

Arizona Cultural Academy & College Prep

“Quality Education Is An Islamic Mandate”



STAFF HANDBOOK

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“In the name of Allah the beneficent the Merciful”

INTRODUCTION

Dear ACA Staff Member,

Assalamu Alaikum, and welcome to the ACA family.

We would like first, to thank you, sincerely for your commitment to education, and to ACA in particular. I hope your ACA employment will be your most fulfilling work experience. The ACA was founded with a well-defined mission: delivering “high standard of youth education”.

At Arizona Cultural Academy & College Prep we take great care and pride in selecting our staff, because we consider you the key to accomplishing our mission, therefore you are our most valuable asset.

This is your ACA Staff Handbook, made available for your use during your work with Arizona Cultural Academy & College Prep.

It is required that every employee of ACA read and become familiar with all of the ACA rules, procedures and policies, including the ones contained in this book. If you need clarification on any policy, please consult with your ACA administrator. Otherwise, it is presumed that you fully understand and are willing to comply with these rules. These policies have evolved from real situations, to comply with Federal, State, and local codes and statutes, and will continue to develop over time. Some rules are made in anticipation of near future development to minimize policy revisions. Your feedback about this handbook would be highly appreciated.

We thank you again for your interest and support of the ACA. We highly appreciate your hard work, and look forward to your constructive input.

ACA Board

VISION

Arizona Cultural Academy is an Islamic private prek-12 school and college prep, with leadership that aspires to build a dream educational and cultural institution.

We hold the following truth to be self-evident: “Quality education is an Islamic mandate”

We envision our ACA to be:

- A leader among Islamic schools in the country.
- Home for the best and brightest students, each of whom will mature into upright, tolerant and law-abiding citizen, who will aspire a unique, grand purpose of life, and play a leadership role in society.
- A model for a fast track academic education.
- A model for learning, working and thriving in an Islamic environment for the community at large.
- A model for steady institutional growth in size, stature and performance.
- A model for fully integrated, diverse community.
- The recipient of major support from the community in general, and philanthropists in particular, who will provide ACA with long term financial stability.
- The preferred Muslim employer in the region, with capacity to recruit and retain highly qualified, and effective faculty.
- A major center for youth activity, promoting positive friendship, offering a variety of programs in education, sports and entertainment for the local community.

MISSION

- To promote moral values based on the authentic teachings of mainstream Islam and create a nurturing and learning environment for the faculty and students.
- To promote high standards of education as measured by national achievement tests.
- To offer students challenging curriculums, to prepare them for college success.
- To integrate the best Islamic, Arabic, curriculums with leading national academic standards of North Central Association – AdvancED organization, in a comprehensive curriculum.
- To promote a culture of responsibility and self-reliance.
- To teach interfaith tolerance, respect, harmony and reject violence as means of promoting the faith or advancing Muslims interest.
- To provide positive reinforcement for the youth through healthy sports, entertainment and social activities.

MOTTO

*We are ACA. We empower our community with knowledge, spirit and service.
“My Lord, increase me in knowledge”*

I. SECTION ONE

HUMAN RESOURCE & EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

LEGAL WORK STATUS

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present original documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with ACA within the past three years, or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact ACA Payroll Officer. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

ACA EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Arizona Cultural Academy is an Islamic school with a specified mission and goals. ACA will employ qualified candidates who will best be able to achieve these specific goals.

While doing so, the ACA will comply fully with all federal and state laws and regulations governing religious schools and designed to assure nondiscriminatory employment. It is the policy of ACA that all potentially qualified applicants for employment are recruited, and the most qualified be hired and assigned on the basis of merit without regard to race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, disability or covered veteran status.

All qualified employees are treated equally with no discrimination in compensation, opportunities for advancement (including promotions and transfers), and discipline based on race, color, religious beliefs, sex, age, national origin, disability or covered veteran status.

DPS CLEARANCE CARD

It is Arizona State law that every ACA staff member and volunteer working with the students apply for a Department of Public Safety (DPS) clearance card, which requires fingerprinting. This is to comply with the Arizona Department of Education and Arizona Department of Health Services' rules of childcare licensure.

Follow the [link](#) for New Hire Documentation on our website for fingerprinting locations or call DPS at (602) 223-2279 to receive an application. You must have your DPS clearance card before you can begin employment at ACA if you will be working with students directly. You are also required to renew your clearance card in a timely manner. It is your responsibility to ensure that ACA Administration has a current copy of your DPS clearance card.

Employment with the Arizona Cultural Academy & College Prep will be conditional until the records check is completed, and DPS issues a Clearance Card to the employee.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

New employees are considered to be in a probationary period for ninety (90) school calendar days of employment. The probationary period gives the employee time to adjust to the new position and gives the school administration time to evaluate the employee's suitability for the position.

Satisfactory completion of the probationary period will result in an employee being considered on a non-probationary full time or part time status. Employment remains at will and may be terminated by either party at any time.

EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE

Daily Tour of Duty

In order for school operations to function smoothly, all employees must report to work on time. Every effort should be made to avoid absenteeism.

Contrary to popular belief, a substitute teacher is no real substitute for the assigned classroom teacher. Many students feel insecure, disoriented, and anxious in the teacher's absence. However, if a teacher is planning to be absent, it is his/her responsibility to have detailed lesson plans made available to the office.

Unless prior arrangements have been made, employees who cannot report to work are required to directly notify the school administrator each day they will not be attending.

An employee who is consistently tardy or absent for three recorded incidents will be given a verbal warning and will receive a "Deficiency of Performance Notification" that will be filed in the employee's personnel file.

Meetings

Please note that staff meetings are required as part of the workday, therefore attendance is mandatory. Meetings are used to discuss instructional program needs, general employment issues or problems, etc.

Other School Activities

All teachers may be required to participate in and attend school conferences, meetings, functions and activities that take place other than regular days or hours, as outlined below:

- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Professional Development training
- Back-to-school orientation
- School Fairs
- Fundraising/ School Events
- Workshops / Seminars
- Weekly Staff Meetings
- ACA Committee meetings as assigned
- Meetings with parents
- Student Graduations

ABSENCE AND LEAVES

Permission to Leave Campus

Teachers may be granted permission to leave the campus during the school day in cases of an emergency only. Please contact the Administrator/Principal if an emergency arises. DO NOT leave your classroom until arrangements have been made to relieve you of your duties. Doctor appointments, classes, etc. should be scheduled so as not to interfere with the teacher's school day.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

The purpose of Paid Time Off (PTO) is to provide employees with flexible paid time off from work that can be used for such needs as vacation, personal or family illness, doctor appointments, and other activities of the employee's choice. Employees are responsible for managing their PTO and ensuring that they do not exceed their annual allotment.

Full Time Employees

Each Full Time employee will accumulate four (4) hours per month / or two (2) hours per pay period for the total of five (5) PTO days per academic year or 40 PTO hours. PTO will be subtracted from the employee's PTO bank in (1) one hour increments. PTO accruals apply to the 22 pay periods while school is in session and does not apply to summer break hours.

Part Time Employees

Part Time employees, including substitutes and temporary employees, will accrue one (1) hour of PTO for every 30 hours worked. PTO accruals for Part Time employees are capped at 40 hours per academic year.

Guidelines for PTO Use

ACA appreciates as much notice as possible for scheduled absences to ensure that your job responsibilities are covered. Unless the PTO is used for legitimate, unexpected illness or emergencies, you should receive prior approval from the Principal/or designee. Please use the Time Off Request Form to document your request.

Employees who miss more than three (3) consecutive unscheduled days, may be required to present a doctor's release to the Principal/or designee that permits them to return to work. ACA reserves the right to require documentation related to unscheduled PTO used before or after a paid holiday. Unscheduled PTO that is taken after a PTO request is denied may result in progressive disciplinary action up to and including employment termination.

PTO taken in excess of the PTO allotment may result in progressive disciplinary action up to and including employment termination. This time will be unpaid. If the employee is in a negative PTO balance, ACA will apply new accruals to the PTO bank to bring the employee to a positive balance.

PTO will run concurrent with any other leave of absence and must be taken before the start of any unpaid time. Employees will not accrue PTO while on unpaid leave of absence for an entire pay period. Employees who give a two-week notice of employment termination must work the notice period without utilizing PTO.

Employees who voluntarily resign before the end of the academic school year and employees who are involuntarily terminated are not entitled to any unused PTO payout.

Accrued and unused PTO hours may not be carried over from one academic year to the next and are paid out at 100% at the end of the school year (pay period 22).

PTO For Substitute Hours

Full Time Employees

When a Full Time teacher substitutes for a colleague they earn PTO credit for the hours they substitute for. Full Time teachers are not capped on the amount of PTO hours they can earn through substitute hours.

When a full time employee is out of PTO credit, the school will document absences in one (1) hour increments in the form of negative PTO. New PTO accruals will be applied to the negative

balance. If any Full Time staff accumulates 8 hours of negative PTO they will receive a deduction of a paid day.

The school reserves the right to require teachers with negative PTO balance to substitute for other teachers when needed.

Part Time Employees

When Part Time teachers substitute for their colleagues they are paid for the time they worked as hourly employees. Part Time employees cannot exceed 80 hours per pay period when combining scheduled and substitute hours without prior approval.

The school reserves the right to mandate teachers with negative PTO balance to substitute for other teachers when needed.

Family Medical Leave and Leave of Absence

Some employees may be eligible for Family Medical Leave (FML) to care for their own serious medical condition or that of an eligible family member. Employees should contact the Administrator for more details if they believe their circumstances warrant such a leave. ACA allows eligible employees to take an unpaid leave of absence for medical or personal reasons. Employees are eligible to request a leave of absence after having completed one calendar year of continuous employment. The school grants a maximum of 45 days leave during a school year. Medical leave may be granted for an extended period depending on the nature of the condition.

Whenever possible, an employee should provide a written request for a leave of absence thirty (30) days prior to the day the proposed leave begins. For a medical leave request, a physician's statement must be provided verifying the medical condition and its beginning and expected ending dates.

Requests for personal leave will be evaluated based on number of factors, including anticipated staffing and load requirements. Wages and Benefits will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon return to active employment.

When personal or medical leave ends, every effort will be made to return the employee to the same position, if it is available, or to a similar position for which the employee is qualified. If an employee does not or cannot report to work at the end of a leave of absence, Arizona Cultural Academy will assume the employee has voluntarily resigned.

OVERTIME AND HOURS WORKED

Employees are expected to adhere to their schedule. Occasional exceptions may occur due to operational necessity. Any changes to an employee's schedule or hours worked must be approved by the Principal/designee in advance. Overtime or additional hours may not be taken without prior approval of the Principal/designee.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon employee status (i.e. Full Time or Part Time). The administration can identify the programs for which you may be eligible. Some benefits may include:

- Academic advancement incentive: tuition for post graduate classes or workshops
- Child tuition discount
- Health insurance
- Employer matching contribution to Simple IRA plan up to 3%
- Paid holidays
- Paid Time Off

HOLIDAYS

Holiday pay is available to full time employees only who work the last scheduled day preceding the holiday and the first scheduled day following it. If a recognized holiday takes place on a Saturday or Sunday or during an employee's paid absence, the employee will be ineligible for holiday pay.

ACA celebrates the following Islamic holidays if school is in session:

The Holy Month of Ramadhan

It is a lunar month extending (29 or 30 days). It is a month of fasting for Muslims but it is not a paid holiday. Older Muslim children (10 years and above) are encouraged to observe the fasting from food and drinks from dawn to sunset during this month, especially if their parents so desire. Children (6-9) are encouraged to fast any part of the day they can without undue hardship if their parents so desire.

Staff members are free to practice the religion of their choice; therefore whether to fast or not, is their own choice. We do ask non-fasting adults to refrain from eating in front of fasting children

and adults as a common courtesy. Lunch options in the cafeteria may be limited during the month of Ramadhan. Eid-alFitr, the day following the end of Ramadhan is either a day off or a day of school celebration with fun and games. Eid-al Adha, the 10th day of the Hajj (lunar month) is either a day off or a day of school celebration with fun and games.

ACA will be in recess during the following Federal Holidays (if school is in session):

- December 25 and January 1, as they coincide with the winter break
- Thanksgiving and the day after (fourth Thursday and Friday of November)
- Memorial Day (Last Monday of May)
- Independence Day (the 4th of July)
- Labor Day (first Monday of September)

Holiday Rules

Since the society at large does not observe Islamic holidays, ACA may be the only source of information or cordial celebration of these holidays. The ACA faculty and staff members are requested, but not required, to emphasize and celebrate these Islamic holidays with their students.

Students should be advised of what each American or non-Islamic holiday means by explaining the origin of such holidays. It is up to individual families to decide if they want to celebrate American or non-Islamic holidays. Special practices or costumes of such holidays are not allowed on school campus (Halloween costumes, fireworks etc.).

Staff or student birthdays should not be celebrated at school.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Each staff member testifies that, to the best of his/her knowledge, immunizations against measles, rubella, diphtheria, mumps, and pertussis are current. A report showing results of a tuberculosis test (within 1 year of starting), or a chest x-ray (within 6 months of starting), indicating the employee is free of any contagious disease is required.

Employees are encouraged to take good care of their health and avoid harmful behavior, action or substances. Keeping the work area clean and unobstructed at all times is the responsibility of each employee.

No staff member may be at the school with any sign of illness such as cold, cough, fever, diarrhea, etc. regardless of how well they may be feeling. The same expectation is set for both staff and students. This is to attempt not to infect others as illness may spread quickly in our work environment.

If you will be absent for any reason, call the administrative office the day before or as soon as you are aware of your condition. Please ensure you have received acknowledgement of your absence. Do not simply leave voice mails or send texts without ensuring your messages have been received.

Immediately report any injury, no matter how slight, to the Principal or designee and file an industrial accident claim. If medical attention appears necessary, it is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that appropriate follow up occurs, such as calling an ambulance or referring the employee to a medical professional.

II. SECTION TWO

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT & WORK ENVIRONMENT

CODE OF ETHICS

All Staff members must follow the Association of American Educators (AAE) Code of Ethics at all times.

OVERVIEW

The professional educator strives to create a learning environment that nurtures to fulfillment the potential of all students. They act with conscientious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards. The professional educator responsibly accepts that every child has a right to an uninterrupted education free from strikes or any other work stoppage tactics.

PRINCIPLE I: Ethical Conduct toward Students

The professional educator accepts personal responsibility for teaching students character qualities that will help them evaluate the consequences of and accept the responsibility for their actions and choices. We strongly affirm parents as the primary moral educators of their children. Nevertheless, we believe all educators are obligated to help foster civic virtues such as integrity, diligence, responsibility, cooperation, loyalty, fidelity, and respect-for the law, for human life, for others and for self.

- The professional educator, in accepting his or her position of public trust, measures not only by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her personal potential, but also as a citizen of the greater community of the greater community of the republic.
- The professional educator deals considerately and justly with each student, and seeks to resolve problems, including discipline, according to law and school policy. The professional does not intentionally expose the student to disparagement.
- The professional educator does not reveal confidential information concerning students, unless required by law.
- The professional educator makes a constructive effort to protect the student from conditions detrimental to learning, health, or safety.
- The professional educator endeavors to present facts without distortion, bias, or personal prejudice.

PRINCIPLE II: Ethical Conduct toward Practices and Performance

- The professional educator assumes responsibility and accountability for his or her performance and continually strives to demonstrate competence.
- The professional educator endeavors to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, and by demonstrating personal integrity.

- The professional educator applies for, accepts, or assigns a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications, and adheres to the terms of a contract or appointment.
- The professional educator continues professional growth.
- The professional educator complies with written local school policies and applicable laws and regulations that are not in conflict with this code of ethics.
- The professional educator does not intentionally misrepresent official policies of the school or educational organizations, and clearly distinguishes those views from his or her own personal opinions.
- The professional educator honestly accounts for all funds committed to his or her charge.
- The professional educator does not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

PRINCIPLE III: Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

- The professional educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, accords just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession.
- The professional educator does not reveal confidential information concerning colleagues unless required by law.
- The professional educator does not willfully make false statements about a colleague or the school system.
- The professional educator does not interfere with a colleague's freedom of choice, and works to eliminate coercion that forces educators to support actions and ideologies that violate individual professional integrity.

PRINCIPLE IV: Ethical Conduct toward Parents and Community

- The professional educator pledges to protect public sovereignty over public education and private control of private education
- The professional educator recognizes that quality education is the common goal of the public, boards of education, and educators, and that a cooperative effort is essential among these groups to attain that goal.
- The professional educator makes concerted efforts to communicate to parents all information that should be revealed in the interest of the student.
- The professional educator endeavors to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in the community and in his or her classroom.
- The professional educator manifests a positive and active role in school/community relations.

GENERAL EMPLOYEE CONDUCT (PROFESSIONALISM)

As a faculty and staff member of an Islamic school, you are expected to abide by professional ethics as well as the moral codes of conservative community standards. Arizona Cultural Academy employees represent the school to the parents and children who put their trust in us. Parents form an opinion of us based upon the way we conduct ourselves at all times. As such, our appearance, manners and demeanor should reflect a positive image of our school. The goal is that each of us should conduct ourselves in a manner that leaves parents with a good feeling that their child is safe and secure in a caring environment.

Some key criteria that constitute professionalism:

Punctuality

- Coming to school on time, starting and ending classes on time, attending all the required meetings and conferences.
- Giving the administration adequate notice in case of absence or tardiness.

Courtesy & Equal Treatment

- Being cheerful, especially when talking to or dealing with others.
- Treating all colleagues, parents and students with respect regardless of gender, race, economic or social status, religion, age, disability, national origin or veteran status.
- Demonstrate business gratitude to customers (parents).

Cooperation and Flexibility

- Showing willingness to perform all assigned tasks by their supervisors.
- Offering to help colleagues with their line of work.
- Taking initiative to perform extra tasks necessary to complete the schoolwork and to meet school obligations

Integrity

- Executing the assigned work with the best of one's abilities.
- Dedicating school time for carrying out one's assignments, promoting student education and the mission of the school.
- Taking care of personal business during school hours should be limited to break time, or in case of emergencies, with permission of the Principal.

- Respecting school property resources (Telephones, computers, copiers and other equipment) and using them only as intended, in the conduct of school business

Loyalty & Private Tutoring

ACA Employees are expected to show loyalty to ACA and strive for its successful operation. That includes not engaging in any business transaction that may compromise or compete with the school's interest, achievements or compromise its reputation. Any breach of loyalty, such as defaming ACA in public, or slandering one of ACA's staff may result in consequences up to and including separation of employment.

Although ACA does not prohibit faculty members from giving private lessons to ACA students or others, ACA staff should be cautioned against any special treatment of private class students during ACA class time. Private tutoring may not take place on ACA property.

Protecting ACA Property & Trust --“Automated Inventory”

As ACA grows, missing property can become a major drain of ACA finances and addition to the budget deficit. ACA cannot afford to become complacent regarding its properties. ACA Board considers ACA property a trust by Allah (SW) and the Muslim community to serve a defined goal. Our trust is a collective obligation that must be guarded for the benefit of our students. This policy is not only sound financial and Islamic practice but also is required by the Internal Revenue Service and other government agencies, and to keep accurate accounting.

The ACA Board considers all ACA property, regardless of condition, as valuable. This applies to all non-disposable property. It does not apply to small amounts of disposable items of daily consumption.

ACA started a computerized inventory system as of June '07, to account for all purchased and donated items. This will be facilitated by scanning equipment. All ACA Property shall remain in inventory until ACA Facilities Department disposes of it with the approval of the Board. No other employee of ACA is authorized to dispose of ACA property as “trash” or redundant without the Principal or designee approval.

All school equipment given to ACA employees during the academic year must be signed for by the employees, at the time of receipt. They all must be returned to the Principal or designee at the end of the academic year. Non-returned items shall be considered stolen ACA property. ACA reserves the right to recover the value of all returnable property from employee's paychecks up to statutory limits, if not returned by the last day of school, or upon request by the

Principal/designee or upon employee's resignation or dismissal. ACA reserves the right to take legal action regarding any non-returned or stolen ACA property.

Communications

Each employee is required to remain informed about necessary information related to day to day ACA operations to be fully functional. Since one-on-one exchange of all information is impractical, group communication methods are necessary. Those include:

Handbooks

Employees are responsible for reviewing the Staff and Student Handbooks and are held accountable to their contents. ACA posts its most updated Handbook editions on the ACA website. When new edition of the Staff Handbook is published and distributed to ACA employees, its provisions supersede all prior editions and publications.

Bulletin Boards & Flyers

It is the employee's responsibility to read announcements and information posted on the staff bulletin boards. The Calendar of events is posted on the School Website. Boards display information required by law and also memorandums from the school office. Staff members who wish to place personal notices should submit them to the office for approval.

Meetings

Meetings are an important tool for obtaining and exchanging information and expected to be attended regularly. If an employee is unable to attend a meeting, the meeting minutes should be read if they are available.

Written Communications

Whenever possible, verbal communications among employees and between them and the administration or parents should be recorded in writing immediately after the meeting to ensure accuracy of the event.

E-Mails

Mass e-mails will be allowed only when it is sent to the employees by the administrators such as the Board Members, Principal, Vice Principal, Department Chairs, and Division leaders for the purpose of announcement. It is encouraged to share positive moments with colleagues, those comments can be sent to the administrators to be distributed at his/her discretion. Any concerns should be brought up to the attention of the administrators only. Any violation may result in disciplinary action up to and including separation of employment.

DRESS CODE

One of the hallmarks of Islamic behavior is modesty of dress. Part of being an ACA staff member is an understanding that, as Muslims, we should adopt fashions and lifestyles that adhere to Islamic values. Our pride and positive self-image are reflected in how we dress. In order to model professional and Islamic attire for students and parents, neatness, cleanliness, and modesty in dress are essential in an Islamic school environment. All employees must comply with the following dress code.

Female

Female faculty and staff members are required to dress in a high standard of modesty and use good judgment when selecting their attire.

1. Clothing must be non-transparent
2. Clothing must be physically and obviously loose on the body
3. Clothing must cover from the neckline to the ankle
4. All female Muslim employees should cover their hair at all times
5. Skirts and dresses should be ankle length
6. Long sleeves are required (3/4 sleeves not acceptable)
7. Garments worn over pants should be loose fitting and covering the thigh
8. Sleeveless dresses must have a loose fitting jacket/cardigan over

Although not inclusive of all items and criteria, the following are some examples of unacceptable dress code.

1. Jeans *
2. Flip-flops
3. Tight tops with tight sleeves
4. Belts that accentuate the waistline
5. Tight pants, skinny jeans or leggings, no matter how long the top is
6. Makeup and Jewelry (kept to a minimum)
7. Nail polish

Male

Male faculty and staff members are required to dress in a high standard of modesty and use good judgment when selecting their attire.

1. All male employees should wear collared shirts, and dress slacks *
2. Jeans and shorts are not permitted
3. Open toed shoes are not permitted

*Exceptions may be applied based on job title/description

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The Arizona Cultural Academy faculty and staff members are exposed to confidential information regarding parents, children, and coworkers. This information must be kept in strictest confidence and should not be discussed with anyone unless approved by the school administrator/principal. Confidential information includes but is not limited to academic, health, behavioral, or financial information, as well as personal information about parents or coworkers. Remember that by sharing confidential information about students with other faculty members; teachers may be unknowingly labeling children as either “troublemakers” or “well- behaved,” “slow students” or “bright students.” Knowing the behavioral and academic background of the students encourages teachers to form an opinion of a particular child, before that child has even entered his/her classroom. As many education studies have shown, teacher perceptions and expectations strongly affect student performance. In other words, students who are expected to perform poorly and behave inappropriately will be the ones most likely to do so.

CLASSROOM SEATING POLICY

Classroom seating arrangement is an important part of a student’s learning process. When classroom setup is in harmony with the teaching style, students, and the space and furniture of the class, the benefits can be endless. Many factors contribute to determining the most effective classroom seating arrangement. Because some of these factors changing daily (and sometimes even hourly), it’s important to have a configuration that can be flexible to accommodate classroom variety. Arizona Cultural Academy classroom seating policy states that teachers will use their discretion to arrange the seating in the classrooms. The arrangement will be based on the classroom dynamic, student’s needs, discipline, and the teaching and learning process. However, all ACA staff members are required to follow the Islamic guidelines as they plan for their classroom arrangements.

NON-FRATERNIZATION AND SOCIALIZING AT WORK

ACA encourages its employees to form friendships with coworkers provided that such relationships are conducted in an Islamic, appropriate, and professional manner and do not violate any of the Dignity at Work policies.

Non-Fraternization

Conflicts of interest, gossip, favoritism, and expanded courtesies, real or imagined can result from romantic relationships between coworkers. Even relationships between non-reporting employees can cause friction in the workplace and/or possible claims of favoritism or sexual harassment. Furthermore, employees are expected to conduct themselves in an Islamic, appropriate manner in all coworker interactions, and particularly between co workers of the opposite sex.

Notwithstanding the above, if two employees begin a romantic relationship, they must disclose the relationship, in its entirety, to the Principal or designee. If the two employees do not disclose the relationship immediately, they may be subject to disciplinary action up to termination.

ACA reserves the right to take appropriate action to address employees' behavior related to this policy, on a case by case basis and according to relevant circumstances.

Socializing at Work

As a courtesy to the students we serve as well as coworkers, socializing during working hours should be kept to a reasonable level. ACA may address excessive socializing between co workers during working hours. Socializing, for the purpose of this policy includes behaviors such as non-work related conversations, texting, emailing, or other forms of electronic communication such as social media platforms.

In addition, all visitors, including relatives of employees, who do not have official business with ACA may be restricted from prolonged visits to the workplace. Time spent attending to non-work related interactions between co workers as well as personal visitors, detracts from work production of both employees and their coworkers.

DIGNITY AT WORK

It is a policy of ACA that all employees have the right to work in an environment free from all forms of discrimination and conduct which can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment, workplace harassment, and bullying.

Sexual Harassment

The ACA believes that sexual harassment is Islamic forbidden and a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. Included within the types of conduct, either verbal or physical, which are prohibited by the ACA as sexual harassment, are as follows:

- Requesting or demanding sexual favors as an implicit or explicit condition of Employment;
- The making of sexually related disparaging remarks;
- The use of vulgar or obscene language that would offend ordinary sensibilities and which is of a sexual nature;
- Unwelcome and/or unwanted staring, leering, touching, fondling or bodily contact;
- Any other contact which creates or tends to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment based on an individual's or group's sex.

Workplace Harassment

Harassment on the basis of factors other than sex is equally unacceptable. ACA strongly supports the rights of all of its employees to work in an environment free from harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability and veteran status.

Harassing conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Epithets
- Negative stereotyping
- Slurs
- Threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to the above characteristics
- Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility to an individual or group because of the above characteristics.

There is no single, simple definition to sexual or workplace harassment. Harassment may ,however, be summarized as conduct which is unwanted, unreasonable, and offensive to the recipient based on sex or being part of a protected class. This could be persistent behavior over a period of time or a single serious incident.

Bullying

ACA defines workplace bullying as repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment. Such behavior violates ACA's Dignity at Work policy, which clearly states that all employees will be treated with dignity and respect.

Bullying can range from extreme forms such as violence and physical/verbal aggression to less obvious actions. Below are types of behavior which are considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of unacceptable behavior.

- Shouting at a person either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating a person, e.g. standing very close to him/her
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Threatening
- Shaking and/or holding a fist towards another person
- Verbal and written abuse through jokes, offensive language, name-calling, gossip,
- Slander, and character defamation, etc.
- Abuse of management procedures to threaten, humiliate, or coerce
- Threats or promises affecting work performance or linked to employment prospects

The above referenced examples related to sexual harassment, workplace harassment, and workplace bullying, are non-exhaustive and refer to communication that may be verbal, non-verbal, in person or via electronic or phone messaging, and/or social media platforms. These expectations are required of all staff interactions whether on or off the clock. Employees who are found to have violated these expectations may incur disciplinary action up to and including separation of employment.

Dealing with sexual or workplace harassment and workplace bullying

The procedure is intended to enable complaints related to sexual harassment, workplace harassment, and bullying to be dealt with sensitively and quickly. Where a complaint has been upheld, ACA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- The offensive behavior has ceased
- No retaliation occurs as a result
- Any changes to policies, practices, and procedures are made if necessary.

If an employee believes he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment, workplace harassment, or bullying, she/he is urged to notify the Administrator or Principal immediately. Likewise any person in a position of authority who becomes aware of sexual harassment, workplace harassment, or bullying by any employee against a fellow employee is required to take immediate and appropriate corrective action.

If an employee is unable or uncomfortable about discussing their complaint with the Principal, the following individuals are available and properly trained to discuss complaints in a confidential manner: Any ACA Board member or HR Committee designee. To assist in the investigation all complaints shall be submitted in writing as well and will be kept confidential to the extent possible.

The ACA will not tolerate sexual harassment, workplace harassment, or bullying of any nature and will investigate all reported allegations promptly and confidentially to the extent possible. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken against an employee who is found to have violated this policy.

Retaliation

In many instances, ACA must rely on individual faculty, staff, and students to report to the appropriate individuals cases where it appears that a member or members of the ACA community are not complying with applicable law or policy. A major deterrent to such reporting is the fear that the person or persons against whom the report is made will retaliate against the person making the report. The purpose of this policy is to clearly articulate that ACA prohibits retaliation against those who make bona fide reports of possible non-compliance.

ACA administrators and staff shall not intimidate or take retaliatory action, as defined below, against any member of the ACA community or a relative of such a person who is an employee or student at ACA, who makes a report of the type defined below in good faith and without malice.

This policy also prohibits persons from knowingly and intentionally making a report of noncompliance that is false.

The prohibition against retaliation applies to:

- The disclosure of information concerning conduct that the reporter believes is illegal or in violation of ACA policies;
- The provision of information or testimony to, or the filing of a complaint initiating proceedings before, a duly constituted investigatory body of the ACA administration;
- Disclosures made during compliance review or a peer review process;
- The filing of a legitimate complaint or incident report

The types of retaliation that are prohibited include but are not limited to:

- Intimidation;
- Adverse actions with respect to the reporter's work assignments, salary, benefits, and other terms of employment;
- Unlawful discrimination;
- Termination of employment;
- Adverse actions against a relative of the reporter who is an ACA employee or student; and;
- Threats of any of the above

Note: Adverse personnel, academic or other disciplinary action against an employee or student whose conduct or performance warrants such action for reasons unrelated to the reporting of a concern will not be deemed a violation of this policy.

Individuals who violate this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary proceedings as set forth in the Student and Staff handbooks, and if found to have violated the policy, may be subjected to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or.

Bullying and Aggression by Parents

ACA encourages the interaction with parents and the community and believes that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one. The vast majority of parents, guardians, and others visiting the school are keen to work with the staff and are supportive of the school. However, a minority of parents may have a negative attitude towards the school and sometimes, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical bullying towards school staff.

ACA expects its staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of Administrators.

ACA recognizes that all employees have the right to work in an environment which is free of bullying. The ACA undertakes that allegations of bullying will be dealt with seriously and confidentially, using the procedures set out below, and that employees will be protected against retaliation for making or being involved in a complaint.

Informal Procedures

1. When a parent or member of the community behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school staff, the Administrator will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation.
2. Attempts shall be made to resolve the complaint quickly and informally if possible (within 3 school days), and ideally on the spot.
3. Complainant's desired outcome such as a warning letter to the parents, and possibilities of re address should be discussed (this is not an admission of liability).
4. Complaints will not normally be investigated if more than 60 days have passed since the incident or event took place.

Formal Procedures

1. If the misconduct continues, or it is not appropriate to resolve the problem informally, either because the serious nature of the complaint or where informal attempts at resolution have failed, the issue shall be raised to the formal stage, like School Council.
2. The perpetrator shall be notified that he or she is under observation for a period of time.

3. If the misconduct continues, the perpetrator will be restrained from entering the ACA premises for a period of time, subject to review. All communication from the parent will be blocked and ceased. If these measures are breached, the Police will be informed.

Students learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and school. While every effort will be made to work with parents, this will only be possible where parents behave in an acceptable way. Unfortunately, where a parent's behavior is either unacceptable or serious it will not be possible to continue working with him/her, and as a final resort, involving the proper authorities and legal action may be taken.

Effects of Harassment and Bullying

A victim of harassment or bullying may suffer physical and/or emotional symptoms such as disturbed sleep, nausea, lack of confidence, distraction from carrying duties properly, or motivation and depression. Whatever the form of the harassment or bullying, the impact on the employee should not be underestimated. Harassment or bullying can lead to illness, increased absence, poor performance, and confusion over status and role leading to an apparent lack of commitment or even resignation. Harassment and bullying can also result in tension and conflict within the workplace and puts great strains on personal and family life. These all have a direct impact on the effectiveness of the ACA as a school and does not allow employees to feel dignity at work. As such, ACA takes a strong position related to its Dignity at Work policy.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

We realize that differences and misunderstandings will occur, and we encourage resolving these situations at the time of occurrence to ensure a fair and equitable resolution.

Whenever possible, job-related problems, questions or complaints should be solved by a discussion with the immediate supervisor. In the majority of instances, the simplest, quickest, and most satisfactory solution is achieved at this level, but if this is not possible or appropriate, you are encouraged to pursue the appeal process.

All matters concerning promotion, non-retention, tenure denial, assignment and interpretation or application of ACA rules and procedures over which ACA has control which directly and adversely affect the grievant may be the source of a faculty complaint or grievance. But no decision may be made at any step of the grievance procedure which conflicts with or modifies a policy approved by the ACA Board.

Step 1 – ACA Principal

Grievances must be initiated within 30 days of the action involved or within 30 days of the employee having reasonable knowledge of the act. Appeals shall be timed from receipt of the written opinion of administrator or from when such opinion is due, whichever comes first.

Informal Stage

Present the grievance orally to the Principal for the purpose of informal discussion. The decision will normally be communicated to the employee orally. In the event that the employee does not find the decision acceptable, he/she may request that the decision be put in writing. If the grievance is unresolved after 3 working days, the employee may appeal to formal stage. The formal stage must be in writing and must be filed within 3 working days.

Formal Stage

Present the grievance in writing to the Principal for formal consideration. The Principal shall within 5 working days after the receipt of the written grievance hold a conference with the aggrieved and/or a designated representative and shall within 5 working days after the conclusion of the conference; render a decision in writing to the aggrieved and/or a designated representative. In the event the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the decision, he/she may appeal in writing to the Human Resource Director. If the grievance related to the Principal shall be initially filed in writing with the HR Director; the grievance related to a Board member shall be initially filed in writing with the Chairman of the Board.

Step 2 – The Human Resource Director

Where a grievance has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the employee in Step 1, the matter may be referred to the HR Director in writing by providing full details of the grievance.

The HR Director shall within 10 working days of the receipt of the written grievance arrange a meeting at which all parties to the grievance will attend.

The HR Director will consider the entire matters rose at the meeting and will issue a written decision within 10 working days. Copies of the decision will be sent to all of the parties. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the employee at Step 2, the grievance may be submitted, in writing to the ACA Board within 10 working days of receipt of the decision reached at Step 2.

Step 3 – ACA Board

The Chairman of the Board will consider the grievance and may be supplied with all of the documentation submitted in relation to the earlier stages of the procedure. The Board will issue, and send to all parties, copies of a written decision within 30 days of receiving the grievance in writing. The Board's decision will be final. The form to be used when submitting a formal grievance is attached in Section Seven of this Handbook.

EMPLOYEE CORRECTIVE PROCEDURES

ACA has established guidelines to assist employees in correcting performance problems. Through corrective procedures, the employee is made aware of unacceptable behavior / performance and the changes necessary to meet the ACA standards. The following steps outline the corrective process generally followed. However, the Arizona Cultural Academy reserves the right to terminate an employee's employment and/or place an employee on probation without prior warning when it deems appropriate.

Verbal Warning

This is used when an employee's actions do not meet the ACA's standards. The administrator informs the employee that the performance/behavior must be corrected.

Written Warning

A written memo is given to the employee stating the nature of the warning, the expected behavior/performance change and the time allotted to show correction. The memo will also state the consequences should the employee fail to correct his/her behavior / performance. In addition, a copy of the memo will be placed in the employee's file.

Probation

A written memo is given to the employee stating the nature of the probation, the expected behavior/performance change and the time allotted to show correction. The memo will also state the consequences should the employee fail to correct his/her behavior/performance. Both the employee and the school administrator must sign the memo and a copy will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Employees who disagree with their probationary status may submit a letter for the School Board to review. This letter will be placed in the employee's file to reflect the situation from the employee's point of view. However, it should be noted that an employee's refusal to sign the letter of probation does not nullify the terms or conditions of the probation.

Termination

The Arizona Cultural Academy reserves the right to terminate employment immediately as deemed necessary by the school administration or School Board.

CLEAN AIR POLICY

ACA is committed to providing a safe and healthful environment for all students, employees and volunteers and visitors. ACA must also comply with the Smoke Free Act provisions. Smoking or use of electronic cigarettes is therefore prohibited on all ACA premises. Any employee or volunteer who wishes to smoke during work hours must do so off campus during their regular break time.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL & WEAPON FREE CAMPUS

In order to protect the students, employees and everyone on campus, ACA has a zero tolerance policy towards drugs or alcohol possession or use on campus, during off campus school activities or outside of school hours. The administration has the right to require drug testing of any and all employees and students at its discretion and without notice. Refusal to take a drug test upon request will be considered the same as a positive drug test and may result in being expelled or, in the case of an employee, separation of employment.

It is also prohibited for anyone to bring weapons on campus, except for law enforcement officers. Any student or staff found to be in violation of this policy shall be expelled from ACA or separated from employment.

III. SECTION THREE

ACA ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

THE GOVERNING BODY

“THE BOARD”

According to Article 3 of the ACA bylaws, the governing body of “The Corporation” is called the Board of Benefactors, which serves in the capacity of “Board of trustees.”

Three to nine volunteers serve on the ACA Board for a term of four years.

New Board members are elected by the current Board members among the most active ACA Parents or Volunteers from the local community, who are most supportive of ACA, its mission, most experienced and capable of serving in such capacity.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Assembly of ACA Parents and Employees constitute the ACA – PTA. ACA PTA is an essential and integral part of ACA structure that cannot be substituted or relegated to any other entity.

PTA Objectives

- To promote the welfare of children in the home, school, and community
- To encourage and enhance the relationship between home and school so that parents, administrators, and teachers may cooperate in the education of the students.
- To sponsor projects and events for the benefit of ACA students.
- To maximize parental involvement in the educational process to activate them from “customers” to “full partners”.
- To hold regular meetings between Parents and Staff to share information and approximate points of view
- To recruit volunteers to staff various ACA Committees, plus other educational and social ACA functions
- To select / elect PTA representatives
- To help the ACA Board and ACA Council reach resolutions on issues referred to it by the Board or Council
- To Represent the interest and concerns of both ACA parents and employees before the ACA Board and ACA Administration

Basic Policy

- The PTA organization shall be noncommercial, and nonpartisan.
The organization and its name, its members, and their names in their official capacities,
- shall not endorse any commercial or political entity or engage in activities not related to promoting the objectives of the organization as specified above.
- The ACA organization, and therefore the PTA, shall not directly or indirectly participate or intervene (in any way, including the publishing or distributing of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.
- The organization may cooperate with other organizations and agencies concerned with child welfare, but persons representing the organization, in such matters, shall make no commitments that bind the organization without the ACA Board's approval.
- The ACA, its PTA and its Members shall not practice or permit discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, national origin, religion, veteran status, or disability.
- Members of this Organization shall be volunteers and shall be reimbursed for authorized PTA expenses, but shall not be compensated for their time or service to the PTA.
- All items remaining after any PTA event remain the property of the PTA and may be disbursed at the ACA Board's discretion, with preference given to classrooms, school staff, youth groups and volunteers, as deemed appropriate.
- In the event of the dissolution of the organization, its assets shall be submitted to the ACA Board.

PTA President

- To be an ACA parent or ACA employee for at least six (6) months.
- To call for and preside over quarterly General PTA meetings.
- To conduct the meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order.
- To attend monthly board meeting and submit office and financial report.
- To direct parents' concerns to the right channel according to the grievance procedure posted on the ACA Parent/Student Handbook.
- To organize volunteer/community activities that may help achieve ACA's mission.
- To cooperate with the Principal to maintain a supportive relationship between the School and the PTA.
- To meet with the Principal and discuss the calendar of events for the year.
- To meet with the Principal to discuss upcoming activities and plans and seek approval.
- To be aware of all PTA finances and financial transactions all the time.
- To provide a summary year-end report of his/her year in office for the new President at the Joint Executive Meeting.

ACA SCHOOL COUNCIL

Mission

- To support and assist the ACA Principal in managing the daily affairs of ACA.
- The Council accomplishes its mission through strategic planning, communication with the Board, the PTA representative, the Principal, ACA staff, and ACA parents, and through development of a plan of action for ACA's progress and development.
- The Council may participate in budget and expenditures development and other functions vital to the success of the school if so desired by the Board and the Principal.
- The Council shall be in charge of resolving conflicts between various parties of ACA.

Membership

- The ACA Council shall be composed of all the stakeholders.
- Members representing ACA staff categories (teachers and others) shall be designated by a voting system that is open to all stakeholders and is transparent in process.
- Council members representing parents and the community at large serve on a voluntary basis. They are nominated and voted on for a two year term.
- Once a member is elected he or she has an obligation to serve till the end of their term.
- Each Council member must notify the Chairman in advance if he or she has a legitimate excuse to miss the meeting.
- A Council member representing a staff category who resigns, will be replaced by the candidate who came second in the vote count.
- A Council member representing a parent or the community at large category may submit a resignation at any time, but he or she may be required to attend meetings till the candidate who came second in the vote is able to attend.
- A new nominated member shall make a self-introduction presentation to the Council and the newly elected member shall be expected to attend the following Council meeting.
- It is the responsibility of the new member to understand the member's guide; he or she shall seek assistance from the President if needed.
- All members shall observe confidentiality rights, especially during the closed sessions.
- The Council shall discuss the membership of that member if such infraction occurs.
- All responses shall be submitted to the President. Mass e-mails to the members only can be sent by the President and the Secretary for sending meeting reminder, minutes, and agenda.

ACA FACILITY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT & SECURITY

The ACA Campus Facility Management assumes the charge of the following, under direction of the Principal or designee.

Campus Security

The ACA for safety reasons, operates as a closed campus during school hours. The Facility Management designee secures the campus and provides access to parties who have legitimate business on campus. Those may include:

- ACA officers
- Registered volunteers
- ACA hired staff: Principal, Imam, Administrators, teaching staff students, their parents and guardians
- Vendors and/or hired personnel

ACA Visitors

All visitors entering campus during school session must check in with the Facility Management designee or reception desk in the Administration office.

ACA is a private school operated on private property. The Facility Management designee, on behalf of the ACA, has the full right to deny entry to any individual for safety or security reasons.

Transportation

The Facility Management designee shall be in charge of safe transportation of students between the ACA campus and another specified location when such a program is in effect.

On Campus Help and Repair Person

The Facility Management designee shall render assistance to ACA staff with physical and mechanical tasks. In addition, the Facility Management designee will perform all simple necessary maintenance and repairs of the school buildings and equipment on campus except specialized repairs and warranties.

ACA SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

The primary purpose of the School Counselor is to support all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development. The school administration, teachers, and school counselor are expected to collaborate to find effective solutions for student issues. To avoid any conflict of interest, the School Counselor cannot provide staff with counseling on personal matters.

Thank you