Elementary School
Parent and Student Handbook

2015 – 2016
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INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Elementary School,

The educational program we offer, the instructional approaches we take with students, and the systems we have in place all reflect the developmental needs of our students and our desire to provide your child/rem with the highest quality of education possible.

This handbook is written as a resource for families and is intended to help you understand the general rules and requirements within the Elementary School. As we hope to maintain close communications between home and school, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns related to school expectations.

We value our partnership with parents and look forward to working with you to provide the outstanding educational program we know you want for your children.

Warm Regards,

Diann Osterlund
Elementary Principal

Damon Rickett
Elementary Assistant Principal
MISSION STATEMENT

“ACS empowers students to solve problems with creativity and integrity, to lead well-balanced lives, and to serve Lebanon and the world community with understanding and compassion.”

We believe:

Students learn at different rates and in different ways.  
Students achieve success by being active participants in their learning.  
Students develop character through engagement with others from different backgrounds and through interaction within the community.

We achieve our mission by:

Setting high expectations for ourselves and our students  
Empowering students to be critical thinkers and independent learners  
Working collaboratively with all members of our community  
Understanding and utilizing innovative teaching and learning  
Creating a safe environment for students to take risks and learn from their mistakes  
Facilitating students’ intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth  
Engaging students in relevant and reflective learning  
Encouraging students to explore different forms of personal expression  
Providing opportunities for students to make choices, to lead, and to demonstrate responsibility  
Supporting students to be caring, empathetic, respectful and tolerant  
Developing student awareness and communication skills through the study of languages  
Involving students in local and international community service projects  
Preparing students to seek admission to the most selective colleges and universities
THE ACADEMIC HERITAGE

ACS, first known as the Faculty School, was established by the American families of the American University of Beirut, formerly known as the Syrian Protestant College. The school opened on October 23rd, 1905 with eighteen pupils and three teachers. Classes were held on the first floor of the Dorman house. The Orly Cinema now stands on the site of the original school. There were twelve boys in the school and in 1907 eleven of them were on the soccer team.

Three years after its establishment the school was moved to the A.U.B. Hospital grounds to a building which was later known as the X-Ray department. When the student number reached thirty-three students in 1920, the school was moved again, this time to a small building on Sidani Street in Hamra. At this time the Presbyterian Mission joined the college in managing and financing the school, and the name was changed to the American Community School. In 1949, the school moved to its present site near the Mediterranean Sea. Since then the campus has been enlarged to include the existing academic buildings, gym, tennis courts, and playing fields.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

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COMMUNICATION

We consider communication between home and school to be of utmost importance. We make every effort to be sure that parents are informed in a timely manner of their child’s progress, of school events, and other important information.

A crucial part of this process is having up-to-date telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, as the school relies heavily on email communication. Please ensure that the school always has your most current contact information as well as an alternate contact person in case you cannot be reached in an emergency. To update your information, please contact the Elementary School Office.

CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

If a question or issue should arise concerning your child, please contact the person most directly connected to the situation. In most cases, that will be your child’s teacher. If you cannot resolve the question or issue at that level, you are requested to contact one of the Elementary School administrators for further assistance. If the situation remains unresolved after working with the school administrators, you would then contact the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.
School Arrival and Departure

Elementary students must be in school no later than 7:50 a.m. and no earlier than 7:30 a.m. When the students arrive in the morning, they should proceed directly to their assigned areas.

When arriving between 7:30-7:50 am, students in grades 1 & 2 go to the lower school playground, located behind the elementary school on the ground floor. Students in grades 3-5 go up to the roof when they arrive in the morning. On rainy days, students proceed directly to their homeroom upon arrival.

Parents are requested to leave students at the gate and not accompany them to the playground area.

Dismissal is at 3:20 p.m. At dismissal time students immediately join the line designated for the bus gate, east gates or BD gate.

- The east gate closest to the library is designated for students whose family names start with A→ F
- The east gate closest to the playground is designated for students whose family names start with G → Z

Please wait outside the east gates for the staff and guards to dismiss your child. Parents are kindly asked to leave the school with their children as soon as the students arrive at the gates. If you will be meeting your child inside the BD gate, please make sure you inform your child’s teacher.

It is very important that your child’s teacher knows who is responsible for picking up your child. If there are any changes in this regard, please inform the teacher immediately.

Leaving with another ACS student

A student who wants to go home with a friend after school needs written parental permission authorizing the school to let him/her leave with the friend. This note needs to be brought to the office for the signature of an office employee. Parents may also email the office prior to 10AM and the office will inform the teacher. Arrangements must be made in advance as students may not use the school phone to obtain permission.
WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION

Parents are not allowed in the hallways while school is in session unless there is an event they have been invited to or they have an appointment with the teacher. Anything student related during the day must go through the elementary office, including:

- Picking students up for appointments (children must be signed out)
- Dropping off items that children may have left at home
- Dropping off lunches, birthday treats, etc.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Absences and Tardies

In order for your child to succeed at school and make the expected growth and progress, they need to be present every day unless they are ill. We ask that family vacations occur during school holidays.

Students are expected to be at school by 7:50 am as classes start at 8:00 am. As tardiness negatively impacts the ACS program and student learning, parents will be contacted for excessive tardies.

Any pupil whose absences exceed 15 days per year will be promoted only upon consideration and approval by the Principal.

Homework

Students should be able to complete all homework assignments with minimal help/support from parents. Homework assignments are varied, and are mainly extensions of class assignments.

You can help your child develop good study habits by finding a place to study that is free from distractions (people moving around, children playing, TV or music on, etc.), setting a regular homework time each day and freeing your child of other responsibilities at that time.
REPORTING ON STUDENT PROGRESS

Our teachers use ongoing assessment processes to determine your child’s growth and progress toward meeting grade level standards and learner outcomes. We report this information to parents through a variety of means, including work samples sent home, parent-teacher conferences, report cards, and learning celebrations.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Research shows that parent interest and involvement in school positively impacts a student’s performance. We believe and support this by placing a high value on our partnership with parents. Following are examples of ways in which we involve parents and demonstrate a commitment to partnering with parents.

Grade Level Parent Coordinators

Each grade level has a parent coordinator who works with grade level team leaders in planning activities and organizing the necessary volunteers. Grade level coordinators also organize the homeroom parents for that grade level.

Room Parents

Each classroom has a room parent who coordinates with the homeroom teacher and the grade level coordinator in organizing classroom activities and special events, and helping arrange for volunteers as needed.

Parent Coffees

Periodic coffees are held throughout the school year. The purpose of these coffees is to keep parents informed and to maintain close ties in support of our partnership with parents. Coffees also present opportunities for parents to meet each other.

Parent Workshops

Periodically we offer workshops that are of interest to parents. These may include parenting classes and sessions specific to curriculum topics.
STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

By using the ACS mission as a guiding statement, the Elementary School has developed the following expectations for members of our community.

- Show respect to yourself, others, and the environment.
- Demonstrate responsibility in everything you do.
- Be trustworthy and truthful to others at all times.
- Treat others as you would have them treat you.

Community members that struggle to meet these expectations will be encouraged to reflect on their actions and how they relate to our community agreements, identify possible actions that would meet these agreements and then practice appropriate behavior(s). Serious behaviors that threaten the safety and well-being of our community members or ongoing behavior issues will be referred to administration.

Transportation – Riding the Bus to School

Allo is the company that the school contracts with for bus transportation. For students who ride the bus, the following guidelines have been established:

- The driver and bus monitor are in charge of the bus and all of its riders. Students will always follow the directions of the driver/monitor promptly.
- Only children who are designated bus riders are allowed to ride the bus.
- If your child regularly rides a bus but is not going to be riding the bus on a particular day or is going to be picked up by someone else, please send a note or email to the Elementary School office by 10AM indicating your permission to have your child take other means of transportation home. This policy is necessary in order to protect your children. In addition to the note, it is the parent’s responsibility to inform the bus company that your child is not riding the bus on that day.

At all times, bus riders should:

- Move quickly to their seats.
- Remain in designated seats at all times while the bus is in motion.
- Hands, arms, and heads must remain inside the bus.
- No objects/rubbish is to be thrown in the bus or out of the bus.
- Windows should not be lowered below the indicated mark.
- Talk in a normal tone of voice.
- Use appropriate, respectful language.
- Keep hands and feet to his/her self.
- Get off the bus quickly and quietly.

In case of emergency, bus riders should follow the driver’s instructions. Bus riders who do not follow the rules may expect the following:

- **1st Time-Warning**- Parents will receive a communication from the Assistant Principal with a complete explanation of what happened.
- **2nd Time-Loss of Bus Privilege**- Student will lose bus privileges for a minimum of one day. Parents will be contacted by the school and further action will be determined by the Elementary Administration.
- **3rd Time-Extended Loss of Bus Privilege**- Student will lose bus privileges for an extended period of time and parents will be contacted.

In case of serious misbehavior, the consequence will be an immediate loss of bus privileges determined by the Principal and the bus manager. Parents will be notified.

**LIBRARY**

The elementary library has a large collection of books for preschool to grade five students. Parents are welcome to check out books Monday through Friday at the following times: 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Parents are notified when books are overdue. Students may not check out new books before the overdue book(s) is (are) returned.

Parents, as well as students, are responsible for the books they check out. If a book is lost or damaged beyond repair, parents will be asked to pay for it. The replacement cost for Arabic books is $5.00 and up. For English books the replacement cost is $15 and up.

**FIELD TRIPS**

ACS organizes several educational trips throughout the year. These trips are specifically designed to enhance and support learning goals. At the beginning of the school year, a blanket permission form for field trips is sent home for parents to sign. Only students whose parents have signed the permission form may participate.
in the field trips. Parents will always be informed of field trips well in advance. In grades 4 and 5, overnight field trips may be offered.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

ACS offers an array of after school activities on a schedule that allows for three sessions a year. These activities are designed to enhance your child’s physical, social, aesthetic, and academic skills. Activities are led by an ACS employee unless otherwise indicated. Parents are encouraged to watch for information regarding the offerings and sign-up procedures.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

ACS has two infirmaries with two full-time registered nurses. In the event of an emergency that is beyond the facilities of the infirmary, the nurse will inform the principal concerned and the child’s parents. The nurse will take the injured student to a nearby emergency room.

It is advisable that the school nurse is informed by the parent in person about any health problems that a student may have in addition to the information available on the Student’s Medical History Form.

If a child is absent from school less than three days, he/she needs to bring a written note signed by a parent. If a child is absent for more than three consecutive days, he/she needs a doctor’s excuse to be readmitted to class.

Physical Education Medical/Participation Policy

We ask that all students participate to the best of their ability at all times and encourage students to participate as much as possible. If a student cannot participate in physical education for health/medical reasons, they will not be permitted to participate in recess or after school sports that day. Please communicate any health or medical concerns to your child's physical education teacher.

If your child needs to be excused from PE for any reason please send a note/email to his/her PE teacher, not the classroom teacher. Children who arrive without a note will participate in the lesson or be sent to the nurse for evaluation. If the student is
unable to participate for one day, a parent note is acceptable, but if a child needs to be excused for more than one day, a doctor's note clearly stating the reason and dates to excuse the student is required.

**Medication Policy**

Medication will be administered to a child **only** upon the written request of the parent. The medication must be brought to school by the parents and should be in its **original container** with the child's name and directions for use clearly marked (dosage and time). The school nurse administers all medications. Any medication still at school at the end of the week will be sent home.

Parents should check with their child's physician to see if a dose schedule can be arranged that does not involve the hours the child is at school. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

**Healthy Eating Habits**

Children who are healthy and well-nourished will have enough energy to take them through a full day of school activities.

Breakfast is an especially important meal for fueling the body since it has had no food during the night. Parents should make sure that their children have adequate time to eat a proper breakfast every day before going to school.

Please be informed that elementary students may not bring sweets, chips, or other types of junk food as snacks. A good snack would be a sandwich with cheese or fish (Tuna), or meat with fresh vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, lettuce leaves etc...) and fruit. To drink, give your child juice or plain water. Soda pops are not permitted. All students should bring a bottle of drinking water to school. Please label the bottle with your child's full name.

*Elementary school students may not bring chocolate, candies, and/or chewing gum to school.*

**School Lunch Program**

A hot meal program is available for lunch. Please contact the catering company for more details.
MONEY/GAMES/VALUABLES

Students may not bring any valuable items to school. The School will not compensate for a valuable item that is lost or damaged at school. If you consider it necessary for your child to carry a cell phone, the phone must be left in their backpack during the day and not be brought out. If the phone becomes visible at school, it will be held by the teacher until the end of the day when the child can take it home.

Children should not bring money to school (except for a school related activity like a bake sale, etc.). Elementary students are not allowed to leave the school premises to purchases items from the Upper School cafeteria. If you deem it necessary for your child to have a snack or drink on the way home, please send that extra snack or drink with him to school.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES AND SPECIAL TREATS

Birthday treats may be brought to the classroom before school begins or to the office after school begins, after conferring with the teacher for a mutually agreed upon time and date. Private party invitations may not be distributed at school unless all children in the class are invited.

LOST AND FOUND

Children, with the support of their parents, should be encouraged to be responsible for their belongings. To make the identification of students' belongings easier, please label all your child's clothing with your child’s full name, grade level, and section (A,B,C,D), including his/her P.E. uniform, lunch box and water bottle. Lost and found items are located at the bottom of the stairs near the library. Periodically, lost and found items that are not claimed are given to a charity organization. Please encourage your child to search lost and found if they lose an item.

ITEMS FORGOTTEN AT HOME

To help our students develop good organizational skills and learn to take full responsibility for his/her belongings, items like books, lunch boxes, and projects that
are forgotten at home should not be delivered during the school day unless absolutely necessary. Please inform your drivers and housemaids of this rule.

TEXT, COPYBOOKS, and SUPPLIES

ACS provides students with all necessary instructional tools, supplies and resources. Parents are expected to compensate for any lost or damaged books or misuse of materials.

ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE

Dressing for school is not the same as dressing to work out, dressing to root for your favorite team, or dressing for the beach. ACS students come to school dressed to learn, and need to look professional.

ACS students are expected to abide by the following dress code:

- Solid colored, collared Polo shirts must be worn to school each day. They are the only option for students.
- Shirts must cover the shoulders, mid-riff, and back.
- Pants must be in good condition, free from any rips, holes, or tears, and worn from the waist.
- Shorts may be worn to school if they are not athletic shorts, no undergarments may be visible.
- Dress modesty is recommended. No short shorts are allowed. It is recommended that shorts be worn underneath short skirts.
- Athletic attire, including athletic shorts, team shirts, sweat pants, and sweat shirts with large logos or lettering are not permitted to be worn to school. The only exception is that students may wear ACS athletic shirts and shorts to school.
- Tights and leggings, as long as they are opaque and not see-through in nature, may be worn to school. Leggings, panty hose, and / or stockings that are made of a sheer material must be covered by an appropriate top or skirt that is longer than students’ fingers when the student is standing and the arms are extended at his / her side.
• Footwear can be sneakers, boots, sandals, or shoes. Flip flops are not permitted.
• Non marking sneakers are required: Students must wear appropriate footwear for PE and recess, no cleats.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY

I. Preamble

The digital age opens ACS students to the world’s library of knowledge. ACS intends for technology of all kinds to be used by students, individually and collaboratively, to promote educational excellence. As an ACS student, understanding of “digital citizenship” is essential to interact with the ACS and world communities with respect.

II. Policy Statement

This document has been created to serve students as a guide for acceptable and unacceptable behavior when being connected to the school network and using technology resources.

Users of digital devices and Internet technology at ACS are expected to abide by the Acceptable Use Policy. ACS students must sign the AUP before they are granted access to the school’s equipment and network services.

III. Acceptable Use

1. Students should respect all technological resources including the ACS equipment and the Internet bandwidth which is an expensive and limited resource. It is intended for educational use only, not for social, recreational, or personal purposes.
   a. Personal email or computer games are not allowed without a teacher’s permission
   b. Permission may be given by the teacher only when the game is directly related to schoolwork.

2. Students will handle, store, and secure devices carefully.
3. Students will be held responsible for all activity that occurs under their account.

4. Students will only access appropriate Internet sites. If you come upon offensive sites accidentally, tell your teacher immediately, so that they can inform the computer network administrator.

**DATA PRIVACY**

Student records, such as enrollment forms, health records, observation records and written parent teacher conference reports, and all other information about the student is confidential. A student’s school records/information will only be accessible to parents or a legal guardian and it can only be shared with outside agencies with parent/guardian approval.