log into the learning platform or the parent/guardian has not submitted attendance for more than 10 days, the student will receive a withdrawal notification.
- Any student who is not consistently meeting weekly attendance requirements will be subject to a meeting with the school Director to determine if the online school is the right learning environment for the child.
- Vacations or Days Off: Teachers should be notified if students will miss their scheduled live Zoom session. It is preferred that students' vacation align with the school calendar whenever possible.
- Our attendance policy is governed by ARS 15-803 – School attendance; exemptions; definitions: It is unlawful for any child between six (6) and sixteen (16) years of age to fail to attend school during the hours school is in session, unless excused pursuant to section ARS 15-803.
- Absences may be considered excessive when the number of absent hours exceeds 10% of the number of required attendance hours prescribed in section ARS 15-808 for online students.

## Weekly Attendance Requirements

Full-time students at AZACS Online Schools are expected to participate in academic activities per the attendance requirements per week.

Online School	Grade Weekly Attendance Requirement	Parent/Guardian Attendance Submission
AZACS K-8 Online	Kindergarten 15 hours weekly, 3 hours daily, 180 minutes daily	weekly
AZACS K-8 Online	1st – 3rd 20 hours weekly, 4 hours daily, 240 minutes daily	weekly
AZACS K-8 Online	4th - 5th 25 hours weekly, 5 hours daily, 300 minutes daily,	weekly
AZACS K-8 Online	6th - 8th 30 hours weekly, 6 hours daily, 360 minutes daily	weekly
AZACS Online High School	9th - 12th 25 hours weekly, 5 hours daily, 300 minutes daily	weekly

Regular attendance is essential for success in school. Attendance for full-time students is required to be logged in the parent portal weekly by the parent through the Student Information System. Although we appreciate that a student's health and family take precedent, we do ask that families not plan activities on days and times when school is in session. If a student participates in extracurricular activities or works part-time during the school week, it is recommended that they distribute any missed attendance hours over the weekend.

Satisfactory attendance status is determined by the following criteria for full-time students:

- Parent or Guardian logging attendance weekly in the Student Information System. Review instructions on how to enter attendance.
- Attendance and participation is required in the weekly morning meetings and in sessions with the course teacher. If a student cannot attend a scheduled session, they should notify the Instructor.
- Completion of academic activities offline are also used to calculate weekly attendance: calls and sessions with Teachers; tutoring sessions, reading, offline research, science and other assignments, field trips, and other academic activities approved by the school team.
- Attendance logs and course gradebook should align (i.e., a log of 10 hours in English but no assignments submitted for the week is not satisfactory attendance)
- Communication with Teacher (two-way communication via phone calls, emails, attendance at

- virtual meetings)
- Attends all mandatory state testing, if applicable.

### **Routine, Weekly Therapy Appointments**

We recognize that many of our online students have regularly scheduled appointments for various therapies and services throughout each week. Students have the opportunity to work on their online coursework and to schedule their Teacher meetings around the weekly appointments. Attending an online school affords flexibility so that both school and appointments can be maintained. Please communicate therapy appointments to classroom teachers and Speech/OT providers.

### **Excessive Absences and Missing Attendance**

Should a student exceed more than 10 cumulative days in their online courses (excused or unexcused) within a semester; the Administrative Staff will meet with the family to align interventions in an effort to support the student in regularly attending. The 10 absences are equated to the number of weekly and daily hours a student is expected to attend in their online school. 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.

If a student misses school more than 10% of the required annual attendance time, the students may be denied promotion due to the 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.

When a student is identified as potentially requiring a plan to address significant absences associated with a chronic health condition, a medical certification form shall be sent to the parents and returned within (30) school days. Please contact the school Registrar for a Chronic Illness Verification form to be signed by a physician and kept on file in our office.

### **AZACS Online Academic Programs**

#### ***Academic Program - Online Schools***

Students in this program are working at or near grade level, qualify to take regular state assessments and communication abilities are at or near typical range. Students may need support with executive functioning skills including proficiency in adaptable thinking, planning, self-monitoring, self-control, time management, and organization.

#### **Student Skills Needed:**

- Ability to follow general education curriculum using a computer; may need some accommodations
- Willingness to work independently on curriculum online
- Grade level or near reading and writing skills to comprehend content, synthesize information, follow directions
- Communication skills to reach out to teachers to ask questions, receive support, and stay on pace
- Ability to attend virtual sessions

- Basic technical skills are required to navigate the course, web links, and additional content and learning tools.

### **Student Expectations:**

- Understand the expectations for success
- May need support with workflow and executive functioning, i.e. anxiety, social skills, time management
- Attend courses as agreed upon and meet weekly attendance requirements
- Take course notes
- Attend weekly small-group virtual sessions
- Communicate with virtual teacher for help, as needed
- Attend virtual therapy sessions, if applicable

### **School Support:**

- The Virtual Instructor communicates, holds office hours, provides grading/feedback and provides necessary interventions
- Opportunities for virtual and face-to face social interaction throughout the school year

### **Parent/Family/Guardian Support:**

- Take an active role in education of child and the school community
- Attend parent/guardian orientation session
- Participate in training sessions provided by AZACS staff
- Verify and submit REQUIRED weekly attendance through the parent portal
- Provide parent/guardian support throughout the week to student, as needed
- Participate in student reinforcement system as determined by AZACS staff with parent/family/guardian collaboration
- Review school communication regularly
- Monitor weekly student progress and time on task
- Communicate with AZACS Virtual Instructors on a regular basis
- Attend IEP/504 meetings, as scheduled
- Work with AZACS Counselor and ABA Manager to create learning support strategies

### ***Modified Academic Program - Online Schools***

Students in this program may have varied skills in specific academic areas, but demonstrate deficits in academic domains overall, may qualify for alternative state assessment, have moderate communication deficits, and have the ability to follow modified and differentiated curriculum. Students most likely need support with executive functioning skills including proficiency in adaptable thinking, planning, self-monitoring, self-control, time management, and organization.



**Student Skills Needed:**

- Ability to complete some or most assignments using a computer with the **required** support of a parent or guardian
- Ability to attend live virtual lessons and tutoring using a computer with the **required** support of a parent or guardian
- Ability to follow general education curriculum on a computer with accommodations and/or modifications
- Willingness to work on curriculum in an online environment
- Ability to communicate with teachers to ask for help with parent or guardian support
- Basic technical skills are required to navigate the course, web links, and additional content and learning tools.

**Student Expectations with Support of Parent or Guardian:**

- Has some understanding of the expectations for success
- Attend courses as agreed upon and meet weekly attendance requirements
- Demonstrate time management and organization skills with a visual schedule and other executive functioning supports
- Use guided notes
- Communicate with the virtual teacher as needed with support
- Attend weekly small-group virtual sessions
- Ask the teacher for help, as needed
- Attend virtual speech therapy and occupational therapy sessions, if applicable

**School Support:**

- The virtual instructor communicates, holds office hours, provides grading/feedback and provides necessary interventions
- Provides regular communication
- Opportunities for virtual and face-to face social interaction throughout the school year

**Parent/Family Support:**

- Take an active role in education of child and the school community
- Attend parent orientation session
- Participate in training by AZACS staff
- Provide daily parent/guardian support to student as a side-by-side facilitator
- Verify and submit REQUIRED weekly attendance through the parent portal
- Participate in student reinforcement system as determined by AZACS staff with parent/family/guardian collaboration
- Review school communication regularly
- Monitor weekly student progress and time on task
- Communicate with virtual instructors on a regular basis
- Attend IEP meetings, as scheduled
- Work with AZACS Counselor and ABA Manager to create learning support strategies

### ***Functional Academic Program - Online Schools***

Students in this program benefit from a highly structured ABA-enriched environment (i.e. clinical model), have significant intellectual, developmental and communication deficits, may qualify for the alternative state assessment and require intensive intervention and alternative curriculum across academic domains. These students have limited, or no spoken language, and use technology or picture boards to communicate.

#### **Student Skills Needed:**

- Ability to complete home academic program with the required side-by-side facilitator to include parent, habilitation and/or respite guardian

#### **Student Expectations with Support of Parent, Habilitation and/or Guardian:**

- May have limited understanding of the expectations for success
- Work with parent, habilitation and/or respite guardian on the prescribed weekly education plan
- Meet weekly attendance requirements
- Work with AZACS Counselor and ABA Manager to create learning support strategies
- Attend virtual speech therapy and occupational therapy sessions, as applicable

#### **School Support:**

- The AZACS education team collaborates with the student's parent, guardian and other providers to support the home education program
- An AZACS Teacher or ABA Manager holds a weekly meeting with the parent, habilitation and/or respite guardian to discuss weekly progress
- Home education program consists of academic lessons through Universal Learning System, and IEP goal work
- Opportunities for virtual and face-to face social interaction throughout the school year

#### **Parent/Family Support:**

- Participate in training by AZACS staff
- Take an active role in education of child and the school community
- Attend parent orientation session and weekly meetings, as scheduled
- Verify and submit REQUIRED weekly attendance through the parent portal
- Participate in student reinforcement system as determined by AZACS staff with parent/family/guardian collaboration
- Review school communication weekly through parent portal
- Monitor weekly student progress and time on task
- Attend IEP meetings, as scheduled

### **Communication Expectations**

Establishing ongoing and regular communication between students, parents and AZACS staff, is an integral part of establishing a successful online learning environment for each student. Please note our

communication guidelines below:

- Reading and responding to email is expected on all days school is in session
- Email is to be used for school-related work between students and teachers and/or students to students
- Regular phone communication and texting is an expectation between students/parents and teachers
- Students will discuss academic material with their teacher(s) via phone or virtually on a weekly or bi-weekly basis
- Students are required to have a working voicemail system for faculty and staff to leave messages
- Announcements and messages will also be sent to students and families through PowerSchool and School Messenger in order to push out important information
- Student attendance and participation is an integral part of collaboration and social opportunities with peers
- Students are encouraged to schedule meetings with their teachers on a regular basis
- AZACS Online Schools are not responsible for costs associated with long-distance phone calls, use of data or school-related apps, or texting. Please check with your phone provider to know your specific phone plan.

### **ABA Tiered-model of Support**

ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) is built into every aspect of the student's online experience, and depending on the student's needs and performance, they will be assigned to one of three levels of support. The tiered system is designed to support the student and help improve performance, while teaching new skills and addressing behavioral challenges. If a student moves from the first level of support to the second or third, that does not mean that they are being punished or they are in trouble, it simply means that we are increasing the level of support we are providing for the student in to help them learn new skills, increase enjoyment and engagement, while also supporting their emotional needs. Please note that level 2 and 3 require more involvement from the learning coach (parent or caregiver), and attending an additional social/emotional support class until the student is able to be successful with a lower level of support.

**Tier 1:** This is the default tier for all students, and every student will receive these supports built into their academic experience in the online program.

- Positive Behavior Supports that focus on positive reinforcement, encouragement, and teaching new skills .
- Access to a point system where the student can earn Wolf Bucks to purchase desired items or privileges in the school store.
- The use of timers, transition signals, and frequent opportunities for choice
- The option for the parents/caregivers to review supplemental ABA training materials/video library to enhance the learning experience and increase knowledge.

**Tier 2:** This tier is designed for students that have met criteria to receive an additional level of support to address academic performance, behavioral needs, motivation, or social emotional support. Students on Tier 2 receive the following supports outlined in Tier 2 in addition to the supports listed in Tier 1.

- Students in this Tier 2 are required to attend the SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) virtual class led by the ABA Director, School Counselor, and Learning Success Coach a minimum of 1 time per week.
- Parents/caregivers are offered the option to participate in virtual consultation with the ABA Online Program Manager as well.
- Parents/Caregivers are given the option to utilize the supplemental ABA parent/caregiver training

videos to enhance their student's learning experience.

**Tier 3:** This tier is designed for students that have met criteria to receive the highest level of support available to students within the Online School program. Students that receive this level of support continue to receive all supports from the previous tiers, and the additional supports listed below:

- Students in Tier 3 are required to attend the SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) virtual class led by the ABA Director, School Counselor, or ABA program manager 2 times per week.
- Parents/Caregivers are required to participate in virtual consultation with the ABA Manager and strongly encouraged to participate in any positive behavior support strategies to support the student's individual needs.
- A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) may be requested by the IEP team to determine the academic and/or environmental factors that might be contributing to a student's academic outcomes.
- Individualized Positive Behavior Support Strategies will be developed and parents/caregivers/teachers will be trained on how to implement the strategies.
- Additional referrals may be made to outside service providers if applicable

If all supports within the Tiered model have been implemented and the student is not showing improvement in class attendance, meeting participation/engagement requirements, meeting satisfactory requirements for passing courses, then a meeting will be scheduled with the Online School Director team and the parents/caregivers to determine if this is the best placement for the student.

### **Progress Reports/Report Cards**

Student grades are based on assessments and student work outlined in the online syllabus for each course. Progress reports are communicated frequently at the individual class level by teachers. Families with students in the Functional Academic Program should schedule weekly communication with their child's teacher.

### **Arizona State Testing Requirements**

Arizona full time students in grades 3-9, and grade 11, are required by state legislation (ARS 15-808) to participate in state standardized in-person testing at a designated testing site during the Spring semester (typically late March and/or early April.) Arizona State Assessment Testing State standardized tests measure proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics. Recent changes to ensure Arizona complies with Federal requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act require all publicly funded schools in Arizona to administer the assessments to students in grades 3-9 and grade 11. Parents/Guardians are responsible for transportation to and from designated state testing locations. While we work to provide testing locations close to as many homes as possible, some students/parents may need to provide transportation up to an hour each way from their home address during the annual testing process. State testing requirements vary by school year based on the Arizona Department of Education.

### **AZACS Online High School Graduation Requirements**

AZACS students must pass all courses required to meet the minimum college entrance standards for Arizona Board of Regents, along with required electives. Students must also be in good academic standing. Only students who have met AZACS graduation requirements may participate in end-of-year ceremonies.

To receive an AZACS high school diploma, students must earn 22 total credits, 6.0 of which must be earned

at AZACS Online High School. The final 1.0 credit must be taken at AZACS Online.

The minimum credits required per subject area include:

- Math 4 credits
- English 4 credits
- Lab Science 3 credits
- CTE/Vocational or Fine Arts 3 credits 1 credit
- Social Studies 3 credits
- Electives 7 credits
- Total required: 22 credits

### **Arizona Civics Exam**

Students are eligible to take the AZ Civics exam as early as their 8th grade year. In 2015, the Arizona legislature passed the American Civics Act (House Bill 2064). This bill requires students, beginning with the graduating class of 2026, to pass a civics test based on the United States Immigration and Naturalization civics questions. Students will be required to score 70/100 or higher in order to graduate from high school. The test is administered online, is untimed, and students can retake the test as many times as necessary until the minimum passing score of 70% is achieved. The Civics exam is not a proctored exam. All students will be provided with study guide materials and resources in preparation for the exam. Successful completion of the civics test will be included on an official transcript as a “P” for pass and does not factor into a grade point average. Any student that transfers into AZACS having already successfully completed the Civics Test requirement for graduation in Arizona will not be required to retake the exam. Proof of completion is indicated on incoming official transcripts. Students will work with the teacher to fulfill this requirement.

### **CPR Exam**

Beginning July 2019, Senate Bill 1137 requires that high school students receive CPR instruction. ASUPD provides online instruction that does not lead to cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification. Full-time online students are not required to practice or demonstrate hands-on cardiopulmonary resuscitation as defined in Section 15-808. Exemptions from CPR instruction may be permitted at the request of the parent or submission of written documentation that the student has completed prior CPR training or is CPR certified. Students will work with their teacher to fulfill this requirement.

### **Grading Scale**

AZACS Online Schools expect students to complete all coursework within a given time frame. Students are allowed and encouraged to take multiple opportunities to achieve mastery, if needed.

Grading Scale - Traditional Scale 9-12 AP/MP

Percentage	Grades
<b>90-100%</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>80-89%</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>70-79%</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>60-69%</b>	<b>D</b>

<b>0-59%</b>	<b>F</b>
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Pass/Fail (When course is designated to receive a P or F versus a letter grade)

<b>60-100%</b>	<b>PASS(P)</b>
<b>0-59%</b>	<b>FAIL(F)</b>

**Technology Requirements**

- Chromebook (Provided by AZACS upon discretion and signed out to student at start of the school year)
- Device used should include a microphone and webcam.
- Operating Systems
  - Windows 10 and newer Mac OSX 14 and newer Linux ChromeOS
- Internet Speed -
  - High speed internet (recommended)
  - Microsoft Edge (latest version)
  - Safari (latest version)
  - Chrome (latest version)
  - Firefox (latest version)
  - Hotspots are available for students in need.
- Supported Browser Plugins and Settings
  - Javascript enabled Flash
  - latest version is recommended
  - 1024x768 is recommended
  - Pop-up blockers should be disabled Cookies should be enabled

**Enrollment Policy**

AZACS aims to make all of its schools and programs accessible to all eligible students, however, demand exceeds capacity frequently and AZACS' fair and equitable enrollment practices come into play. 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 ARS 15-184.

Applications are accepted starting January 1 for the following school year, and selection of students starts in March. For any grade level/program for which there are more applications than available spaces, a lottery is held to select students for that classroom or program. Students who are not selected through the lottery process are placed on an interest list. The same procedure takes place each school year. If more applications are received than the available slots, then a lottery is held to select students to enroll.

While AZACS focuses on best-practices for students with autism and attracts a majority of students with autism, it is an open enrollment school where all students are welcome. AZACS 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.

### **School Paperwork / Payment Deadlines**

AZACS operates under the supervision of several different regulatory bodies at both the state and federal level that impact every procedure from IEPs to 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, you and/or your child's ability to participate in the meeting/event or activity may not be guaranteed.

### **Medication**

- In the event of attending an in-person session or event on campus, AZACS must have the Medication Administration Form completed and signed by the student's physician and legal parent/guardian on file. Prescription medication may only be administered by AZACS trained staff members. See Online School Clerk/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 to make sure there is enough medication in the office. Parents must be responsible for ensuring medication does not run out during the event.

### **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 PRIOR TO A STUDENT ATTENDING SCHOOL. PLEASE NOTE: The state mandates that a child without an immunizations record on file will not be allowed to attend in-person sessions or events until the school receives this information.

### **Uniform Requirements For Online Students**

AZACS online students are **strongly** encouraged to wear an AZACS branded shirt and/or their school ID lanyard during online Zoom sessions. Students receive an ID upon having their photo taken during back to school events. When coming on site or attending any AZACS social function, wearing an AZACS shirt is also strongly suggested. Dennis Uniforms is the authorized retailer for AZACS school uniforms. The AZACS PTA school store sells school spirit-wear shirts, other school swag items, and a portion of the proceeds go back to the school. Information on how to order uniforms and school shirts can be found at the links below.

### **PTA School Store**

<http://www.azacspta.org/azacs-pta-swagstore.html>

## **Dennis School Uniforms**

3645 E. Indian School Road Suite 1

602-377-5154

<https://www.dennisuniform.com/collections/qau/>

## **Code of Conduct**

As a member of the AZACS Community you will be expected to uphold the rules, policies, and procedures of our school. The Online Code of Conduct for students includes the following:

- Reach for new content and skills and make them your own.
- Participate in online course discussions and other activities on a regular, substantial basis
- Review course requirements; organize and schedule work.
- Be persistent as you read, study, research, plan, and accomplish work.
- Learn and practice the new technology skills needed for assignments and interaction.
- Keep an open mind, and consider different perspectives and opinions.
- Participate in online discussions with thoughtful posts that build upon previous ideas and information.
- Contribute toward an online class environment that supports and encourages creativity and sharing.
- Use the support and ideas of your online community to participate in the creative process of learning.
- Treat your classmates and teacher with courtesy and respect.
- Think before you communicate; avoid derogatory, dismissive, or overly critical comments.
- Support others in learning by providing constructive feedback, resources, and information.
- By your comments and actions, show your appreciation for the contributions of others.
- Welcome and value the diversity, expertise, and insights of the learners in your class.
- Be honest in your representations of your background and education when sharing with your teacher and classmates. Submit work that is your own.
- Follow copyright laws, and give credit when using the work of others.
- Be an active, dependable member when participating in group activities

## **Academic integrity**

Academic integrity is putting high values into practice by being honest in the **academic** work you do at school, being fair to others, and taking responsibility for learning by following the school policies and guidelines.



## **Roles and Responsibilities to Ensure Academic Integrity**

- Student submits only original work
- Student protects their original work (do not post online or share with another student)
- Student communicates with teacher if unsure about any aspect of academic integrity expectations
- Student never shares username or password
- Parent/Guardian Attends Parent Orientation Webinar
- Monitors student work to ensure only original work is submitted
- Discusses academic integrity and the consequences with your child

## **Types of Academic Integrity Violations**

- Direct Plagiarism - A word-for-word transcription of a section of someone else's work, without citation and without quotation marks. This also includes allowing another student to copy your work.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) - Using ChatTPG and other artificial intelligence programs.
- Mosaic Plagiarism - Sometimes called "patchwriting," which entails borrowing phrases, as opposed to complete sentences, but not using a citation.
- Using an Academic Broker - Allowing another person to complete coursework on your behalf.  
Self-plagiarism - submitting work that is the same or significantly the same as you previously submitted for another class without approval from your teacher.

## **Consequences for Academic Integrity Violations**

### ***First Offense***

- Completing online review of Academic Integrity with teacher within 48 hours.
- Failure to respond will result in immediate lockout of course and director phone call.
- Teacher phone call to parent/guardian
- Resubmit assignment for full credit or complete alternative assessment for full credit with completion
- Offense will be noted in the school's disciplinary system
- K-3 infractions will be handled on a case by case basis

### ***Second Offense***

- Teacher and Administration phone call to parent/guardian
- Redo the original assignment with academic integrity.
- Receive reduced grade (50%) on assignment.
- Write a 2-page essay (or grade appropriate) on the topic of academic integrity.
- The student's teacher will work with a school administrator for details.
- Offense will be noted in the school's disciplinary system
- K-3 infractions will be handled on a case by case basis

### ***Third Offense***

- Automatic zero on assignment,
- Parent contacted by Director
- Offense will be noted in the school's disciplinary system

### **Misconduct**

Misconduct refers to non-academic misconduct by a student. Misconduct is defined as: Misconduct Interfering with the orderly conduct of an examination, lecture, tutorial or other teaching class, or impairing or hindering the learning or assessment performance of others.

Examples of Misconduct are:

- The use of profanity, sexually explicit comments or threatening comments toward school staff or other students in any verbal or written communication
- Disrupting the orderly conduct of live lessons, tutoring sessions, discussion boards or any school activity
- Refusing to comply with any reasonable request of identifiable school personnel performing their duties
- Violating any federal or state statute

Consequences from misconduct violations can include but are not limited to:

#### ***First Offense***

- Documentation of incident
- Parent contact by Teacher

#### ***Second Offense***

- Formal reprimand
- Documentation of incident
- Parent contact by Director

#### ***Third Offense***

- Possible short-term suspension
- Student Conduct Agreement
- Parent contact by Director

#### ***Fourth Offense***

- Possible long-term suspension and/or expulsion from AZACS Online Schools
- Parent contact by Director

### **Bully and Cyberbullying Policy**

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group, intended to harm others. Examples of CyberBullying include but are not limited to:

- Cyberbullying can include text messages or emails

- Sending messages through Zoom chats
- Rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites
- Sending embarrassing pictures or videos

### **School-wide Rules against Cyberbullying**

- Students will not cyberbully other students
- Students will help students who are cyberbullied
- Students will tell an AZACS staff member and an adult at home when we know cyberbullying is occurring
- Consequences for cyberbullying can lead to dismissal from AZACS Online Schools

Definitions of harassment, intimidation and bullying:

- 1. Verbal harassment (threats)
- 2. Social Isolation (encouraging peers to not like, interact with student)
- 3. Non-verbal insults (mouthing, gestures)
- 4. Physical assault (any instance of physical contact made seeking negative interactions)
- 5. Property destruction or theft (any instance of destroying or taking another's belongings)

Process for the investigation by the appropriate school officials of suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying AZACS staff will fill out a bully report and turn in to administrator. A member of the Admin Team will investigate the report including:

1. Interviewing all parties involved to get statements
2. Inform families involved within 24 hours of the report Disciplinary procedures for pupils who have admitted or been found to have committed incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Consequences for bullying or cyberbullying include but are not limited to: time out of morning meetings or group meetings; additional parent/staff supervision when online; peer mediation group; suspension and are based on the level of offense.

### **Disciplinary Policies and Procedures**

AZACS follows disciplinary policies and procedures as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Students who attend AZACS may not bring to school or have in their possession any item that may be classified as a weapon (examples: guns, knives, matches, lighters, etc.). A student who brings such items to AZACS may be required to participate in daily searches of person or personal possessions thereafter to ensure the safety of the student and others. Possession of these items may be considered grounds for recommendation of suspension. Assaultive behavior by students (use of a weapon or object used as a weapon or battery against a staff person or another student) will not be tolerated at AZACS. The parents, guardians will be notified immediately in the event assaultive behavior occurs. A recommendation may be made for suspension, a Manifestation Determination meeting, or a review of placement.

### **Suspension of Programming**

A student's attendance at AZACS may be suspended on the following basis:

1. Lack of attendance due to a clinical necessity, i.e., a student demonstrates a psychiatric or medical instability or condition that compromises effective education. An intervention and/or alternative placement may be

considered by an IEP team consisting of parents/guardians and school professionals.

2. Educational necessity, i.e., a student requires educational programs or services that currently cannot be provided satisfactorily in an AZACS program. An alternative placement may be considered by parents/guardians and school professionals. Administrative suspension of programming may occur based upon 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 in a positive and proactive way. If a student escalates into a crisis, becoming a danger to himself or others, Safety Care (QBS) strategies are used.

The QBS 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.

### **Special Education Services**

Arizona Autism Charter School provides Special Education in accordance with all federal and state regulations and guidelines. Students will be provided any needed special instruction as indicated in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Once enrolled, review of the student's existing IEP will be conducted within 30 school days. Services, if any, will be provided in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

When the student's teacher and/or parent suspect a disability, the pre-referral process will be initiated. If the pre-referral process leads to the need for evaluation, parent/guardian permission will be obtained in writing before an evaluation takes place. After a student has been evaluated, a multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET) meeting will be conducted to determine the student's eligibility for special education services. Team members include the classroom teacher, school psychologist, special education case manager, administrative representative, parents and any involved service providers. Based upon the results of this meeting and evaluation, an IEP meeting may be scheduled and an IEP may be developed by the team, which includes the parents and student when appropriate.

Our primary goal of services is to fully include students with special needs. In compliance with IDEA 2004, Arizona Autism Charter School is notifying parents of the availability of special education services for students through 21 years old. It is expected that students and parents with an IEP will meet with the SPED Case Manager as outlined in the IEP in accordance with special education requirements.

### **Parents Right To Know**

Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, parents have the right to know the professional qualifications of the instructors who teach their children. Resumes outlining educational background and experience for all

teachers are maintained in the Human Resources office at Arizona Autism Charter School. If you wish to view a teacher's background information, you should contact the Senior Manager Talent Strategy at the school.

### **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 School will identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities within their population who are in need of special education and related services, regardless of the severity of their disability.

In its identification process Arizona Autism Charter School 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 School will inform the general public and parents within its population 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 School 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]

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 School, Arizona Autism Charter School 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 School's procedures to follow-up on the student's needs. [A.A.C. R7-2-401.D] Arizona Autism Charter School shall maintain documentation of the identification procedures

utilized, the dates of entry into school, notification by parents of a 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 School determines that a full and individual evaluation is not warranted, Arizona Autism Charter School shall provide prior written notice and procedural safeguards notice to the parent in a timely manner. [A.A.C. R7-2-401.D]

### **McKinney-Vento**

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, Tracy Malcolm at [tmalcolm@autismcharter.org](mailto:tmalcolm@autismcharter.org).

### **Annual Notification of Rights under FERPA for Schools**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are: 1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Arizona Autism Charter School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. LL 10\_14\_2020 12 Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Arizona Autism Charter school to amend their child's or their education record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent 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 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 set forth 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 own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, 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 in order 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.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, LL 10\_14\_2020 13, 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 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 or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents 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 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 authorize 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 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, or 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 LL 10\_14\_2020 14 justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to 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, in order 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 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, in accordance with 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)) Arizona Autism Charter Schools (AZACS)

### **Section 508 Compliance**

AZACS strives to ensure our website information and courses are available to all, regardless of abilities. In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended, 29 U.S.C. Section 794d, requires that Federal agencies' electronic and information technology is accessible to people with disabilities. AZACS courses are 508 compliant and conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level A and AA. Client-side supports allow for the additional personalization of accessibility supports based on the individual's tools and experience with access. If you have difficulty accessing any portion of this site or would like additional information on our 508 initiative, please email



your SPED case manager.

## ESSA Parent and Family Engagement Policy

**Governing Board Approval Date: August 29th, 2024**

### Statement of Purpose

Arizona Autism Charter School, Inc. is committed to providing quality education to every student. Partnerships with parents, 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 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 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 School, Inc. agrees to implement the following statutory requirements:

- The school will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents 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 of participating children.
- Consistent with section 1116, the school will work to ensure that the required parental involvement policies meet the requirements of section 1116(b) of the ESSA, and each include, as a component, a school-parent compact consistent with section 1116(d) of the ESSA.
- The school will incorporate this parental involvement policy into its LEA plan developed under section 1112 of the ESSA. In carrying out the Title I, Part A parental involvement requirements, to the extent practicable, the school will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents 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 understand.
- If the LEA plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1112 of the ESSA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the school district will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school submits the plan to the State Department of Education.
- The school will involve the parents 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 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 involvement, and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition:  
*Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—*

- o *that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;*
- o *that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;*
- o *that parents 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 School, Inc. 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, members of the community, teachers, operations staff, and school administration. This committee will annually review the ESSA Parent 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 School, Inc. 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 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 and family engagement opportunities.

### **Coordinate Services**

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

### **Annual Evaluation**

Arizona Autism Charter School, Inc. will assess the needs of the parents 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 to address these needs. Parents will be notified about training opportunities.

The SBDM committee will review and evaluate all aspects of the parent and family engagement program. Parents will be asked for their input on the content and effectiveness of the Title I parent and family engagement programs through an annual evaluation of the Title I Program. The evaluation will include an assessment of overall parent and family engagement and identify barriers to parent and family participation that still need to be overcome, the needs of parents 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 and children in the community through a variety of measures, including parental suggestions. The school will welcome and receive recommendations about the Title I program.

## **Design Evidence-Based Strategies**

Arizona Autism Charter School, Inc. 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 involvement. The SBDM committee will annually review the school's Parent and Family Engagement Policy based on the results of an annual review.

## **Involve Parents in Activities**

Parents can become involved in their children's education in a variety of ways. AZACS values both the at-home contributions of parents 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 and family engagement are needed in school-home-community partnerships to help all children succeed. AZACS will offer many opportunities for parent and family engagement in the school including, but not limited to the following:

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

Parents 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. Arizona Autism Charter School, Inc. will welcome and respond to efforts by parents to communicate with the school.

## **Parental Involvement Statement of Commitment (Compact):**

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

The Parental Involvement Compact shall contain:

- The expectations for parental involvement;
- Specific strategies for effective parent 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 conference, teachers walk through all performance metrics with parents. Each teacher has the data specific to each student. Additionally, we offer two parent-teacher conferences to make sure all parents 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-School Compact

This compact outlines how the parents, 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 will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State's high standards. This school-parent compact is in effect during the entire academic school year.

### School Responsibilities

Because Arizona Autism Charter School, Inc. believes every student can learn and wants to provide every student with a first-class education, Arizona Autism Charter School, Inc. 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-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 with frequent reports on their children's progress using student digital portfolios.
- Provide parents with reasonable access to staff. Specifically, staff will be available for consultation with parents after school, by calling the school's office phone number or emailing the staff member directly.
- Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate at their specific campus and access to observe their student's performance upon request.
- Involve parents in the planning, evaluation, and improvement of the school's Parental Involvement Policy, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.
- Involve parents in the joint development of its Integrated Action Plan, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.
- Hold an annual meeting to inform parents 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 to be involved in Title I, Part A programs. The school will convene the meeting at a convenient time for parents and will offer a flexible number of additional parental involvement meetings, such as in the morning or evening, so that as many parents as possible are able to attend. The school will invite to this meeting all parents of children participating in Title I, and Part A programs, and will encourage them to attend.

- Provide information to parents of participating students in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon the request of parents with disabilities, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand.
- Provide to parents 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, provide opportunities for regular meetings for parents 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 parent an individual student report about the performance of their child on the State assessment in at least math, language arts, and reading.

Provide each parent 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.
- 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, 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 Policy and Responsibility Handbook for the 24-25 school year, I agree to uphold the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.