



Ascent Classical Academies
South Carolina
Family Handbook



THE VISION

Ascent Classical Academies develop the moral and intellectual skills, habits, and virtues upon which independent, responsible, and joyful lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis for a free and flourishing republic.

THE MISSION

Ascent Classical Academies train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a classical, content-rich education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue in an orderly and disciplined environment.

CORE VIRTUES

Courage • Moderation • Justice • Responsibility • Prudence • Friendship • Wonder

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ACADEMIC PROGRAM POLICIES (AP)

Policy AP-1.0 Mission and Vision

The governing board adopts the following vision and mission for Ascent Classical Academies of South Carolina (ACASC).

The vision of the school is the long term intended outcome of the work of the school.

Ascent Classical Academies' vision is to develop the moral and intellectual skills, habits, and virtues upon which independent, responsible, and joyful lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis for a free and flourishing republic.

The mission is what the school does on a daily basis to achieve the vision.

Ascent Classical Academies' mission is to train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a classical, content-rich education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue in an orderly and disciplined environment.

Policy AP-1.1 Philosophy

Ascent Classical Academies' mission is derived from the history and philosophy of liberal education in Western Civilization and in America. Currently, traditional, classical education is experiencing a Renaissance in this country after decades of neglect. Within this broader reform, Ascent Classical Academies follow the principles and curriculum of what might be called an American classical education, whose mission encourages the formation of human beings and citizens who will flourish in life and serve their communities and country in manifold ways. To embrace this mission, the school holds certain essays and texts to be foundational. Among those are the following:

E. D. Hirsch, *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*
E. D. Hirsch, *The Making of Americans*
Robert Maynard Hutchins, *The Great Conversation*
Terrence O. Moore, *A Classical Education for Modern Times*

Important Historical Sources:

Benjamin Franklin, *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*
Thomas Jefferson, *Virginia Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge*
Benjamin Rush, *A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools*

Policy AP-1.2 Core Virtues

Ascent Classical Academies' Core Virtues are, in order:

Courage, Moderation, Justice, Responsibility, Prudence, Friendship, and Wonder.

Policy AP-1.3 Honor Code

Consistent with its mission to develop students with good character and virtue, Ascent Classical Academies sets forth the following honor code:

I am honorable and responsible in conduct, honest in word and deed, respectful of others, and will promote the same.

Policy AP-1.4 Parent Partnership

Ascent Classical Academies adheres to the philosophy and truth that students are, first and foremost, children of parents and guardians. Parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children and a family's home is the primary source of a child's education and knowledge.

Ascent Classical Academies partners with parents to educate students to recognize, appreciate, and value the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. Certainly, training hearts and minds includes discussions of moral and civic duty, but a child's identity is personal, complex, and under the province of the family by nature and by right. Educators attempting or claiming to have the agency to engage in identity conversations with students have exceeded the proper role of the school.

ACACS acknowledges and respects parents' and guardians' ultimate authority over the education of their children by ensuring that the instructional approach is consistent with classical content and pedagogy, as well as transparent by welcoming all reasonable requests to review the curriculum and visit their children's classroom sessions.

Policy AP-2.0 Educational Priorities and Curriculum

The governing board desires that all students receive a classical, liberal arts education. To this end, the board has determined the following educational priorities:

1. Basic cognitive skills: reading, writing, mathematics
2. Core subjects:
 - a. English language and literature
 - b. History, geography, and government
 - c. Physical and biological sciences
 - d. Mathematics
3. Other classical subjects: Latin, art, and music
4. Auxiliary subjects: Foreign languages, physical education, and performing arts
5. Extracurricular activities of any type as defined by the executive director.

K-8: The K-8 curriculum will generally follow the Core Knowledge sequence. Occasionally, the school will diverge from the Core Knowledge sequence in order to raise the standards in teaching a particular subject or skill. The executive director will determine these instances, with the guidance of partners of the school. The executive director will ensure that all content areas in the K-8 Core Knowledge Sequence are taught at some point in grades K-8.

9-12: The high school will feature an advanced arts and sciences curriculum. The objective of the high school curriculum is to explore issues and texts intensively rather than to offer a superficial

“covering.” The humanities program will be centered on a coordinated Western Civilization sequence. In all humanities courses, priority will be given to original sources and great works as opposed to textbooks. Mathematics and the sciences will offer rigorous training in the fundamentals and theories of these disciplines. Students will receive extensive training in analytical thinking and the scientific method. In all subjects, textbooks will be used as a resource, not as the basis of the curriculum. The curriculum will exceed the South Carolina Academic Standards. Teachers must develop their courses under the direction of the headmaster, who is accountable to the executive director and governing board.

Policy AP-3.0 Curriculum Guidance

Ascent Classical Academies teachers create their own lessons within the scope of a content-rich K-12 scope and sequence and the Core Knowledge framework, founded on the following principles:

- (1) The centrality of the Western tradition in the study of history, literature, philosophy, and fine arts;
- (2) A rich and recurring examination of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions;
- (3) The use of explicit phonics instruction leading to reading fluency, and the use of explicit grammar instruction leading to English language mastery;
- (4) The teaching of Latin;
- (5) The acknowledgement of objective standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth intrinsic to the liberal arts;
- (6) A school culture demanding moral virtue, decorum, respect, discipline, and studiousness among the students and faculty;
- (7) A curriculum that is content-rich, balanced, and strong across the four core disciplines of math, science, literature, and history;
- (8) A faculty where well-educated and articulate teachers explicitly convey real knowledge to students using traditional teaching methods rather than using so-called “student-centered learning” methods;
- (9) The effective use of technology without diminishing the faculty leadership that is crucial to academic achievement; and
- (10) Grades K through 12 within a single school.

In order to recommend changes to the core curriculum, faculty must consult with the headmaster and executive director, who will request board approval if a change is warranted.

Policy AP-4.0 Grading

Grades are not the be-all and end-all of education. Nonetheless, grades are a useful tool to evaluate and communicate a student's mastery of the curriculum. Teachers will assign grades in order to reflect accurately the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge of a subject. To this end, the following letter grades have these meanings:

- A – Mastery
- B – Proficiency
- C – Sufficiency (Competence)
- D – Insufficiency
- F – Failing

In addition to these general parameters, we will use a 4.0 grading scale. The following grading scale will be used for all grades K-12:

A	94-100%	4.0	C	74-76	2.0
A-	90-93	3.7	C-	70-73	1.7
B+	87-89	3.3	D+	67-69	1.3
B	84-86	3.0	D	64-66	1.0
B-	80-83	2.7	D-	60-63	0.7
C+	77-79	2.3	F	0-59	0.0

The grading scale as defined above is utilized for all students. Incompletes will only be given under special circumstances as determined by the headmaster. It is the responsibility of parents and students to remain informed of the student's progress.

Weighted GPA

Ascent Classical Academies do not inflate student grades, since doing so poorly prepares students to lead independent, responsible, and productive lives. Nevertheless, the larger academic world does not share our view, and to ignore this would do a disservice to our students as they apply for some colleges and scholarships.

In order to maintain the integrity of our classrooms while recognizing the pressures of the broader academic world, Ascent Classical Academies adopts the following weighted grading policy.

For purposes of official high school transcripts only, honors courses and courses that count for both high school and college credit will be weighted on a 5-point scale as follows:

A	5	C	3
A-	4.7	C-	2.7
B+	4.3	D+	2.3
B	4	D	2
B-	3.7	D-	1.7
C+	3.3	F	0

For report cards, retention and promotion decisions, club and athletic eligibility, honor roll designations, eligibility for in-school honors, and for all other purposes, the standard 4-point scale applies.

Policy AP-5.0 Reporting Student Progress

For students to be successful, both they and their parents should be informed of their standing in class. In addition to the regular grading of assignments, the school will inform parents of their student's academic progress in the following ways:

- If a student is determined to be significantly below grade level, a meeting will be scheduled with a parent, the teacher, and other faculty as deemed appropriate.
- Once a semester, parent-teacher conferences will occur to discuss the student's academic progress.

In general, grades will be posted within seven business days after the due date unless otherwise notified by teacher on the syllabus. Written assignments in the upper school and labs may take longer to grade due to the kind and amount of feedback.

Progress reports will be made available to families at the end of each quarter between semesters, and student grades will be made available at the end of each semester.

Policy AP-6.0 Schedule Changes

There will be no schedule changes during the semester unless it is deemed in the best interest of the student by the school. Approval signatures must be obtained from the student's present teacher, the new teacher, the headmaster, and a parent or guardian.

Policy AP-7.0 Promotion Requirements

Grammar School Students (K-6)

The primary goal at the grammar school level is solid literacy. If a child lacks adequate reading skills, he or she will be unable to progress to more complex studies.

A student may pass to the next grade if he reads just above grade instructional level (2.0 means second year, 0 months, etc.):

- first graders must read at a minimum of a 2.0 instructional level to pass to second grade
- second graders must read at a minimum of a 3.0 instructional level to pass to third grade
- third graders must read at a minimum of a 4.0 instructional level to pass to fourth grade

To avoid loss of reading skills over the summer, a vacation reading program will be instituted. This will consist in reading specified works and completing written assignments. These assignments are due the first day of school and will be evaluated.

In addition to literacy, K-6 students must have attained competence in all the core subjects (English, including reading, spelling, grammar, composition; history; math; science) over the course of the year and attained at least a C average. Competence is attained by not only knowing the material but by completing assigned work. Completion of work demonstrates not only the ability of the student in the various subjects but also the mastery of study skills necessary for academic and personal achievement. Students whose grades or skills fall below the requirements of their grade level will be retained. “Borderline” cases will be decided by the teacher and the headmaster.

In addition, students in grades K-2 must achieve mastery of the English phonograms at the following minimum levels:

- Kindergarten: 90% mastery of the first 26 phonograms taught at the kindergarten level. Students should be able to read with fluency the letter sounds in nonsense words. Fluency is approximately 1 word per second.
- First grade: 70% mastery of the 72 English phonograms.
- Second grade: 90% mastery of the 72 English phonograms.

Age is the second criterion for placement in a grade level at Ascent Classical Academies. A student must fall within state guidelines to enter a grade.

Upper School Students (7-12)

It is our goal for parents, teachers and students to work together during the year to ensure that students are developing responsible work habits and attaining a sufficient level of understanding in their courses.

A student must attain a 1.7 GPA in core courses (English, history, math, science) to pass to the next grade level.

Students who make a C in a single class may re-take that class with the approval of the headmaster. A D in a single class may be a passing grade and may be awarded credit at the discretion of the teacher and headmaster. The student may be required to retake that class based on the recommendation of the teacher and headmaster. Failing a core course will require the student to re-take the class. A

student who fails an elective course may retake that course with the approval of the headmaster.

The upper age limit for 9th through 12th graders will be determined by Ascent Classical Academies administration in accordance with South Carolina law.

Special Education Students (All grades)

All students, including those receiving special services and with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) should be placed at the appropriate grade level. Retention decisions for students with IEPs will be made by a grade placement committee.

This committee will include the parent(s), general education teacher, special education case manager, other pertinent services providers, and a school administrator.

The committee will discuss the multifaceted dynamics that relate to the well-being of the child including academics, progress data, attendance, behavior, and related needs of the child. The committee will discuss how these dynamics currently impact or could impact the child overall. Lastly, the committee will reach a consensus that the student should be retained or promoted to the next grade level.

The meeting will also be recorded as an additional meeting for documentation purposes.

Policy AP-8.0 Grade Level Retention

The purpose of promotions and retentions is to provide maximum consideration for the long-range welfare of the student and to provide an opportunity for each student to progress through school according to his/her own needs and abilities.

It is expected that most students will be promoted annually from one grade level to another upon completion of satisfactory work, however, a student may be retained when his/her standards of achievement or social, emotional, mental, or physical development would not allow satisfactory progress in the next higher grade. Retention normally occurs before the student leaves the primary grades.

Parents or guardians who wish to appeal the decision for retention must first contact the headmaster. If parents or guardians do not accept the decision of the headmaster, an appeal may be made in writing to the board. All appeals must be requested within two (2) weeks after the close of school.

Policy AP-9.0 Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate, all students are required to:

- 1) Meet the credit requirement and complete the core courses as reflected in the below chart;
- 2) Complete a senior thesis with a grade of C- or higher; and
- 3) Either of the following: Score at least 500 on the math section of the SAT, score at least 50 percentile on the AFQT of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude

Battery, or complete a math capstone.

In the following chart, one credit is equivalent to one year of study (or two semesters).

Subject Area	Credits Required
English Core courses: Classical Literature (2 semesters), British Literature (2 semesters), American Literature (2 semesters), Modern Literature (2 semesters).	4
Math Within the credit requirement, students must successfully complete Geometry (2 semesters) and Algebra II (2 semesters).	4
Science Within the credit requirement, students must successfully complete Biology (2 semesters), Chemistry (2 semesters), and Physics (2 semesters). 3 Required by South Carolina.	4
History Core courses: Western Civilization I (2 semesters), Western Civilization II (2 semesters), American History (2 semesters), Modern History (2 semesters).	4
Government Core course: American Government (2 semesters) .5 Required by South Carolina.	1
Economics Core course: Economics (1 semester) .5 Personal Finance required in South Carolina.	.5
Latin/Foreign Language Within the credit requirement, students must complete a full year of Latin. Students may choose to complete the remaining two years in Latin or another foreign language. 1 required by South Carolina.	3

Subject Area	Credits Required
Logic and Rhetoric Core course: Logic (1 semester) and Rhetoric (1 semester). Depending upon readiness, a student may be required to complete as a prerequisite a basic Composition course, that will be counted as an elective.	1
Moral and Political Philosophy Core courses: Moral Philosophy (1 semester), Political Philosophy (1 semester)	1
Senior Thesis (Capstone)	.5
Fine Arts	1
Physical Education/Health	1
Electives 6.5 required by South Carolina. Above Ascent Classical Academies requirements fulfill South Carolina requirements.	2
Total	27

Seventh or eighth grade students enrolled in a high school Latin II class or higher may receive high school credit. However, this does not diminish the requirement applicable to all high school students, to complete at least 3 credits of foreign language while in high school as set forth in the chart above.

At the discretion of the headmaster, a student may be required to complete remedial courses to graduate.

The headmaster has the authority to waive any graduation requirement except those required by law.

Once enrolled full-time, a student will not receive credit from any other institution without the prior approval of the headmaster.

Any student who attends the school part-time, then becomes a full-time student, must have the headmaster's approval to graduate.

ACA will work with parents and students to develop and maintain an individualized post-graduation advisement plan.

Policy AP-9.1 Concurrent Enrollment

Ascent Classical Academies will partner with an institution of higher education to offer concurrent enrollment opportunities to students in grades 9-12. These opportunities are free of charge and allow students to earn college credit while pursuing Ascent Classical Academies graduation requirements. All concurrent enrollment classes must be taken onsite, in classes led by school faculty.

Students may take concurrent enrollment classes as elective credit for purposes of meeting or exceeding school graduation requirements.

Students need staff approval before registering for any concurrent enrollment class. This approval will include an evaluation of character, maturity, general attendance, and thoughtfulness, to ascertain readiness for the rigor of a college class. Faculty, house mentors, and administration will be involved in the evaluation process.

Policy AP-10.0 Honor Roll

Any student who receives a 3.5 GPA will be on the Honor Roll. Any student who receives a 3.75 GPA will be on the High Honor Roll.

Policy AP-11.0 Class Rank, Valedictorian, Salutatorian

In determining class rank for graduating seniors, there is obviously a difficulty. Some students will have attended Ascent Classical Academies full-time all four years of high school, whereas others may have attended for two or three years. The question is which manner of ranking students is the most just if, as is likely, the standards of grading are harder at Ascent than in other schools. It would seem that a system by which students are ranked “head to head” is the most appropriate. To this end, final class rank for seniors will be based solely on the classes taken at Ascent Classical Academies by full-time students. Only students who have attended Ascent Classical Academies for at least the complete junior and senior years will be given a class rank. Students who come just for their senior year and/or an incomplete portion of their junior year may graduate but will not be ranked. The system of ranking students who have attended for different numbers of years will be as follows:

- The students who attend full-time for four years will all have their cumulative grade-point averages compared.
- The students who attend full-time for three years will have their cumulative grade-point averages compared to the three-year averages (sophomore-senior) of the above students.
- The students who attend full-time for two years will have their cumulative grade-point averages compared to the two-year averages (junior-senior) of the above students.

- The students who attend full-time for only one year will not be ranked. Nonetheless, in writing letters of recommendation to colleges, the college counselor or headmaster will inform admissions officers of what the student would be ranked in his or her graduating class.

The purpose of this policy is to keep Ascent Classical Academies' four-year students from being penalized for what may be a relatively difficult freshman year. At the same time, students who come to Ascent Classical Academies in their last two or three years of high school will be ranked according to how they do at this school.

The selection of valedictorian and salutatorian will be based upon final grade-point averages and upon good standing in terms of character. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty or similar offenses will not be ranked, and therefore cannot be salutatorian or valedictorian. In line with the process detailed above, both the valedictorian and the salutatorian must have attended Ascent full-time for two complete years upon graduation.

The final class rank will be determined after the first semester of the senior year. It is important to make the cutoff at that point since colleges will wish to know the final rankings as soon as possible and since the valedictorian and salutatorian should be afforded the opportunity of including their honors on their graduation invitations. All students must nonetheless complete all graduation requirements in the last semester in order to graduate.

In the unlikely event of a tie for a certain ranking, two or more people may hold the same class rank. The subsequent place in rank will not be skipped. For example, if two students tie for third place, the next student in rank will be fourth.

Policy AP-12.0 Early Graduation

Students who desire early graduation may receive a diploma from the school if they have earned 27 credits, a minimum of 16 received from Ascent Classical Academies, and the requirements for the core classes met.

The headmaster or executive director's designee will evaluate a student's transcripts and inform the student of the viability of early graduation upon receipt of a written request signed by the student and parent.

Policy AP-13.0 Format for State Assessments

State assessments will be administered using a paper-and-pencil format when available.

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the executive director, in consultation with the board and parents, and updated as determined appropriate by the board.

Policy AP-13.1 State Assessments Opt-Out

As publicly funded charter schools, Ascent Classical Academies is required to offer and administer several assessments, to include: **SC READY** (South Carolina College- and Career-

Ready Assessments): This is a statewide assessment program in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for students in grades 3-8. SC READY is designed to measure student performance against the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards; **SCPASS** (South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards): SCPASS is administered to students in grades 4 and 6 for science and grades 5 and 7 for social studies. This assessment measures how well students have mastered the state standards in these subjects; **End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP)**: While primarily applicable to high school students, if a charter school offers high school credit courses to middle school students (for example, Algebra 1 or English 1), those students must take the EOCEP assessments associated with these courses. The EOCEP is designed to assess student performance on state standards in specific high school-level courses; the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the Pre-SAT (PSAT).

South Carolina does not have a policy that allows parents to opt their children out of state-mandated assessments.

Policy AP-14.0 Homework

Homework is a fundamental part of our general academic program and helps develop a strong work ethic and personal organizational skills. Homework's immediate educational purpose includes the following:

- To reinforce and master facts and concepts taught in class;
- To prepare for the next day of class and for quizzes and tests;
- To develop study skills and habits;
- To work on assignments not readily accomplished in the classroom, such as writing essays;
- To inform parents of what is being taught in the classroom.

In addition to regular classroom assignments, we would like each young child to read, or be read to, at least three times a week and preferably every day. As cited in *A Nation at Risk*, “the single most important factor for determining whether children will go to college is being read to as a child.” While going to college is not the only mark of academic success, becoming an avid and able reader is essential to becoming an engaged and informed worker, citizen, and human being. Reading is the foundation for all subsequent learning. Thus, by reading to your child you encourage your child's growth and strengthen family ties. By making sure your child is reading at home you are directly contributing to his education. By reading in front of your children, you model good habits and reinforce your expectations.

Homework should be an opportunity for practice or for acquisition of material to be taught in class. Parents are not expected to “teach” material to students.

In order to take college-level classes (if offered), all students must first get parental approval as well as the teacher's recommendation for that class.

College-level classes will require anywhere from 30 to 60 extra minutes of homework per night beyond the usual amount required in high school courses. For this reason, the school recommends that students take no more than one college-level class per semester. Any more classes than one will require special approval by the headmaster.

9th through 12th grade students may elect to be scheduled in an additional study hall in lieu of an elective, if doing so will not prevent them from earning all required credits. No credit will be awarded for study hall. Students who do not use this time wisely will be required to enroll in an elective.

****** In order to give 9th through 12th grade students adequate time to write papers and prepare for tests, the last week of each quarter, starting the preceding Friday, will be a “Quiet Week.” No major performance will be scheduled during this time without prior approval by the headmaster.

Approximate Time Guidelines

In general, Ascent Classical Academies assign approximately ten minutes of homework times the grade level to students per night and between two and three hours in the high school. While schools try to hit this mark, all must understand that it is impossible to gauge perfectly how long an assignment will take any given child, as some students take longer to complete tasks than others.

The expected homework time allotment for each grade is as follows:

- Kindergarten - 10 minutes plus family reading time
- Grade 1 - 10 minutes plus family reading time
- Grade 2 - 20 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 3 - 30 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 4 - 40 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 5 - 50 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 6 - 60 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 7 - 70 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 8 - 80 minutes plus reading time
- Grades 9 to 12 - two hours plus reading time

Reading time in the primary years refers to practice in the skill of reading, which is best done aloud. In the upper-elementary grades and higher, “reading time” means reading literature in preparation for class. Since literary works become longer and increasingly complex in our curriculum, students in the upper school will need to spend 30-45 minutes per night on the literature they are reading.

The designated times serve as guidelines and may vary depending on the work assigned on a given day, the schedule, the student’s organizational skills and study habits, and the nature of the assignments. Students are expected to learn how to use their time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. Parents are expected to support their children in this endeavor, principally by ensuring a quiet place to study (and away from potentially distracting “devices”). Advanced or honors classes may require additional homework time.

For poor or uncompleted work, teachers may require students to redo an assignment. How much credit is given for the redone version is left to the discretion of the teacher.

Late Homework

All assignments are expected to be turned in on time.

One of the responsibilities of homework is to teach students responsibility and accountability. In order to accomplish this, and to ensure students do not fall behind on their schoolwork, it is essential that students complete their work on time. Students who have an excused absence will have the number

of days equal to the number of days absent to make up class and homework without penalty up to 7 days.

Homework will not be sent home nor will credit be awarded for any work done during periods of unexcused absence.

Upper School Late Homework

In the upper school, homework and assignments submitted one day late will receive 75% credit and two days late will receive 50% credit. Homework submitted more than two days late will not receive credit.

Make-up Homework

Please see Attendance Policy.

Policy AP-15.0 Instructional Time

The primary focus of the school's staff and programs is to maximize the time students are actively engaged in the educational process. While learning occurs as a result of extracurricular activities and as a result of non-structured interaction between students and between students and staff, most learning occurs as a result of planned learning activities during class time. Therefore, every effort will be made to minimize disruptions in instructional time. Public address announcements and pull-out programs will be planned to avoid loss of critical instruction time.

The board defines "actively engaged in the educational process" as time when students are working toward achieving educational objectives under the supervision of a teacher, including:

- Classroom instruction time
- Individual student work time while at school, including study hall and library research
- School-related field trips
- Independent study
- Assemblies
- House meetings
- Meetings with faculty members and mentors

The board expands its definition of "educational process" to include:

- In-person attendance in which attendance is taken by the teacher on-site;
- Instruction delivered electronically;
- Completion of lessons assigned through our learning management system as documented with a student login and lesson participation;
- Completion of offline work as documented by parent, under the guidance of a teacher;
- Independent, remote work time for students that is directed and monitored by school staff;
- Attendance in a synchronous live session; and/or
- In-person testing.

Student contact days may include remote or online learning days as allowed. If school is closed due to emergencies, which results in direct student-teacher contact time being reduced below the

minimum hours/minutes allowed by state law and provided for in the calendar, the headmaster shall adjust the calendar to make up for the lost time.

For remote instruction, the school will calculate contact time based on numerous factors including academic content covered, student demonstrations of learning, estimated times for students to complete independent work, parent-supervised activity under the guidance or direction of a classroom teacher, and/or other methods deemed comparable to in-person learning. Additional information about how teacher-pupil instruction will occur during remote learning days as well as bell-schedule equivalencies shall be further detailed in the school's learning plan.

Teachers may take attendance with students present in a remote/video classroom, student login to the school's online platform, during pick-up or drop-off of instructional materials, through the front office, or by turning in specific assignments. Attendance will be tracked daily. Students who are isolating or in quarantine from a pandemic will transition from in-person to on-line learning, further detailed in the school's learning plan.

Schools may also offer a full and part-time online program subject to the same instructional, contact, and attendance equivalents stated above.

An in-person learning environment is superior in delivering a classical education and Ascent Classical Academies will strive to ensure it is available to all students. A remote option is not a functional equivalent to in-person school, but it will be made available to families who request it or as otherwise required by exigent circumstances, applicable laws, rules, regulations, or orders.

Policy AP-15.1 School Calendar

The headmaster of a campus shall develop and submit calendars for all programs for the upcoming school year to the executive director for presentation to the governing board by February.

The school calendar shall meet the instructional hours and days required by law.

Student contact days and hours may include remote learning time as allowed.

Policy AP-16.0 Special Events – Parties

Special events or parties held during a significant part of the school day must be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum.

Any special event must be approved by the headmaster a minimum of 2 weeks prior to its planning. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next.

Policy AP-17.0 Special Events – Guest Speakers

Guest speakers utilized during the school day must speak on topics covered in the course or grade. If possible, the students should be in process of studying the topic to be presented.

Guest speakers must be approved by the headmaster prior to the invitation being extended. Approval must still be obtained for guest speakers used in the previous school year. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next.

Guest speakers who address controversial or potentially contentious topics must be screened by the headmaster or executive director. The screening may include an interview of the guest by the headmaster or designee. Parents must be notified prior to guest speaker presentations on controversial issues, including religions covered in the Core Knowledge sequence. Parents may have students excused from such presentations and understand that the student will be supervised in a silent study hall. Teachers will provide permission slips to parents as notification of a guest speaker covering controversial issues and indicate an option on the permission slip for the student to be excused.

Policy AP-18.0 Special Events – Field Trips

Local field trips should be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum. Field trips must be approved by the headmaster or designee two weeks prior to planning. The field trip planner will work with the field trip coordinator to ensure that all procedures are followed.

Policy AP-19.0 Extended Field Trips

All extended field trips require individual board approval a minimum of 90 days (180 days outside the U.S.) prior to the trip. All students attending the extended field trip must have unanimous approval of the administrators of the school. All extended field trips must have liability insurance protecting all the trip attendees, the school, and the authorizer, as required. Any liability insurance not covered by the school's policy must be paid for by the fees charged to trip participants. Any increases in the costs of extended field trips (due to inflation, changes in exchange rates, etc.) must be paid for by increases in fees by trip participants. All adults attending the field trip are required to be currently registered volunteers. The field trip planner will work with the field trip coordinator to ensure that all procedures are followed.

Policy AP-20.0 Teaching Controversial Issues

Controversial issues are defined as contemporary problems, subjects, or questions of a political or social nature where strong differences of opinion emerge and passions can run high. Controversial issues will only be explored when emanating from some part of the curriculum. When these subjects come up, teachers will present an impartial view of both sides without proselytizing. Contemporary controversial issues will not be discussed in the grammar school, even if part of the Core Knowledge sequence, without executive director approval.

Policy AP-21.0 Human Sexuality Instruction

Ascent Classical Academies believe parents own the fundamental responsibility for their children's education, which includes the areas of morality and sexuality. The school's role, particularly in these realms, should be viewed as a supportive one. It is apparent that human sexuality is more

than biology and physiology. It necessarily relates to questions of ethics, spirituality, and the emotions. Because it is a part of the whole human experience, it must be treated with respect and sensitivity.

We believe children are naturally modest concerning their bodies and are not ready to learn everything at once. They are naturally curious, however, and need to get answers to their questions in a way appropriate to their stage of development. In teaching this topic, we want to minimize the potential embarrassment associated with it for both children and parents. Therefore, Ascent Classical Academies intends to help initiate and facilitate discussions between parents and children on this sensitive subject.

Human sexuality instruction at Ascent Classical Academies focuses solely on human reproduction from a biological and scientific perspective.

In the grammar school, the curriculum places lessons on changes in human adolescence and reproduction in science. This part of the sequence will be taught in a sex-separated environment. Parents will have the opportunity to preview the class materials, to attend a meeting with the teacher(s) prior to this unit, and to excuse their children from this portion of the curriculum.

In upper school, human reproduction is taught as part of the biology curriculum.

Policy AP-22.0 Teaching Evolution

The study of modern biology rests in large part on the theory of evolution. The Core Knowledge sequence introduces the basics of this theory in the seventh grade. In the ninth grade, this topic will be taught in more depth in the biology class. Although we recognize that there are other explanations of human origins and development, such as Creation or Intelligent Design, we will not devote class time to these and will refer students to their parents.

Policy AP-23.0 Student Services

Consistent with federal guidelines, Ascent Classical Academies admits students based on available seats, without knowing the special needs of a student before a seat is offered.

Ascent Classical Academies offers a continuum of special education services and placements for the special needs of students. These include in-class accommodations, pull-out tutoring, and resource time for students with special needs. We also contract with providers for therapeutic services (occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and counseling) that the school cannot offer on its own, as needed.

Ascent Classical Academies' student services program rests on three pillars of instruction: explicit phonics instruction, arithmetic skills, and organization. Since classroom time is crucial for all students to develop these skills, student services staff will create and lead resource class time for students who need extra help. The goal is to reinforce what is learned in the classroom and to help the student develop independence.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES (SE)

Policy SE-1.0 Attendance

Overview

Classical education is highly interactive and requires consistent and punctual attendance. Because the classical approach relies heavily on classroom discussion among students and teachers, most work done in class cannot be made up if a student is absent. For this reason, parents should exercise prudence and make every reasonable effort to ensure that students do not miss class, including restricting trips to the allotted breaks.

Absences

Planned absence during the school term is highly discouraged. Any such absence must be requested at least one week in advance and in writing. The headmaster may require that the student obtain comments from teachers about the impact of the absence before the request for an excused absence can be granted and may require evidence or a commitment that the time will be made up in some way.

Doctor and other appointments during the school day are discouraged when avoidable. When those appointments are unavoidable, students are responsible for any make-up work during their absence.

In the upper school, absences are calculated by course. In the grammar school, missing two clock hours equals one half-day absence and missing four clock hours equals one full day absence.

Excused Absences

The following will be considered excused absences:

- Absences for medical reasons
- Absences for documented mental or emotional disabilities
- Pre-arranged absences of an educational nature
- Important family events
- Attendance at any school-sponsored activity for which a student is eligible
- Bereavement (notify school if absence will extend beyond three days)
- Court appearances or when in law enforcement custody
- Religious holidays and observances

The school may require suitable proof of excused absences, including written statements from medical sources.

Ascent Classical Academies recognizes the individual nature of extended excused absences including, but not limited to, such situations as acute or chronic illnesses/injuries, a terminally ill family member, or a death in the family. Families can expect to be informed by the headmaster or designee of the general expectation of the faculty related to the completion of assignments and, as applicable, to the student's status for promotion to the next grade.

Make-up Work

Students must complete homework and assignments that they miss during a period of absence. Assignments that are not made up, according to the time restrictions set by the teacher and school, will be reflected in their grades.

Missed assignments due to an absence must be completed within the same number of school days as the absence. Students are responsible for retrieving notes and assignments for themselves, preferably from a classmate, and are expected to be respectful of their teacher's time.

An absence on the date of a major assignment, such as a test or major paper, will not extend the deadline of that assignment. The student must complete the assignment the day of his or her return.

Reporting Absences

Parents must notify the front office of absences by 8 a.m. in order to be excused. Parents should notify the school every day a child is to be away from school. Office staff will place calls daily to parents for unaccounted absences.

Unexcused Absences

Absences are unexcused when parents do not follow the procedure to excuse absences noted above, when a student is unaccounted for, or if a student does not make a reasonable effort to come to school on time. Such absences are liable to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension.

Students will not receive credit for homework and assignments that they miss during unexcused absences.

If a student has more than three (3) consecutive unexcused absences or a total of five unexcused absences in any year, the student may be classified as truant according to South Carolina statute. When the parent does not explain sufficiently the reason for unexcused absences, a parent conference will be required, and credit may be withheld. An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing reasons. Each unexcused absence will be entered on the student's record. The parents or guardians of the student receiving an unexcused absence will be notified by the school of the unexcused absence.

The school will develop an intervention plan to assist habitually truant students, with the intent to keep them in school, with the assistance of the parents, guardians, or legal custodian, as required by law.

Policy SE-2.0 Tardy/Early Release

Each tardy or early release prevents students from engaging their classes appropriately. In order to get the most from class, students must begin and end on time.

Three (3) tardies or early releases equal one absence. These may be excused, but the total number does count against the ten (10) absences a student may accrue before losing credit.

Policy SE 3.0 Releasing a Student from School

School campuses are closed during the school day to encourage conversation among our students and maintain student accountability. Students will only be released to parents or legal guardians, unless the school has received written permission to release the student to another adult. Students may not be taken from the school or playground during the school day unless parents have signed them out in the office.

In the case of divorce or separation of the parents, both parents shall have full rights until legal notification is provided to the school limiting the rights of either parent.

School-sponsored activities require a teacher or sponsor to be responsible for the students. Students may only leave the activity or event with their own parent unless prior written authorization is given to the teacher or sponsor.

Policy SE-4.0 Enrollment

Enrollment takes place without regard to race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, ancestry, disability, or need for special education services, in compliance with federal, state, and local laws.

Within the time limits and priorities described below, students shall be enrolled at Ascent Classical Academies in two rounds, the First and Second Enrollment Rounds.

First Enrollment Round (Lottery)

The First Enrollment Round will be conducted by random lottery, consistent with all applicable laws and guidance.

Lottery Overview

In the event interest in a grade exceeds its capacity, enrollment is determined by a random lottery system. All completed applications turned in by the deadline will be eligible for the lottery. All applicants are randomly selected during the lottery. Should there be more lottery applicants than available seats, students are randomly assigned waitlist numbers. Ascent Classical Academies does not carry its enrollment list over from year to year and students not selected in the lottery will be invited to reapply the following year.

Lottery Application Process

The headmaster or designee will determine, based upon the total number of students currently enrolled, how many enrollment openings are available for each grade level. Class size may be approximately 28-32 students per class with two to four classes per grade, totaling 56 to 128 students per grade. Classes may be over-enrolled by two students per class to account for natural attrition. The executive director or designee may determine final class sizes. Applications are processed online. Prospective parents without online access may come to the school to apply or use a terminal at a public library. The application will not request demographic information or if a student requires special services.

Lottery Application Criteria

Parents may submit an enrollment for their child anytime during the Enrollment period for the appropriate grade level for their child and only for the upcoming school year. Only full-time students will be accepted.

Weighted Lottery Guidelines

The content-rich curriculum, instructional style, and culture at Ascent Classical Academies contribute to creating a learning environment where children with various needs and backgrounds can thrive. To attract and serve families not otherwise served with quality education options, Ascent Classical Academies offers a weighted lottery when allow by law, where Free and/or Reduced Lunch (FRL) eligible children are given a weight of 4 within their lottery category. This is intended to increase the chances for FRL-eligible children to obtain an offer through the lottery.

Lottery Application Deadline

All applications for the lottery must be filled out completely and legibly. Applications received after the deadline indicated below will be added to the end of the waitlist in the order they are received.

Lottery Mechanics

When the number of eligible applicants exceeds the space available in a particular grade to which admission is sought, a process of random selection shall be conducted. Random selection will occur when the priority list of applicants has been exhausted. Ascent Classical Academies' lottery is conducted considering a number of different priority statuses.

Priority 1: Founder Preference

Those children whose parents/guardians were active in the planning process by serving on the founding interim governing board, an advisor to the founding interim governing board, active volunteer who completes 30 hours of service, or other criteria established by the Governing Board beneficial to the successful founding of the school, will receive priority for admission if their applications are received by the application deadline. Said families must have been designated a "founding family" by Ascent Classical Academies. Reserved Priority 1 seats will not exceed 20% of grade capacity. Priority 1 families will taper off throughout the existence of the school as their children graduate. Founding Family status will no longer be given after the opening day of the school.

Priority 2: Staff Preference

Children of staff members of Ascent Classical Academies who work 30 or more hours per week will receive priority for admission. These children will be allowed to remain in the school regardless of whether or not the parent remains employed by the school.

The total number of students enrolled under the priority Founder/Staff policy will not exceed 20% of the school's population. If there are fewer spots than the number of priority applicants, then a separate lottery is held for these applicants with priority status. Children of Founders and Staff are given priority over siblings. Any student falling under the Founder/Staff policy who is not eligible for priority due to exceeding the 20% threshold, will be designated to the next highest applicable priority level.

Priority 3: Sibling/Household Preference

It is the intent of Ascent Classical Academies to support whole families and create a cohesive and inclusive school community. Siblings of enrolled students will receive priority for admission if their applications are received by the designated deadline. Families may also apply for household priority. Household priority is given when a child, who is not a sibling, lives with a currently enrolled or admitted family. In this situation, custody papers or other legal documentation must be provided to claim priority.

Siblings of multiples, such as twins or triplets, will be grouped together within their respective priority category.

Priority 4: Ascent Classical Academies Network Preference

Ascent Classical Academies allows a preference to children who have previously attended the school or another school in the Ascent Classical Academies network. Children must have attended a complete school year at an affiliated school to be eligible for this preference.

General Lottery

Once priority seats have been filled, Ascent Classical Academies holds a general lottery as described above. The lottery will be held no later than the second Monday of February. Seats will be assigned randomly.

At the conclusion of the lottery for each grade level, applicants will be ordered on a waitlist for each grade.

Second Round Enrollment

The Second Round Enrollment period opens as soon as the First Round is closed to new applications.

Applicants applying in the Second Round will be offered open seats or placed on a wait list on a first-come, first-served basis, after the First-Round lottery is conducted and wait lists established.

Grounds for Denial of Admission

Subject to the school's responsibilities under the Exceptional Children's Educational Act and applicable federal, state, and local laws, the following will constitute grounds for denial of admission to the school:

- Failure to meet an age requirement. Kindergarten students must be 5 years old by October 1. Six- year-olds will be placed in First Grade absent extenuating circumstances. Students who qualify for Gifted and Talented may qualify for Early Access, and the school may accept these younger students in kindergarten if classes are not fully enrolled on September 1.
- Considering a student's educational record, a clear inability of an incoming 11th or 12th grade student to meet Ascent Classical Academies' graduation requirements.
- Having been expelled from any school district in the preceding twelve months.
- Having engaged in behavior in another school during the preceding twelve months that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel.
- Failure to comply with state immunization laws, including providing documentation of an exemption.

- Falsification of application or enrollment documents.

Time Frame and Public Notice

The First-Round application period will take place from October through 2:30 p.m. of the Friday of the first full school week of January. Grade-level lists will be compiled no later than the second Monday following the close of the First-Round application deadline. Once a name is drawn, the parent(s) will be notified by email and given 72 hours to accept or decline the seat. This offer is only for the grade level the parent applied to for their child. If the parents(s) cannot be contacted because they failed to make notification of changes of their email or phone number, they shall be removed from the lottery pool.

If the parent declines an opening offered to their child, that child's name is withdrawn from the application pool and the parent(s) may choose to reapply at a later date.

If a student is offered a seat into the school after August 1, the parent or guardian must respond within 48 hours or that child's name is withdrawn from the application pool. The parent or guardian may choose to reapply to be put back into the application pool.

Openings at Ascent Classical Academies will be advertised at school information meetings, on websites, public newsletters, and posted in the schools. Ascent Classical Academies does not discriminate in recruiting and will reach out broadly to the entire community, including households that do not speak English as a primary language, students with disabilities, and other underserved groups to inform of early enrollment list availability.

Enrollment Deadline

The school will only accept new students after the first semester with approval of the headmaster.

Re-Enrollment for Current Students

Families with children currently attending the school do not need to enter the lottery each year but they must do two things to secure their seat for the following year.

Each December parents or guardians of students currently enrolled in the school will receive a form asking if they are planning on returning the following year and if so, how many children they would like to enroll. This information helps determine how many seats are available for the lottery. Failure to return the forms by the deadline may result in the loss of a student's seat for the following year. This step is NOT the registration for the following school year. Additional steps must be taken to secure a seat for the following year.

All currently enrolled students must be re-registered between April 1 and June 30 for the next school year. A returning student has not secured his seat for the following year until this step is complete.

Ascent Classical Academies will notify currently enrolled families of the registration process via e-mail and in writing via the school newsletter at the end of each school year. School staff will offer several reminders via e-mail. The school is not required to make individual reminder calls.

It is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian to keep his or her e-mail and phone numbers updated as well as follow the registration process and meet the required deadlines. If a parent or guardian fails to make the deadline and fails to notify the admissions director, the seat will be offered to the next person on the waitlist. The parent or guardian may choose to have the student's name added to the bottom of the waitlist.

Complete Registration Process

After being offered a seat at the school, parents or guardians will be required to complete additional steps to complete their registration, including notifying their current school of their acceptance of a seat at the school and authorizing their child's records be transferred to the school.

This deadline will be established by the executive director or designee, and communicated to parents or guardians. If parents or guardians do not inform their previous school and authorize the release of their child's records by the deadline, they may forfeit their seat, and it will be offered to the next child on the waitlist.

Ascent Classical Academies retains ownership of its Enrollment Policy and may update it as needed, to include ensuring compliance with federal grant guidelines. The policy will include strict prohibitions on discrimination and meet all applicable laws.

Online and Part-Time Programs

Enrollment and participation in an online or part-time program of the school does not give the child a priority for the lottery of the school.

References to "parents" in this policy also apply to legal guardians.

Policy SE-5.0 Grade Level Placement of Newly Enrolled Students

The grade level placement policy is designed to promote educational excellence and fairness by placing students at the most appropriate level for instruction. Any assessments affecting placement decisions occur after a student is admitted to Ascent Classical Academies, and such decisions are independent of the admission process.

If a newly admitted student is found to be reading more than one grade level behind the existing peer group, he or she may be placed in the grade level deemed appropriate by the teacher and headmaster. If the parent, against the advice of the teacher and headmaster, chooses that the student remain in the original grade level placement, a signed document of this choice will become part of the student's permanent file.

Special education students on IEPs will be considered separately from this policy.

Policy SE-6.0 Classroom Placement

Ascent Classical Academies hires knowledgeable, professional teachers who are capable of teaching all kinds of students. While a parent is always free to discuss an issue with the headmaster or

designee such as assistant headmaster or dean, the school does not invite teacher requests from parents except from families with more than one student in the same grade for the purposes of keeping them together or separate. The administration of a school considers various factors in placing students.

Policy SE-7.0 Uniform and Standards of Appearance

Purpose

Ascent Classical Academies students will wear the school uniform. A school uniform is an important element of a successful classical school since it serves to create a school culture conducive to order, decorum, and civility. More specifically, the uniform helps accomplish several goals:

- It significantly curtails worry over ‘what will I wear today?’ that can also lead to a struggle in the home over what will (and will not) be worn.
- It significantly reduces the distraction clothing can become to the disadvantage of learning.
- It provides for a more elevated learning environment and school culture.
- Far from repressing a student’s individuality, it helps channel a child’s own character and thought in the direction of learning, making a person’s identity reflected more in what he or she says than in what he or she wears.
- It fosters a healthy sense of school identity and pride.

Care for the uniform, set at a higher standard than common school clothing, teaches students how to dress and conduct themselves professionally. The students at a school with a uniform, in fact, appear much more mature than students found on the vast majority of college campuses. This is a “soft skill” that will help them later in life but also give them a distinct *esprit de corps* while in school.

Questions arising over particular aspects of the uniform should be decided according to this overarching intent. The most up-to-date uniform policy will be posted on the school’s website. Temporary exceptions to the clothing requirements of this policy may be granted by the headmaster. Upon request, reasonable adjustments in the uniform policy may be made by the headmaster for students with disabilities, religious convictions which conflict with the code, or other unique reasons. In addition to the uniform, students must adhere to the following standards of appearance.

Standards of Appearance

All Students

- Students should be neat and tidy in appearance;
- No logos, prints, or words other than the official ACA logo are allowed;
- No cargo pants are allowed;
- Shirts should be tucked in;
- Belts should be worn with all pants and shorts in third grade and up. Belts should be solid black, brown, tan or navy;
- Socks should be white, black, gray, or navy in solid colors (no prints or patterns);

- Shoes must be closed-toe, closed-heel, rubber sole, and no heels above 1-inch. Shoes should not be brightly colored, and must be in navy, white, gray, brown, tan, or black;
- No hats are allowed inside the school (only winter hats for outdoors);
- Jackets/fleece/hoodies/sweatshirts other than those with the official ACA logo may be worn to school, but must be removed and hung prior to entering the classrooms;
- No visible tattoos or other body art or piercings, other than earrings for girls, are permitted.

Men

- Shorts must be no higher than 2" above the knee, and not fall below the knee;
- Hair should be neatly styled; hair color should be natural and not distracting. Hair length must be above the top of the collar. Older boys must shave when the time comes.

Ladies

- Shorts, skirts, skorts, dresses, and jumpers must be no higher than 2" above the knee;
- Tights, leggings, or shorts in solid white, tan, or navy may be worn under all skirts/dresses; Navy or black bike shorts are required under all skirts and skorts.
- Girls in grades K-6 may not wear make-up. Make-up, when used, should be natural-looking;
- Hair should be neatly styled. Hair color should be natural and not distracting;
- Girls may wear single earrings in their ear lobes. No gauge earrings or dangling earrings are allowed, and all other visible piercings must be removed during school.
- Nails should be natural-looking and not distracting.

Spirit Wear

Spirit wear is not part of the school uniform but can be worn outside of school or on other appropriate occasions as determined by each campus to show support for the school.

Backpacks, Book Bags, and Totes

Backpacks, book bags, and totes are expected to be clean, in good condition, and appropriate for the school culture. Backpacks and bags shall not include any items which detract from the school's orderly and disciplined environment.

Volunteers and Visitors

Volunteers and visitors should abide by the spirit of the student uniform policy and if possible, be consistent with faculty standards of appearance. Attire is expected to be neat, modest, and not distracting. Athletic or sleepwear, flip flops, or revealing clothing is not permitted. Guidelines for students' garment lengths are to be observed.

The school shall enforce and interpret the uniform code within the spirit of this policy.

Changes to this policy will be approved by the executive director.

Policy SE-8.0 Student Leadership

Any student leader must demonstrate high moral character and be in good academic standing.

Policy SE-9.0 Personal Hygiene

All Ascent Classical Academies students should be independent in toileting. When the occasional “accident” occurs, the school will contact the parent who holds the primary responsibility to assist the child and to provide clean clothing. If necessary, staff will ensure a child does not remain in soiled clothing. If repeated “accidents” occur, a meeting with the parents, headmaster or his designee, and the clinic aide will be held to evaluate the situation and assess the extent to which the student may develop independent habits.

Exceptions and reasonable accommodations may be made to the extent required by applicable law.

Policy SE-10.0 Discipline

The main purpose of all discipline is to foster a child’s desire to be morally and intellectually virtuous. Where that desire does not exist, self-discipline will not arise, and a child will falter when laws and rules are silent.

The secondary purpose is to foster an orderly and disciplined environment in which all students can learn and present their ideas in a prudent way.

Any departure from proper decorum is liable to disciplinary action. While any discipline policy must be consistently applied to all students, because not all students respond to the same arguments, incentives, or punishments, consequences must be fitted to both the nature of each individual student and the circumstances in which any misbehavior occurs.

Each Ascent Classical Academies will develop suitable procedures consistent with the spirit and purposes of this policy to ensure discipline is conducted fairly across the campus

Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action ranges from classroom verbal warnings to discipline referrals to administration, including suspension or expulsion. These will be used to promote both a student’s self-discipline and an orderly environment for all. Even when more serious discipline like a suspension is necessary, the purpose is not to punish but to educate.

Students may receive detention before or after school, during lunch, or on the weekend. Weekend detentions require students to be dressed in their uniform. Detention takes precedence over any extracurricular activity. Students who miss detention will need to make it up and serve another detention. Repeatedly missing detention may result in suspension.

Teachers have the authority to remove disruptive students from the classroom. Upon repeated removals, the teacher may remove the disruptive student from that class for the remainder of the term of the class, after development of a behavior plan for the student in cooperation with the headmaster or designee.

Discipline for students with disabilities shall be in accordance with the student’s individualized education plan (IEP), any behavior intervention plan, 504 plan, and applicable laws affording procedural safeguards to students with disabilities.

Parental Notification and Material Disruptions

In general, the school strives to notify parents of discipline problems before they escalate beyond a manageable level. Particularly when a student is removed from the class for being disruptive, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be contacted, and a conference, which may include the student, may be requested.

Pursuant to South Carolina law, a student may be declared “habitually disruptive” for causing a material and substantial disruption in the class, on school grounds, on school vehicles, or at school activities or events three or more times during the course of the school year because of behavior that was initiated, willful and overt on the part of the student.

For any disciplinary referral rising to the level of disruption that the school will count toward the determination of whether the student is “habitually disruptive,” the school will provide written notice of same to the student and parent or guardian. The student and parent or guardian shall also be notified in writing and by telephone or other means at the home or place of employment of the parent or legal guardian of the definition of “habitually disruptive.” A student declared “habitually disruptive” may be subject to the Suspension and Expulsion Policy.

Ascent Classical Academies have adopted procedures to develop a behavior plan that meet the requirements of state law and regulations. These procedures shall be available to parents upon request.

Restraint

If a student poses imminent danger to themselves or others, and other less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in mitigating the threat, then trained and authorized school personnel may use restraint or seclusion only for as long as necessary to mitigate the risk of harm. **Restraint** refers to the physical restriction of a student's movement for their own safety or the safety of others. It does not include incidental or minor physical contact.

Any use of restraint must be thoroughly documented, including the reason for restraint, the duration, and the method used. The school shall contact the parent(s) as soon as possible after physical restraint or seclusion is used and no later than the end of the school day.

Complaints regarding the use of restraint or seclusion should follow the grievance process.

Policy SE-11.0 Suspension and Expulsion

A headmaster or designee has the authority to suspend students as appropriate. For students in third grade and above, suspensions last from 1 to 5 days depending on the severity of the infraction. All suspensions will require a parent meeting at which a remedial student discipline plan will be created. The school may request the parent attend (as a volunteer) a full day of class with the student upon return. The school may also require a risk assessment if the reasons for suspension merit it.

The following are grounds for suspension or expulsion of a student during the school year, whether committed on school grounds, in school vehicles, or at school-sanctioned events:

- Continual, willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority;

- Willful destruction or defacing of school property;
- Behavior on or off school property, which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel;
- Carrying, using, actively displaying, or threatening with a firearm facsimile that could reasonably be mistaken for an actual firearm;
- Intentionally making a false accusation of criminal activity against a school employee to law enforcement authorities, school authorizer officials or personnel, or both;
- Use or possession of a drug or controlled substance without medical authorization; and
- Repeated interference with a school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.

Ascent Classical Academies shall refer a student to the governing board for expulsion for the following violations:

- Carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon, as determined by the school;
- Sale or distribution of a drug or controlled substance;
- The commission of an act which, if committed by an adult, would be robbery or assault; or
- Declaration of a student as "habitually disruptive."

Students in grades kindergarten through second may only be suspended up to three (3) days and for specific reasons cited in statute.

Policy SE-11.1 Expulsion Procedure

A student must not be expelled or denied admission unless the school considers whether alternative remedies are appropriate and whether excluding the student from school is necessary to preserve the learning environment.

The executive director may request expulsion to the Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina governing board. Parents may elect to dispute a recommendation for expulsion to the governing board in writing within three (3) days of the executive director's request. Upon such election, the matter will be referred to a Disciplinary Officer (DO). This designee will be responsible for conducting a prompt hearing affording the student "due process," and producing a written report summarizing the evidence and containing the DO's decision to uphold or overrule the recommendation of expulsion.

The DO's decision may be appealed to the Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina governing board by the executive director or by the parent(s) of the student. A person wishing to appeal a decision must provide written notice to the other party and the board chair within ten (10) business days of receipt of the decision. This may be done using the normal grievance process, through the grievance form on the school's website.

Upon receipt of notice, the governing board will promptly schedule a special meeting, unless the matter can be timely considered in a regular meeting. The DO's written decision will be provided to the board at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting. Consideration of the appeal shall be in executive session. The executive director or designee and the parents shall each be allowed to

present fifteen (15) minutes of argument concerning why the DO's decision should be approved or disapproved. New evidence will not be received on an appeal. The decision of the board shall be by vote to uphold or overturn the DO's decision, taken in public session, and without use of the student's or parents' names. The decision of the board is final.

A student's out-of-school suspension may be extended by the headmaster to accommodate the time needed to conduct and conclude a "due process" hearing held by the governing board. The school must schedule such a hearing so as to permit a final decision within no more than (25) school days of the initial out-of-school suspension. Expulsion may not extend past one full calendar year. The school will provide the parents of an expelled student with notice of their obligations and rights to education during the period of expulsion. The school will provide services required under an IEP to an expelled student.

Policy SE-12.0 Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. Students progress academically only by receiving comments and corrections on work they turn in and by taking these comments and corrections to heart in order to improve their performance. The entire system of assessment rests on the assumption that the work a student turns in is his own. Plagiarism compromises this system, is unfair to other students in the class who do their own work, and constitutes a form of theft of others' ideas and labor. Plagiarism is defined as the appropriation of another's ideas or words in order to present them as one's own. An instance of plagiarism can be as long as a term paper or as short as a sentence. Simply rephrasing an author's words can also constitute plagiarism. The words of authors can only be used when properly quoted and cited. Teachers will provide the guidelines of acceptable citation. When in doubt, the student has the responsibility to ask how an author should be used in an assignment.

Whenever a student has been caught plagiarizing, the following process will be followed:

1. The teacher will keep a copy of the student's assignment and, whenever possible, a copy of the plagiarized work. The teacher will also write a brief description of the instance of the plagiarism. These materials will be placed in the student's permanent record.
2. The teacher will inform the headmaster of the plagiarism.
3. Either the teacher or the headmaster will inform the student's parents of the plagiarism.
4. The student will receive an F on the assignment if it is the first offense.
5. For a second offense, the student will fail the entire course, and further disciplinary action, to include suspension or expulsion, may be instituted.

A disciplinary referral slip will be issued if plagiarism has occurred.

High School students found guilty of academic dishonesty or similar serious offenses will not be ranked, and therefore cannot be salutatorian or valedictorian.

Policy SE-13.0 Cheating

Like plagiarism, cheating will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. Cheating occurs when a student uses someone else's work or a prohibited source of information in order to gain an unfair

advantage on a test or an assignment and to avoid doing his own work. Cheating comes in many forms. One student copying off another, a student using a “cheat sheet” to answer questions on a test, and a student trying to pass off another student’s work as his own are examples of cheating. Whenever a teacher suspects two students of cheating, he should confront the students individually before speaking to them together. Otherwise, the same process outlined for plagiarism should be followed for instances of cheating. A student who allows others to copy his work will also be held accountable in the same fashion.

A disciplinary referral will be issued if cheating has occurred. High school students found guilty of academic dishonesty or similar serious offenses will not be ranked, and therefore cannot be salutatorian or valedictorian.

Policy SE-14.0 Behavioral Standards

Students are expected to be polite and attentive at all times. Any other behavior is disruptive and will be cause for disciplinary action.

Classroom

Teachers have the authority to set their specific classroom rules and procedures within the parameters of the Ascent Classical Academies’ handbook.

Students should listen when others are talking and not interrupt, speak courteously and respectfully, follow directions, keep one’s body and objects to oneself, and not disturb others.

Campus

Behavioral expectations apply whenever the student is on our campus, including before school, during recess, and after school. Beyond that line, students may be disciplined if their behavior causes or may be reasonably be believed to cause a substantive disruption to campus activities, or is in any way related to Ascent Classical Academies.

In the hallways, students are expected to walk quietly and orderly. During lunchtime students are expected to act calmly and quietly while they enjoy their meals and relax. All students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves.

Policy SE-15.0 Student Network Use

Students shall not have access to the internet without staff supervision, or access to network or wireless passwords.

Recognizing the need of supervision to protect students, the school shall provide these services in as safe an environment as possible. Network access is a privilege, and all students are expected to practice proper and ethical use of these systems.

The use of these systems is monitored, without an expectation of privacy, and subject to administrative review at any time. It is intended that these resources will be used to pursue intellectual activities in support of research and education.

Ascent Classical Academies does not assume responsibility for system failures that could result in the loss of data.

It is the policy of Ascent Classical Academies to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical, technology protection measures such as Internet filters, shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Ascent Classical Academies online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Education, Supervision and Monitoring

Ascent Classical Academies' staff and teachers who supervise internet use shall be responsible to educate and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the executive director or designated representatives.

Electronic Mail and Social Media

Students are not allowed unsupervised access to or use of personal electronic mail or social media accounts from school networks.

Etiquette and Personal Security

During supervised classroom activities on the network, students are expected to observe the same standards of behavior as they do in the classroom.

- Be polite and courteous.

- Never reveal any personal information. This includes addresses, phone numbers, and credit card numbers.
- Do not reveal addresses or phone numbers of any other student or member of the staff.

Policy SE-16.0 Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices must be powered off and may not be used during the academic school day, including drop-off and pick-up, without express staff permission. Students may not keep electronic devices on their person during the academic school day. Such devices include but are not limited to laptops, portable audio devices, head/earphones, hand-held video games, cell phones, and any other device or accessory with wireless or cellular capabilities, including but not limited to watches and eyewear. Exceptions will be made for necessary medical devices at the headmaster's discretion.

Any student who is using a phone or other electronic device during the day will have that device confiscated until the end of the day. If there is reason to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation, the device may be powered on and searched.

Students who break this rule will be subject to fines and other disciplinary action. Once a device has been taken up, the following procedure will be used to return the device:

1st Confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up by the student or parent when school is dismissed.

2nd Confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up by the parent when school is dismissed. An administrative fee of \$5 will be charged before the device can be returned.

3rd Confiscation: The device can be picked up by the parent no earlier than the following Monday. An administrative fee of \$15 will be charged before the device can be returned.

4th Confiscation: The device can be picked up by the parent no earlier than the following Monday. An administrative fee of \$50 will be charged before the device can be returned.

Confiscations beyond four will result in additional disciplinary action and, if necessary, suspension from school. Ascent Classical Academies is not responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of these items.

Policy SE-17.0 Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular Activities

Ascent Classical Academies encourages students to participate in as many extra-curricular activities as they can reasonably manage, knowing that academics come first. Every member of a club or team has a responsibility to his or her teammates to show up on time ready to participate, to remain in good academic standing, and to display Ascent Classical Academies's core virtues as ambassadors for the school. Extracurricular activities will support the spirit of the Mission and Vision of the school.

Extracurricular activities may charge a participation fee and athletic events may charge a gate fee for matches. These funds will be used to pay for uniforms, equipment, instruments, fees for invitationals, and other miscellaneous items.

Each coach or club leader will set rules by which each student must abide in order to participate.

Attendance Required for Extracurricular Participation

Students participating in any school-sponsored event must have been in attendance at school the day of the event, otherwise they will be disallowed from participating in the event. Additionally, students who are considered truant based on this policy manual may be disallowed from participating in any extracurricular activities sponsored by the school.

Eligibility

Extracurriculars enrich a student's life at the school. Ascent Classical Academies' goal is to encourage students to prioritize academics, but also to provide meaningful opportunities to compete and flourish as young men and women. Participation in extracurricular activities, however, is a privilege that is contingent on academic performance and good behavior.

High School

Students with either two Ds or one F are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities. Grades are checked on the Ides.

Middle School (6th-8th Grades)

Students with either three Ds or two Fs as course grades are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities. Grades are checked on the Ides. Because the adjustment to Ascent Classical Academies can be difficult, new students are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the first semester regardless of grades.

Students may still practice at the discretion of the coach or club leader if they are ineligible to compete. Any student who receives a pink slip will be ineligible to participate in competitions the following month. This will roll-over into the next sport if the pink slip is received in the last week of a season. New 7th and 8th grade students who receive a pink slip will be ineligible to play at the coach's and the athletic director's joint discretion.

Students who receive 3 pink slips will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the rest of the year.

Ultimate discretion on eligibility is the responsibility of the headmaster or designee.

Policy SE-18.0 Student Clubs and Groups

Consistent with its mission and vision to provide a classical, liberal arts education, Ascent Classical Academies seek to assist students in cultivating the moral and intellectual virtues and developing their characters in such a way that they regard themselves and others within the context of their shared humanity. Ascent Classical Academies thus welcome respectful discussions, disagreement and debate among students and staff, where students may cultivate the virtues of courage,

moderation, and justice by treating all with respect, listening attentively, and disagreeing with civility.

To develop students to be productive members of civil society, and to avoid divisions within the student body, Ascent Classical Academies do not partner with or permit student-facing groups or clubs that are non-curricular, regardless of whether the group or club is offered by an outside third party or is student- or faculty-led.

Policy SE-19.0 Off-Site Extra-Curricular Activities

Any Ascent Classical Academies off-site extra-curricular activities must be approved by the headmaster. All adults present at these activities must be registered Ascent Classical Academies volunteers.

A list of all approved Ascent Classical Academies off-site extra-curricular activities will be maintained and updated by the headmaster or designee, and copies will be made available to parents.

Policy SE-20.0 Student Social Activities

All official Ascent Classical Academies social functions will have at least one faculty or staff sponsor and additional adult chaperones as needed.

Policy SE-21.0 Dances

Ascent Classical Academies may host upper school dances for students. Attendance is limited to students who are enrolled at Ascent Classical, in good academic standing (as determined by the headmaster) and following the rules of conduct set forth by the school. Dances may be held separately for different age levels. Students are required to follow the rules and regulations of Ascent Classical Academies while attending any dance. The uniform policy intent for modest and acceptable fashion wear will apply. Parents are encouraged to attend as chaperones.

Policy SE-22.0 Student Publications

Student publications must uphold Ascent Classical Academies' mission, philosophy, Core Virtues, and board policies. The purpose of such publications is to inform the school community of school-related events, achievements, and businesses. In addition, student publications are a way for students to learn and to practice responsible writing and journalism. Student editorials are permitted in the student newspaper subject to prior review of the headmaster. Employees of the school or parents may not use student media to proselytize their own views on controversial issues. The headmaster acts as the final editor in all cases.

Policy SE-23.0 Supervision of Students

Students are to be supervised at all times while in the care of Ascent Classical Academies. This includes the time students are attending school, while away from the school on school-sponsored events, or while participating in extracurricular activities after school. Supervision for all students will be provided for 30 minutes prior to the start and 20 minutes after the end of the school day. Parents will be notified of supervision times at least twice per year in writing through the school's newsletter. Students may not be left alone without supervision.

Policy SE-24.0 Photographs of Students

Portraits

Ascent Classical Academies will sponsor one or two formal portrait days for students. A company which best meets the needs of the families for a reasonable cost will be selected by school staff. These photos will be utilized for the creation of the yearbook in addition to being available for sale to families.

Snapshots

Frequently throughout the school year school staff may take pictures of events that happen during the school day. Should parents not want their child photographed in such a way, they must submit written notification of their request to the headmaster. This request will then be passed along to school staff. Snapshots may periodically be used for promotional materials for the school. Every attempt will be made to receive parental permission prior to the publishing of promotional materials which include the photograph of students. Additionally, the school reserves the right to utilize such snapshots through electronic media which do not individually identify any specific student. If a parent or guardian requests the removal of such a photograph, the school staff will comply with the request within 72 hours.

Policy SE-25.0 Philosophy of Sports

Ascent Classical Academies encourages participation in athletics, and therefore requires physical education courses throughout a student's education. Physical education courses require the same degree of commitment and engagement as other courses in a student's daily schedule. Students who struggle with athletics are still required to participate to the extent of their abilities, just as they would in any other class.

Ascent Classical Academies encourages students to participate in sports outside of the school day, whether at Ascent Classical or at another school if we do not offer the sport in question. In all cases, a student's academic needs and performance are the foremost priority and take precedence over athletics. Similarly, disciplinary consequences will take precedence over athletics.

Ascent Classical Academies will make every effort to develop a modest athletics program that focuses on sportsmanship and the school's core virtues. The school will consider adding new sports by weighing student interest, the number of potential participants, the school's general capacity to support new sports and teams, and the likelihood of a sport's longevity in the culture of the school.

Policy SE-26.0 Medical Policies

Immunizations of Students

All Ascent Classical Academies students are required to be in compliance with state law governing immunization against specific diseases, which law includes potential exemptions that are documented by (1) a certificate of medical exemption; or (2) a certificate of non-medical exemption due to a religious or personal belief that is opposed to immunizations, certified by a health care professional. Failure to comply with the state requirements will result in a student being unable to attend classes, and receiving unexcused absences, until proof of compliance is provided.

Schools will provide state-required immunization information to parents and guardians annually by providing a hardcopy document to students or providing the information or a web link in the school newsletter or Family Handbook.

Administering Medications

For those students who require medications, the parents must complete a medication form. All medication must be administered according to school procedures.

Illness and Communicable Diseases

Students with contagious illnesses or communicable diseases shall not attend school. At the discretion of the headmaster, a physician's note may be required for a student to return to class.

Policy SE-27.0 Interviews, Interrogations and Searches

Interviews and Interrogations

School administration will make every reasonable attempt to notify parents prior to permitting any person from outside the school, including law enforcement officials, to question or detain a student. In no circumstance will a student be questioned or detained without the presence of either a parent or school official; the school having legal custody of the student during the school day and during approved extra-curricular activities must ensure that each student's rights are protected.

Searches

All school property is under the control of the board and its officials. A search of school property (including, but not limited to lockers,) may be made at the discretion of school administration if a reasonable suspicion arises that items considered illegal, disruptive, or a general nuisance to the educational process are being kept at the school.

Detaining Students

School officials will detain a student if there is a reasonable suspicion that a student has drugs, narcotics, weapons, explosives, or other dangerous contraband in his possession, and if such possession constitutes a clear and imminent danger to the safety and welfare of the student, other

persons, or school property. Further, school officials will notify parents and the appropriate law enforcement agency of illegal possession of such materials.

Policy SE-28.0 Bullying and Harassment

All students are encouraged to think of their own behavior in terms of the habits of thought and action that lead to happy, responsible, independent, and productive lives. Ascent Classical Academies promotes this positive view of shaping minds and improving hearts more than the negative view implied in anti-bullying campaigns and the like. School culture marks the tone and tenor of conversations throughout the community and is based foremost in what virtues to emulate more than the vices to avoid.

The school recognizes that there is a range of behaviors that begins with the mean and nasty and extends all the way to felonious. Bullying is a term that can be overused and misapplied to include behavior that is less serious, spontaneous, or otherwise unsystematic, and underapplied when behavior is more serious. Ascent Classical Academies faculty and staff will take this into account when determining the character of any pattern or incident of bullying.

In the case of the modern phenomenon of “cyber-bullying” or online harassment, the school will address it if there are repercussions or manifestations at school, which there likely will be. If one or several students do become abusive in their usage of social media—to the emotional detriment of other students—then the school will be required to discuss the matter with both parents and students. At the same time, those who may be the subject of negative social media must learn not to invest their entire emotional well-being in what is or is not said about them online, and we look to work with parents to teach students to think less of social media than students sometimes do.

Bullying, traditionally defined as a larger or stronger person picking on or intimidating a smaller or weaker one, will not be tolerated. That said, parents and teachers must also realize that children can easily get into a scrape over a sports contest or a snowball thrown in jest or other such commonplace occurrences. Therefore, any consequences or punishments for such altercations, if one student is clearly the instigator, will consider whether the episode was a spontaneous tussle or part of a sustained pattern of aggression.

Bullying includes any pattern of written or verbal expression, physical or electronic act, or gesture, that is intended to coerce, intimidate, or cause any physical, mental, or emotional harm. Bullying is prohibited on school property, at school-sanctioned events, when students are being transported to or from school or a school-sanctioned event, and off-campus when it is reasonably foreseeable that the bullying conduct may cause a substantial disruption in the educational mission of the school or interfere with the ability of other school students to learn or be secure.

Policy SE-29.0 Prohibition Against Firearms and Weapons

In matters related to the possession of firearms or weapons, students must abide by South Carolina law. If students are found to be in violation of the law, law enforcement will be notified, and a lockdown may be initiated.

Student participation in school-sanctioned gun safety courses, student military or ROTC courses, or other school-sponsored firearm related events does not constitute a violation of this policy,

provided the student does not carry a firearm or other weapon into any school, school bus, or onto the premises of any other activity sponsored or sanctioned by school officials.

Policy SE-30.0 Student Fees and Textbooks

Ascent Classical Academies will publish the mandatory student fee schedule detailing a complete list of the student fees, the purpose of each fee, whether the fee is voluntary or mandatory, any activities from which the student will be excluded if the fee is not paid or waived, and whether they may be waived upon demonstration of indigent status. The fees charged shall relate directly to the actual cost of providing expendable supplies and materials to students, and all student fees shall be used solely for the purposes set forth in the fee schedule. The school will communicate the current fee schedule via parent newsletters and via a link on its website including how to apply for a waiver.

Field trips and other extracurricular activities such as athletics, clubs, or house activities will incur additional fees. Students will not be allowed to participate in such activities if mandatory student fees are not paid or waived. The school will endeavor to ensure all students may participate in such enrichment activities regardless of economic status by implementing a sliding scale for indigent students.

Ascent Classical Academies desires to provide the best in learning materials for its students. Ascent Classical Academies does not charge loss or damage deposits for non-expendable supplies and materials. Still, students are responsible for these materials and they are to be treated appropriately. When such materials are lost or damaged by a student, the school may require repair or reimbursement to the school if permitted by law and its authorizer's policies, after considering all mitigating and extenuating circumstances including the cost of the item, extent of the damage, age of the student, and any repeated instances of loss or damage by the student.

Ascent Classical Academies will not withhold records required for enrollment in another school or institution of higher education, the diploma, transcript, or grades of any student for failure to pay a fee or to return or replace school property.

Policy SE-31.0 Student Driving

Being able to bring a vehicle on campus is a privilege. The school is not responsible for damage to a vehicle that occurs while it is on campus. A student has full responsibility for the security of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. Permission is required for any student who finds it necessary to go to his or her vehicle during the school day.

Vehicles parked on campus are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the presence of the student. A copy of a student's driver's license and insurance must be on file in the school office.

Students who have received a driver's license and are in good standing may drive to school and park in designated parking spaces. Students must maintain a 1.7 GPA in order to drive to or from school. The school will check a student driver's GPA at semester and falling below the 1.7 threshold will revoke driving privileges for the following semester.

Students must receive a parking pass in order to park on campus. Due to limited space on campus, passes will be distributed first to seniors, then to juniors, then to sophomores, through a lottery process as established by the school administration. Students who receive their driver's license during the course of the school year may apply for a parking permit if spaces are available.

The school shall not issue more than one parking pass per family.

The school will set the fee for a parking pass each year before the start of school.

Student passengers must have parent permission to be in other students' vehicles, other than siblings.

The headmaster reserves the right to not allow a student to park on campus.

Policy SE-32.0 Parent Communications to Administration, Faculty, and Staff

In order to direct their children's education, parents must have accurate and timely communication from teachers regarding academic performance and behavior. At the same time, in order for teachers to do their job responsibly and well, they cannot be in constant and immediate contact with parents.

Highly effective communication requires prudence, responsibility, and justice – as well as moderation and friendship. The school seeks to develop and extend these virtues in daily communications.

Prudence involves taking the time to allow measured, thoughtful deliberation in our communications with others. At Ascent Classical Academies, we strive for thoughtful, thorough communication that avoids the immediate back-and-forth that so often characterizes lengthy email strings and text messages. Good communication proceeds at a generally slower and more deliberate pace than what we have become accustomed to in our electronic age of instant messaging. Extra time allows us to pause and reflect, and to think through alternatives.

The primary responsibility for communication rests in the students, as this responsibility enables them to assume full ownership of their work and effort. The road to good grades is paved with good organization, open communication between student and teacher, and a clear sense of responsibility on the part of students to own their assigned work. This should start in the early grades. If a student comes home from school with an incomplete spelling list, for example, it is good – indeed, it is preferable – that the natural consequence occur early on so that the student can learn from it. In some cases, a teacher will have forgotten to articulate something clearly enough, and when that happens it is natural and expected that the teacher acknowledge and correct the mistake. In this case, students are advised to bring their questions to class, and teachers are expected to treat these questions with respect.

Justice, in turn, is rooted in the recognition of the authority of the teacher who has the student's best interest at heart. As a school, we recognize that if a parent's and a student's story differ, it is natural and fitting that the presumption be on the side of the parent. Similarly, it is natural and fitting that the presumption be on the side of a teacher when assignments are missing, homework is late, or other circumstances arise over the course of a school year.

Useful Guidelines

- Headmasters and Student Services Coordinator: Due to the amount of day-to-day responsibilities, will respond in no more than three (3) school days.
- Administrative Staff: Will make every effort to respond within one (1) school day, and no more than two (2) school days.
- Faculty: Will make every effort to respond within one (1) school day, and no more than two (2) school days.

Policy SE-33.0 Grievance Process

The school firmly believes that adults must be models of good character even when there are disagreements or misunderstandings. Should a parent or member of the community have a grievance concerning a particular class or the administration of the school, that grievance should be resolved using the following chain of command. Issues that arise in a particular classroom should always be addressed to the teacher first since the teacher is most likely to have the most direct knowledge of the student and the situation.

1. The teacher. Parents should schedule a meeting with the teacher through the office. Under no circumstance is it ever acceptable for a parent to confront a teacher about an issue with students present, including the parent's children.

2a. The assistant headmaster or dean. If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, and the matter regards discipline, the parent should schedule a meeting with the assistant headmaster or dean, who will respond to a grievance within three (3) days.

2b. The headmaster. If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher and the matter regards academics or teaching, the grievant should schedule a meeting with the headmaster. The headmaster will respond to a grievance within three (3) days.

Appeals to Ascent Classical Academies

Appeals of a school-level decision may be made to the Ascent Classical Academies home office staff. The grievance must be submitted in writing using the "File a Grievance" form on the school's website. ACA leadership will review the grievance within five (5) business days of receipt and may contact the grievant to request any missing pertinent information. No later than ten (10) business days after ACA has the information required and/or requested, ACA will provide a decision in writing to the grievant.

Appeals to the Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina Governing Board

If resolution is not achieved by the foregoing process two other options are available:

The grievance can be submitted to the Ascent Classical Academies South Carolina governing board, through the Grievance form on the school's website.

The governing board or board chair may appoint members, to not comprise a quorum, to review the grievance and/or may review and make one of the following determinations:

1. support the previous decision;

2. appoint up to two board members to address the issue that may take up to 15 business days;
3. address the issue in an open regularly scheduled board session, which may take up to 30 business days during a scheduled board meeting; or
4. address the issue in an executive session, in accordance with the South Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Public Comment

Concerns may also be raised during the public comment portion of a meeting of the governing board. The comment may be submitted in writing to GoverningBoard@ascentclassical.org or presented verbally during the meeting. No more than three (3) minutes will be granted for each comment. Grievances or discussions involving specific personnel will not be entertained. It is recommended that the concern or grievance be addressed in one of the aforementioned steps before using this option.

Grievances regarding policy should be directed to the headmaster first. Grievances regarding an administrator should be directed to the individual first, then in writing according to this policy.

General Concerns/Questions/Suggestions

In the unfortunate event that resolution is not achieved through the process outlined above, it is unlikely that Ascent Classical Academies is the best educational option for your family. The governing board must at all times hold what is in the best interest of the school and will not entertain anonymous complaints, nor can they hold information in confidence, unless required to do so by state or federal law.

Policy SE-34.0 Parental Involvement and Volunteering Policy

Ascent Classical Academies rests on a partnership between the school and families who choose to enroll their students. Volunteering is a crucial element in that partnership. Ascent Classical Academies rely on volunteers during carline, at lunch and recess, in the classroom, and in other events sponsored by the school. Parents are encouraged but not required to volunteer.

The classical model of education prioritizes the role of the teacher in the classroom, direct instruction, and Socratic conversation. For these reasons, the school's volunteering needs are primarily in assisting teachers in their administrative and supervisory tasks.

The school seeks qualified and interested parents to help sponsor clubs, chaperone activities, and assist the school in developing a culture of respect and responsibility.

The school will post the most current volunteer handbook online and will have copies available in the front office. All volunteers must read, agree to, and sign the volunteer handbook before volunteering at the school.

Policy SE-35.0 Volunteer and Visitors Background Checks

All visitors and volunteers must enter through the main office. Should they wish to go beyond the main office, a background check will be conducted, and a badge will be issued, identifying the

visitor properly checked in through the office. It is the responsibility of all staff and faculty members to help police the halls to ensure that all visitors have properly checked into the office. Any individual who does not have an appropriate name badge must be walked back to the office to ensure that person is signed in properly.

Student Supervision Background Checks

If an adult plans to volunteer with students (such as coaching, field trip chaperones, student tutoring, etc.) the individual must complete a volunteer registration form. If the adult will be responsible for student supervision (such as running an after-school club), the parent must go through an additional background check, the cost of which the parent is responsible for paying. The school conducts the complete background check to ensure the individual is clear of anything in his or her past which would prevent them from working with children.

Policy SE-36.0 Volunteer Confidentiality Policy

Volunteers often inadvertently have access to sensitive information. Any information about students, grades, faculty, etc. is to remain confidential. Volunteers may observe situations of a sensitive nature. These are also to remain confidential.

If a volunteer has a concern involving something that is witnessed, observed, or overheard it may only be discussed with the faculty member, headmaster, or executive director. If a volunteer disregards this policy, the privilege of volunteering may be revoked.

Policy SE-37.0 Chaperone Policy

The number of chaperones for an event will be established prior to the occurrence of the event. This number will be strictly adhered to.

No siblings or individuals other than assigned chaperones may attend the event. Fees for the event must also be paid by the chaperone and are due at the same time as the student's fee for the event. If fees are not submitted by the date due another chaperone will be chosen to fill the vacancy.

Chaperones must attend to assigned duties and must model the Ascent Classical Academies' virtues.

Violators of this policy will not be allowed to chaperone any future events. Chaperones are also bound to the Volunteer Confidentiality Policy.

Policy SE-38.0 Financial Assistance

Ascent Classical Academies seeks to provide a classical education to any student who is willing to put in the great effort needed to succeed, and is therefore committed to providing financial assistance for families in need, including waiver of student fees and assistance to defray the costs of the school uniform and lunches.

Nothing in this policy precludes schools from providing additional assistance exceeding the above rubric. Further, schools will make support for school families in need of financial assistance a top priority in fundraising efforts.

Policy SE-39.0 Dissemination of Information

Any person responsible for coordinating any special classroom event must give appropriate information to the front office.

Policy SE-40.0 Mass Communication Policy

The executive director, headmaster, or designee must approve all letters and bulletins, including e-mail (excluding class newsletters of teachers) from teachers, parents, or other interested parties that will be disseminated to the school community at large. Each communication must be submitted to the office in an electronic format, print-ready, three (3) days prior to the date it needs to be communicated.

Policy SE-41.0 Up-To-Date Records

It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to keep the school office informed in writing and up to date regarding any changes of names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc. so that important student information may be received from or provided to the parent/legal guardian in a timely manner for the benefit and well-being of the student.

Policy SE-42.0 Drop-off and Pick-up

The school will make every reasonable effort to ensure the safety of students and efficient movement during drop-off and pick-up.

Students who self-release without a parent to pick them up will be released after the peak traffic of carline has settled, to ensure their safety.

Policy SE-43.0 Public Displays of Affection

Public displays of affection are not allowed on campus or during school-related activities and are liable to disciplinary consequences.

Policy SE-45.0 South Carolina South Carolina Freedom of Information Act

Overview

Ascent Classical Academies is committed to transparency and open government. As outlined in the following policy, Ascent complies with South Carolina's Freedom of Information Act, Ascent applies this policy in a uniform and reliable manner to ensure it satisfies both the letter and spirit of the Freedom of Information Act. This policy is not intended to be duplicative of the Freedom of Information Act or to supersede state law. It applies solely to records requests where Ascent Classical has custody and control of the public records in question.

Freedom of Information Act Records Request

All records requests made of Ascent Classical must be submitted online or by mail and shall be provided to the school's Record Custodian. Records requests must cite the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act or the federal Freedom of Information Act..

For the fastest and best response, requestors should avoid vaguely worded inquiries. Each request must be as specific, clear, and narrow as possible. Requests should include:

- Subject matter, in the most descriptive terms possible;
- Date range for search;
- Types of documents to be searched (emails, written documents, reports, etc.);
- Names of persons who you believe created the records, are in possession of the records, are the subject of the records, or transmitted the records;
- Other information that will help the school provide the correct records; and
- Contact information of the requester.

A statement explaining the requester's reason for making the request is helpful for the school to fulfill the request, but not required.

If a request fails to meet these guidelines, the school may be unable to fulfill the request. If more information is needed to process the request, the school will make reasonable efforts to contact the requester at the contact information provided within the timeframe for responding to the request.

Consistent with the Freedom of Information Act, Ascent Classical Academies will notify the person making a Freedom of Information Act request of its determination within ten business days for records less than two years old, and within twenty business days for records more than two years old. If the request is granted, the records must be furnished no later than thirty calendar days from the final determination, or thirty-five calendar days if the records are older than two years. A request is considered received the day Ascent Classical Academies receives and opens the written correspondence.

No Ascent Classical employee may modify, redact, or omit responsive records provided to Ascent Classical's Record Custodian. The Record Custodian – after consulting with Ascent's legal counsel, if necessary – will make all determinations regarding the applicability and scope of the Freedom of Information Act request regarding a particular record.

When practical, Ascent Classical will provide electronic copies to requestors. When responsive records cannot be provided electronically to a requestor, Ascent Classical will schedule a mutually agreeable time for the requestor to inspect the records in person. The School will schedule inspections during normal school hours.

Fees for Document Retrieval, Review, and Copies of Release of Records

Ascent Classical shall charge the requestor for all copying expenses and reasonable, actual costs associated with staff time.

In the event Ascent Classical charges a requestor, the School may charge a reasonable fee that cannot exceed the actual cost of the search, retrieval, and redaction of records. The fee for such activities is based on the prorated hourly salary of the lowest paid employee who has the necessary skills to perform the request. Any costs charged to a requestor shall not exceed the actual cost of producing the records. For purposes charging for staff time, all requests made by the same requestor in any 30-day period shall constitute one request.

In the event Ascent Classical anticipates producing more than 25 pages or utilizing more than one hour of staff time, the School will provide a requestor with advance notice and an estimate of costs. Absent an alternative written arrangement, the costs must be paid in full before Ascent Classical will produce the requested records.

Format for Produced Records

Freedom of Information Act requires all public records be open for inspection by any person at reasonable times. Freedom of Information Act does not guarantee access to public records in a specific format. Accordingly, Ascent Classical Academies retains the authority to determine the appropriate format for the records to be produced. This means records may not be provided in their native format.

Ascent Classical Academies may require that members of the public are only permitted to review copies of documents when the Records Custodian determines that allowing access to originals could interfere with the regular discharge of Ascent Classical employees' duties or production of original records could jeopardize those records.

The school may manipulate existing records to redact or exclude information not subject to disclosure or, at its sole discretion, create a new record in order to respond to a request. If the school is required to manipulate data to generate the record, the school may charge an hourly fee that applies in the same manner as the research or retrieval of records.

Records Generally Exempt from Disclosure

Freedom of Information Act exempts certain records from disclosure. The following list is not a complete account of South Carolina law. A requestor should review South Carolina law to understand precisely which records are not subject to disclosure. But as a general guideline, the following records are exempt from public disclosure:

- Certain medical, mental health, sociological, and scholastic achievement data, and electronic health records on individual persons.
- Personnel files which may include home addresses, telephone numbers, financial information, and other information maintained because of the employer-employee relationship.
- Confidential information, including social security numbers.
- Addresses and telephone numbers of Ascent Classical's students.
- Any records of sexual harassment complaints and investigations, whether or not such records are maintained as part of a personnel file.
- Student academic records other than your own student's.
- Personnel information of employees.
- Test questions or scoring keys.
- Personal information where public disclosure would constitute an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy.
- Documents related to proposed contractual arrangements or sale/purchase of property before these actions are finalized.
- Confidential communications with attorneys or attorney work products.
- Security plans and devices.

- Trade secrets and confidential and proprietary information.
- Competitive matters related to school operations.

Policy SE-46.0 Non-Discrimination and Title IX

Ascent Classical Academies admit students of any race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or ancestry, and without regard to a student's disability or need for special education services, to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Further, the School does not discriminate on any such basis in administration of its educational or admissions policies, scholarship or athletic programs, or other school-administered programs, or in its employment practices.

Ascent Classical Academies is also committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning and working environment for its community members. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment are strictly prohibited in all ACA schools' educational programs and activities.

Each Ascent Classical Academies campus and network website shall include on its home page 1) Ascent Classical Academies' statement of non-discrimination; 2) the identity and contact information for the Title IX Coordinator for that site; and 3) a Title IX Formal Complaint form.

Any individual who believes that they or someone else has been a victim of or witness to sexual harassment, assault, or retaliation are encouraged to make a report or file a Formal Complaint to the Title IX Coordinator. Furthermore, all employees of the School must report to the Title IX Coordinator any sexual harassment of which they or someone else has allegedly been a victim, even if not witnessed first-hand by the employee. Anyone, even if they are not the individual who experienced the sexual harassment can make a report to the Title IX Coordinator.

A concern or report may be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator in any format, although it is encouraged to utilize e-mail or hard copy transmission to better ensure a record can be more readily maintained of the content of the report or concern. The Title IX Coordinator will make and maintain notes from any verbal reports made.

For more information about filing a Title IX Formal Complaint, the Title IX Grievance Process, and/or to obtain the school's complete Title IX procedures, please contact the Title IX Coordinator for your campus.

[END OF DOCUMENT]