

Student & Parent Handbook

2025–2026



Mission Statement

The Avery Coonley School elevates high-achieving and gifted learners through immersion in a mutually talented community where intellect, curiosity, and creativity are enhanced by optimal challenge.

Administration's Right to Amend

The Avery Coonley School ("Avery Coonley," "ACS" or the "School") Student & Parent Handbook (the "Handbook") is published and distributed to members of the Avery Coonley community for the purpose of providing information on aspects of student and campus life to help students gain as much as possible from their experience at the School. Students, parents, faculty, administration, and staff should all read and be familiar with the contents of the Handbook so that each member of the community knows and understands our community expectations. While policies in this Handbook will generally apply, the School may take actions that it determines to be in the best interests of the School, its faculty, and its students. This Handbook does not limit the authority of the School to alter, interpret, and implement its rules, policies, and procedures before, during, and after the school year. In addition, any duties that are assigned to specific administrators in this Handbook may be delegated, as the School determines appropriate. This Handbook is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to create, nor does it create, a contract or part of a contract in any way, including, but not limited to, between Avery Coonley and any parent, guardian, or student affiliated with or attending the School. Avery Coonley may add, revise, and/or delete School policies before, during, and after the school year.

Welcome

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year at The Avery Coonley School! Whether you are returning to ACS, or you are new to our community, I appreciate your commitment to The Avery Coonley School by choosing to enroll.

This handbook has been developed to familiarize students, parents, and community members with the mission, policies, and procedures of ACS. Community is at the heart of ACS—the learning experience is a three-way proposition, involving students, parents, and teachers working together for the good of the entire community.

This handbook should act as an important resource for you and your family, and it addresses a range of topics that are important for your whole family to review together. Please contact me or a member of the ACS Senior Leadership Team if you need additional clarification.

I look forward to partnering with you through the upcoming 2025–2026 academic year.

Sincerely,



Kirsty Montgomery, Ph.D.

Head of School

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Quick Reference



Quick Reference

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Driving and Parking on Campus

With our students' safety in mind, and because of fire laws and safety procedures, please park only in designated parking spaces and not along the driveways of the School or on the grass. For safety, and in consideration of the School's neighbors, please drive slowly on School grounds and in the surrounding neighborhood and refrain from using cell phones while driving on campus.

Hours & Daily Schedule

The Receptionist is typically on duty between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday–Friday.

Daily Regular Hours for Each Group

PreK 3 (Half Day)	8:15 am–11:00 am
PreK 3 (Full Day)	8:15 am–2:45 pm
PreK 4 (Half Day)	8:15 am–11:15 am
PreK 4 (Full Day)	8:15 am–2:45 pm
Kindergarten	8:25 am–2:45 pm
Groups 1–4	8:25 am–3:05 pm
Groups 5–8	8:25 am–3:35 pm

Morning Arrival

Drop off typically takes place on the East side of the building in the area between the Main Entrance and the South Entrance.

7:30 am–7:45 am	Before school extracurricular activities begin. Students must enter through Main Entrance.
7:45 am	Morning drop off begins (K–8 only). Students are directed to the south playground (blacktop) for supervised play.
8:05 am	Earliest that students in PreK 3 and 4 may be dropped off and report to homeroom.
8:15 am	School begins for PreK 3 and 4
8:20 am	Bell rings. All students enter School via the South Entrance.
8:25 am	South Entrance and car line close. All students PreK 3 through Group 8 arriving at or after this time must sign in at Main Entrance reception. Students will be marked tardy.

Regular Dismissal

Dismissal Procedures

Dismissal typically takes place on the East side of the building between the Main Entrance and the South Entrance.

Pick-Up Times

Please do not arrive on campus more than 5 minutes prior to dismissal.

PreK 3: (Half Day)	11:00 am
PreK 3 (Full Day)	2:45 pm
PreK 4 (Half Day)	11:15 am
PreK 4 (Full Day)	2:45 pm
Kindergarten	2:45 pm
Groups 1–4	3:05 pm
Groups 5–8	3:35 pm

Arrival & Dismissal Traffic Safety

Arrival

When dropping off your child(ren) please pull all the way forward in the car line, even if your child is entering the building via the Main Entrance for before-school activities. Students should be ready to exit the vehicle when it stops. ACS staff, faculty, and volunteers will assist in getting your child safely out of the vehicle.

PLEASE DO NOT drop students in the circle as it is unsafe for pedestrians/other drivers and causes unnecessary car line delays.

PLEASE BE AWARE: Depending on ACS traffic, you may be in the car line for up to 15 minutes, so please plan your departure time accordingly.

Dismissal

Drivers may not arrive on campus for pick-up more than 5 minutes prior to their child(ren)'s dismissal time so as not to interfere with staggered divisional dismissal times. Cars entering the property for dismissal should come to a complete stop at the first stop sign, then drivers should alternate into the two lines being formed—one to the left down the main drive and one to the right in the parking lot along the fence (see map, next page). **Drivers must display their color-coded, School-provided name card in the windshield.**

When picking up your child(ren), please pull all the way forward in the car line, even if your child is exiting the building via the Main Entrance. ACS staff, faculty, and volunteers will assist in getting your child safely in the vehicle. Parents wishing/needing to meet their child(ren)

Quick Reference

at the Main Entrance or South Entrance should park in the main parking lot, not on the driveway. Parents are expected to share parking, arrival, and dismissal procedures with any childcare providers who will be responsible for dropping off or picking up students.

It is the parents' responsibility and the School's expectation that **all students (PreK 3 through Group 8) will be picked up promptly from School at their designated dismissal time.** Any student in full-day PreK 3 through Group 8 not picked at their scheduled dismissal time or at the end of their School-sanctioned, after-school activity (such as sports or clubs) will be escorted to the After-School Program by a faculty member, and families will be charged the drop-in rate for the service. Multiple instances of pick-up tardiness of any student in PreK 3 through Group 8 will be brought to the attention of the School administration and, in extreme cases, may result in non-renewal of the student's enrollment contract. Students waiting for an older sibling or carpool member to be dismissed at a later time must be registered in the After-School Program but will not be charged for the service. (See [Lower School After-School Program](#), page 54. See [Middle School After-School Program](#), page 75.)

Before-School Supervision

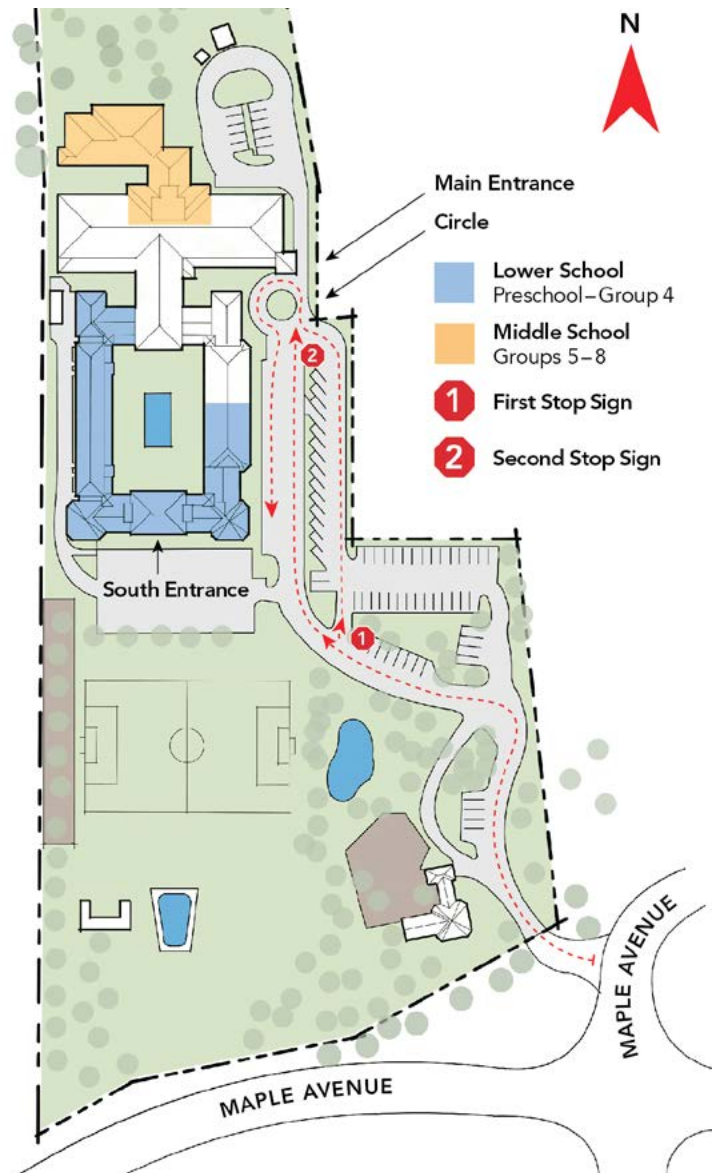
Beginning at 7:45 am, students in Kindergarten through Group 8 may be dropped off and must report to the playground (blacktop) by the South Entrance, or the Commons during inclement weather, for supervised play. No students will be admitted to the building before 7:45 am except for those students attending supervised before school extracurricular activities.

After-School Program

Avery Coonley **students in full-day PreK 3 through Group 8** may enroll in the After-School Program. The program operates Monday through Friday, from 2:50 pm to 6:00 pm on regularly scheduled school days. The After-School Program is not available on early dismissal days. **An additional fee is charged for this program** and billed in the student's tuition statement. Students may be signed up for the entire year, or by day as needed. ACS's After-School Program is led by the After-School Program Coordinator and operated by qualified staff. The variety of daily activities planned for students participating in the program include games and outdoor play, arts and crafts, hands-on activities, and structured homework time for Lower and Middle School students. (See [Lower School After-School Program](#), page 54. See [Middle School After-School Program](#), page 75.)

Pick-Up Instructions

1. Come to a complete stop at the first stop sign.
2. Alternate into the two lines being formed — one to the left down the main drive and one to the right in the parking lot along the fence.
3. Come to complete stop at second stop sign.
4. Alternate into single line forming around the circle. **DO NOT** block driveway. **DO NOT** pick up or drop off in circle.
5. Pull all the way forward in the designated drop-off / pick-up area.



Quick Reference

Contacts

Main

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Quick Reference

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Contacting Teachers During the Day

Except in case of emergency, parents are encouraged to email any messages to teachers and administrators during the school day. All messages should be returned by the end of the next business day. Please respect our teachers' time with their families after regular school hours and on the weekend.

Students who need homework assignments or other class information after hours should contact other students or access the Parent Portal for information.

ACS Parent Portal

To access the Parent Portal, go to: <https://accounts.veracross.com/averycoonley/portals/login>

The Parent Portal can also be accessed from the Parent page of the ACS website. Go to: averycoonley.org/parents. Then click on the Parent Portal button.

Quick Reference

2025–2026 School Calendar

2025

August

8/21 Thursday

Groups 5–8 First Day of School

No School: Groups 1–4

PreK 3, PreK 4, K Special hours

8/22 Friday

Groups 2–4 First Day of School

No School: Groups 5–8

PreK 3, PreK 4, K, Group 1

Special hours

8/25 Monday

Groups 2–8 Regular school hours begin

PreK 3, PreK 4, K, Group 1

Special hours

8/26 Tuesday

Group 1 Regular school hours begin

PreK 3, PreK 4, K Special hours

8/27 Wednesday

PreK 3 Half-Day, PreK 4 Half-Day

Regular school hours begin

PreK 3 Full-Day, PreK 4 Full-Day,

K Special hours

8/28 Thursday

PreK 3 Full-Day, PreK 4 Full-Day, K

Regular school hours begin

September

9/1 Monday

No School: Labor Day

October

10/9 Thursday

No School: Parent-Teacher Conferences

11:00 am–8:00 pm (PreK–Group 8)

10/10 Friday

No School: Parent-Teacher Conferences

8:00 am–4:00 pm (PreK–Group 8)

10/13 Monday

No School: Indigenous People's Day

10/14 Tuesday

No School: Teacher Institute Day

November

11/14 Friday

End of 1st Trimester

11/21 Friday

Half Day (PreK 3, PreK 4, K only)

Thanksgiving Program—

Groups 1–8 (Afternoon)

Thanksgiving Break begins at the end of the day

December

12/1 Monday

School Resumes from

Thanksgiving Break

12/19 Friday

Winter Break begins at end of the day

2026

January

1/5 Monday

School Resumes from Winter Break

1/15 Thursday

No School: Parent-Teacher Conferences

11:00 am–8:00 pm (PreK–Group 8)

1/16 Friday

No School: Parent-Teacher Conferences

8:00 am–4:00 pm (PreK–Group 8)

1/19 Monday

No School: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February

2/13 Friday

No School: Teacher Institute Day

2/16 Monday

No School: Presidents' Day

March

3/3 Tuesday

End of 2nd Trimester

3/26 Thursday

Spring Break begins at the end of the day

3/27 Friday

No School: Teacher Institute Day

April

4/6 Monday

School resumes from Spring Break

4/16 Thursday

No School: Parent-Teacher Conferences

11:00 am–8:00 pm (PreK–Group 8)

4/17 Friday

No School: Parent-Teacher Conferences

8:00 am–4:00 pm (PreK–Group 8)

4/20 Monday

No School: Teacher Institute Day

May

5/15 Friday

No School: Teacher Institute Day

5/25 Monday

No School: Memorial Day

June

6/3 Wednesday

PreK 3 Last Day of School

(Dismissal at 11:00 am)

PreK 4 Last Day of School

(Dismissal at 11:15 am)

K Last Day of School

6/4 Thursday

Groups 1–8 last day of school

(Early Dismissal)

Summer Break begins after morning Graduation

NOTE: As of June 9, 2025. All dates are subject to change. Dates for special school activities and events will be announced as they are finalized.

General Information



General Information

Overview

About

Established in 1906, The Avery Coonley School (ACS) has been known as a leader in gifted education for the past 50+ years. We offer advanced and gifted learners in preschool through eighth grade a curriculum with the depth, pace, and complexity to challenge them to the fullest. All ACS faculty are experienced with and understand the emotional and educational needs of gifted children and are skilled in differentiating their instruction to support individual learners. Over three-quarters of our faculty hold advanced degrees and the average tenure of an ACS teacher is over eight years.

Our campus is located on 13 acres of inspiring learning spaces with state-of-the-art technology, flexible space for individual and collaborative work, expansive art studio, music room, library, computer lab, and Makerspace. The campus includes 9,000 square feet of outdoor play areas, a challenge course, athletic field, gymnasium, outdoor swimming pool, and pond.

Mailing Address

The Avery Coonley School
1400 Maple Ave.,
Downers Grove, IL 60515

School Hours

Receptionist	7:00 am – 6:00 pm
PreK 3 (Half Day)	8:15 am – 11:00 am
PreK 3 (Full Day)	8:15 am – 2:45 pm
PreK 4 (Half Day)	8:15 am – 11:15 am
PreK 4 (Full Day)	8:15 am – 2:45 pm
Kindergarten	8:25 am – 2:45 pm
Lower School (Groups 1–4)	8:25 am – 3:05 pm
Middle School (Groups 5–8)	8:25 am – 3:35 pm

See Lower School and Middle School sections of the Handbook for information about drop-off times, extracurriculars, and the After-School Program.

Mission

The Avery Coonley School elevates high-achieving and gifted learners through immersion in a mutually talented community where intellect, curiosity, and creativity are enhanced by optimal challenge.

The Avery Coonley School Philosophy

We believe that the joy and excitement of learning must begin early in life. We place a high premium on developing the desire in our students to become critical thinkers and independent, lifelong learners.

We assist our students in realizing their intellectual, emotional, social, creative, and physical potential by promoting academic achievement, character development, self-reliance, self-confidence, independent thought, and personal fitness.

We recognize and are sensitive to the unique needs of gifted children. Within a traditional structure, we provide acceleration and enrichment, and foster a supportive atmosphere that provides opportunities for creativity, problem-solving, and risk-taking.

We believe that diversity is the foundation for a strong, competent, and compassionate community.

We strive to build a community that encourages understanding and mutual respect and nurtures appreciation of the individual, civility, gratitude, honesty, kindness and consideration, responsibility, and volunteerism.

Branding

Motto: *Onward and Upward*

Mascot: Seahorse

Colors: Navy Blue (PMS 295), Orange (PMS 021)

Accreditation & Memberships

The Avery Coonley School is accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS) and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), Illinois Association for Gifted Children (IAGC), Lake Michigan Association of Independent Schools (LMAIS), Illinois Coalition of Non-Public Schools (ICNS), Educational Records Bureau (ERB), and Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

General Information

Governance

Head of School

The ACS Head of School is responsible for the overall management of the School, in accordance with the Board of Trustees policies. This person is the spokesperson for the School with all its internal and external constituencies including students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, neighbors, business community, governmental agencies, and local, state, regional and national educational organizations, and accrediting agencies. Though much of the work is properly delegated, the Head of School has ultimate and overall responsibility for operations, academics and instruction, student life, business affairs, admission, and fundraising.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for setting the mission and policies of the School and ensuring that the institution operates in the best interests of its students, teachers, and parents. The Board consists of a minimum of fifteen and a maximum of twenty-one volunteer members from ACS parents, alumni, and community leaders. All Board members serve on one standing committee and other ad hoc committees as needed. Standing committees include Building and Grounds, Committee on Trustees, Development, and Finance. The 2025–2026 list of trustees can be found on the website under Our School/School Leadership. Any parent or member of the faculty wishing to offer a name for consideration for membership on the Board should email the Chairperson of the Committee on Trustees at COT@averycoonley.org. Questions regarding the Board of Trustees should be addressed to the Board Chairperson at BOTchair@averycoonley.org.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Avery Coonley School admits qualified students of any sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, physical or mental disability, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, and any other status protected by applicable law to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded or made available to students at the School generally. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, physical or mental disability, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, or any other status protected by applicable law in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid program, athletic program, or other School-administered programs.

General Information

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Community Expectations

At ACS, we believe that diversity is the foundation for a strong, competent, and compassionate community. Collectively, we strive to foster an environment where the gifted characteristics of empathy and curiosity lead our mission to honor the dignity and experience of every human being. This starts by facilitating courageous conversations and affirming that mistakes are part of the growth process. Our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is one that is continuous and constantly evolving.

Honoring our Religious & Cultural Diversity in 2025–2026

ACS believes that it is important to acknowledge, honor, and support our community's religious and cultural diversity. The list of holidays noted here provides the ACS community insight into celebrations that may be honored in ACS community members' homes. Some of these holidays and cultural celebrations may be discussed in class as they provide opportunities for cross-cultural connections and community building. Our goal is to be culturally responsive to all families. Please let your child's homeroom teacher or advisor know at least two weeks in advance if your family is honoring a special day/holiday and if your student(s) may need homework/classwork accommodations.

NOTE: All Jewish and Islamic holidays begin at sundown on the evening before the first date shown. Additionally, some of these dates are not fixed to a calendar but based on the lunar cycle. This list of holidays and celebrations is not exhaustive (i.e., ACS families may celebrate holidays or observances not listed below); it will be updated to reflect survey data collected at the start of the 2025–2026 school year.

Holiday or Observance	Religion/Belief/Culture	Dates
Eid al-Adha	Islamic	June 6–June 7, 2025
Muharram (Al Hijrah New Year)	Islamic	June 27, 2025
Janmashtami	Hindu	August 16, 2025
Labor Day		September 1, 2025
Mawlid-al-Nabi (birthday of Mohammad)	Islamic	September 4–5, 2025
Rosh Hashanah (New Year)	Jewish	September 22–24, 2025
Navaratri/Dussehra	Hindu	September 22–October 2, 2025
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)	Jewish	October 1–2, 2025
Indigenous Peoples' Day		October 13, 2025
Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)	Jewish	October 6–13, 2025
Shmini Atzeret	Jewish	October 13–15, 2025
Simchat Torah	Jewish	October 14–15, 2025
Diwali	Hindu	October 20, 2025
Dia de los Muertos		November 2, 2025
Veterans Day		November 11, 2025
Thanksgiving Day		November 27, 2025

General Information

Holiday or Observance	Religion/Belief/Culture	Dates
Hanukkah (Chanukah)	Jewish	December 14–22, 2025
Christmas Day	Christian	December 25, 2025
Kwanzaa		December 26, 2025–January 1, 2026
New Year's Day		January 1, 2026
Orthodox Christmas	Christian Orthodox	January 7, 2026
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		January 19, 2026
Maha Shivaratri	Hindu	February 15–16, 2026
Presidents' Day		February 16, 2026
Lunar New Year		February 17, 2026
Beginning of Ramadan	Islamic	February 17, 2026
Ash Wednesday	Christian	February 18, 2026
Beginning of Lent	Christian	February 18, 2026
Purim	Jewish	March 2–3, 2026
Holi	Hindu	March 4, 2026
Laylat Al-Qadr	Islamic	March 16, 2026
Rama Navami	Hindu	March 16, 2026
Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)	Islamic	March 18, 2026
Passover (Pesach)	Jewish	April 1–9, 2026
Good Friday	Christian	April 3, 2026
Easter	Christian	April 5, 2026
Orthodox Good Friday	Christian Orthodox	April 10, 2026
Orthodox Easter	Christian Orthodox	April 12, 2026
Shavuot	Jewish	May 21–23, 2026
Memorial Day		May 25, 2026
Eid al-Adha	Islamic	May 27, 2026
Juneteenth		June 19, 2026
Independence Day		July 4, 2026
Janmashtami	Hindu	September 4, 2026

General Information

Family & School Partnership

In line with our mission, we ask parents/guardians to help us maintain a positive, inclusive, nurturing environment by working with us in partnership. We believe the quality of education a student receives is dependent upon the school environment as well as the home environment. If expectations are consistent between the two environments, the student will develop more rapidly and with more self-confidence. The best interest of the student should always be the primary concern of parents/guardians and educators. The following principles of good practice describe the respective roles and responsibilities of both partners.

Parents/Guardians Working with the School:

- Recognize that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.
- Seek an optimal match for the needs of the student, their own expectations, and the philosophy and programs of the School.
- Familiarize themselves with and support the School's policies and procedures.
- Provide a home environment that supports the development of positive learning attitudes and habits.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences, special events, parent education presentations, and other school activities where such participation supports the student's efforts.
- Seek and value the School's perspective on the student.
- Seek information (when concerns arise) directly from the School (most often this means that the parent should reach out to the classroom teacher first).
- Share with the School any religious, cultural, medical, or personal information that the School may need to best serve the student.
- Refrain from posting negative commentary on social media that references the School or specific employees.
- Refrain from engaging in any conduct or activities that may be disruptive or detrimental to the School.

School Working with Parents/Guardians:

- Recognizes that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.
- Clearly and fully presents its philosophy, program, and practices to parents during the admission process and encourages dialogue that clarifies parental/guardian expectations and aspirations for the student.
- Seeks and values the parents/guardians' perspective on the student.
- Ensures that teachers and administrators are accessible to parents/guardians and model candid and open dialogue.
- Keeps parents well informed through systematic reports, conferences, publications, and informal conversations.
- Defines clearly how it involves parents/guardians when considering major decisions that affect the School community.
- Offers and supports a variety of parent/guardian educational opportunities.
- Suggests effective ways for parents/guardians to support the educational process.
- Seeks the knowledge it needs to work effectively with a diverse parent/guardian body.

As explicitly stated in the ACS Enrollment Contract, any conduct determined not to be in the best interests of the School, the School community, its students, parents, or employees may result in the student's dismissal.

Multiple Households

In order for the School to communicate effectively with families and support each student, it is important for teachers and administrators to be aware of students who spend time in multiple households. On the Parent Portal, parents are expected to identify whether co-parenting arrangements exist. If there are court-ordered guidelines regarding visitations, picking up a student from school, parent involvement in field trips, or other issues, please notify and provide proper documentation to Zoe Johnson, Associate Director of Admissions & Registrar.

General Information

Believing that a student’s educational experience is enhanced through active parent participation and partnership, the School seeks to facilitate communication with all parents. Absent a court order to the contrary, all parents for whom the School has contact information will receive normal School mailings (i.e., grades, teacher comments, all-School email) and other School communications. As part of this commitment, it is parents’ responsibility to ensure that any communication from the School is shared among their family. In addition, parents are expected to include any other parent(s)/guardian(s) of their child on electronic communications to the School, including emails to teachers. Given the unique legal situation of each family, the School may make exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis.

The School expects separated or divorced parents to cooperate and partner with the School with respect to their child’s education. For this reason, the School will not get involved in parental disputes or custody issues.

Home & School Association (HSA)

The Home and School Association (HSA) is a parent-led volunteer organization of The Avery Coonley School that works in cooperation with the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. All parents and School employees are members of the HSA. The purpose of the HSA is to help foster, through sponsorship of ACS events and initiatives, positive relationships among the parents of Avery Coonley students, the Senior Leadership Team and staff, the faculty, and the Board of Trustees. The HSA helps strengthen and enhance the School environment for the benefit of students, faculty, and parents by ensuring equity and inclusion for stakeholders as part of HSA-sponsored activities and events, celebrating and supporting the diversity in our community, and striving for inclusion for all community members. Examples for how the HSA can work to strengthen inclusive initiatives include striving to incorporate a broad range of texts and perspectives at the annual Book Fair and ensuring the annual Holiday House celebration represents a variety of different cultural themes and celebrations from cultures and religions around the world.

HSA Events for the 2025–2026 School Year May Include:

- Family Fun Day
- Book Fair
- Fall Fest Dinner
- Holiday House
- Parents Night Out
- Heritage Fest Games
- Heritage Fest Dinner and Performances
- Tall & Small Ball

HSA Programs for the 2025–2026 School Year May Include:

- Trimester Treats
- Memory Books
- Artsonia
- Go Green Committee
- Enrichment Opportunities
- E.A.T.S. (Employee Appreciation Treats & Snacks)

School Traditions

- **ACS Annual Gala and Auction** is held every spring on a Saturday evening to raise funds for the School (see [Alumni Relations, Development & Fundraising](#), page 21).
- **ACS Fund** is the School’s annual giving program (see [Alumni Relations, Development & Fundraising](#), page 21).
- **Book Fair** is a fall event for which the gymnasium is transformed into a bookstore, and students can shop for books. It usually coincides with Fall Fest Dinner.
- **Family Fun Day** is held every fall on a Saturday morning to build School community and culture. It includes fun outdoor activities and all families are encouraged to attend.
- **Fall Fest Dinner** is an annual family get-together where dinner is served by our Group 8 students. The money these students earn in “tips” is used to purchase a class gift for the School.
- **Gathering** is a time for students in Groups 1–8 to come together as a whole community for performances and events. Lower School students and Middle School students are partnered with their buddies for almost all

General Information

Gathering activities.

- **Graduation** is ACS's formal ceremony to award diplomas to Group 8 students. The ceremony is performed during the day in front of the entire school, and then in the evening for families of graduating students.
- **Heritage Fest Games** celebrate our School's rich cultural diversity. Held during the school day, students participate in games, crafts, and activities from cultures around the world.
- **Heritage Fest Dinner and Performances** is an opportunity for students to share aspects of their families and cultures through the sharing of food and performances. This evening event closes out Heritage Fest.
- **Holiday House** is an annual holiday market that brings in local vendors and artisans. It is held on the first Friday in December. Proceeds from Holiday House sales benefit enrichment programs offered to ACS students during the year.
- **Spring Fair** is an end-of-year School-wide community building event that celebrates the connection between our students, teachers, staff, and parents. It includes fun outdoor activities, and all families are encouraged to attend.
- **Thanksgiving Program** is an annual ACS tradition that dates back to the time of Queene Ferry Coonley herself! It is a time for the School community to come together in service of others and includes performances.

Alumni Relations, Development, & Fundraising

ACS is a not-for-profit educational institution that receives revenues from tuition, fees, endowment income, and voluntary charitable contributions. The tradition of philanthropic giving initiated with Mrs. Coonley's vision for the School and continues today with the generous financial support received from parents, grandparents, alumni, parents of alumni, faculty, staff, corporations, and other friends. The Alumni Relations & Development Office oversees the School's fundraising activities and many special events, and coordinates alumni relations. All fundraising activities or solicitations on behalf of ACS must be coordinated through the Alumni Relations & Development Office and Head of School. The main

fundraising activities of the Office include:

The ACS Fund

The ACS Fund is an annual giving program that begins each fall and concludes by the end of the fiscal year (June 30). Donations to the ACS Fund are necessary because tuition alone does not cover the full cost of the education and opportunities students receive at ACS. Like most independent schools, this "tuition gap" is filled by tax-deductible donations from parents, alumni, and other members of the community. The School depends on each family to participate every year with a tax-deductible donation. Contributors to the ACS Fund are recognized in the Annual Report.

ACS Annual Gala

Each spring, the Gala is held to raise funds for the School. Chaired by parent volunteers, the theme of the event changes each year. All families are encouraged to participate in this important and joyous celebration. Contributions are recognized both in the Gala program and in the Annual Report. Proceeds from the event support the School's operating budget and capital projects. The "Fund-A-Need" component of the event is different each year and targets a specific need of the School.

Alumni Relations

ACS Alumni Relations serves as a bridge between our past, present, and future. In partnership with the Alumni Council, we aim to foster lasting connections with alumni and create a supportive community that continues to enrich the school experience. Through events, communication, and volunteer opportunities, we work to celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni while encouraging their involvement in the School.

Tax Identification Number

The School's Federal Tax Identification Number (EIN) is 36-2171680

General Information

Contacts

Carolyn Johnson
Director of Alumni Relations & Development
630-353-7218
cjohnson@averycoonley.org

Sarah Perron
Associate Director of Alumni Relations & Development
630-353-7221
sperron@averycoonley.org

Kathleen Flynn
Alumni and Donor Relations Coordinator
630-353-7290
kflynn@averycoonley.org

Admissions, Re-Enrollment, & Financial Assistance

The Admission Office is responsible for admissions, re-enrollment, and financial assistance (financial aid).

Re-Enrollment

When a student is admitted to The Avery Coonley School, it is the School's expectation that the student will succeed and move forward to the subsequent Group. Contracts are renewed on an annual basis. In late January, the School provides re-enrollment information to parents/guardians.

Re-enrollment contracts will be issued only when accounts with the School are paid in full. A re-enrollment contract is typically prepared for all students in good academic, disciplinary, and financial standing. Occasionally, students who have academic or behavioral concerns may not be offered a re-enrollment contract, or their re-enrollment contract may be "held" until such concerns are addressed satisfactorily. The contract is available through the Parent Portal and is typically completed online. It should be electronically signed by all custodial parent(s) and/or guardians and any other adult who will assume financial responsibility and submitted no later than two weeks after contracts are made available, accompanied by a nonrefundable re-enrollment fee. Barring any academic, disciplinary, or financial concerns that emerge or worsen after the contract is executed, the contract holds the student's place for the next academic year until the first

tuition payment is due. It is important that this form be executed properly and promptly. Once the re-enrollment contract has been signed, the signer remains obligated to pay the coming year's full tuition unless the student is withdrawn in writing before June 1. Requests for extensions to re-enrollment deadlines should be addressed in writing to the Head of School. If the contract and deposit are not received by the due date, the student's slot will be considered available for other applicants.

Separation from the School

If parents make a decision to withdraw a student, they must notify the Head of School in writing as soon as they make the decision. The family is responsible for their financial obligations as outlined in the enrollment contract. The School may suspend, expel, or decline readmission to any student at any time. Reasons could include any breach of the School's policies and procedures now in effect or hereafter promulgated, including, but not necessarily limited to, academic, behavioral, attitudinal reasons—whether such issues arise on or off campus, during the school year, or at any other time—if the parents' relationship with the School becomes uncooperative, or if there is an unresolved financial issue.

Family Leave

Families who take a leave of absence from the School of a year or more are generally expected to apply to the School for readmission. The student will be considered on a space-available basis, as well as within the context and competition of the applicant pool for the student's grade level. Strength of the applicant's file is important, including a strong finish to the student's last year at the School, as well as a strong record of academic performance and citizenship while the student is away. Ultimately, the School cannot predict the number of openings or competitiveness of applicant pools for specific grade levels, and given the School's high enrollment, there is never a guarantee of readmission for the following year. Applications and all admission materials, from both current and new families, must be submitted by March 1 for first-round consideration. Enrollment decisions, regardless of a family's prior or current relationship with the School, always rest exclusively with the School.

General Information

Financial Assistance Program

The purpose of the financial assistance program (financial aid) is to extend long-term access to the educational programs of ACS to qualified students of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, who have the ability to succeed academically but may not have the economic means to pay full tuition. The financial assistance program also provides short-term or emergency aid to current ACS families, who are experiencing financial difficulties, to allow their children to continue enrollment in the School. ACS awards financial assistance to students in Kindergarten through Group 8 based on demonstrated financial need as determined by the School's financial assistance application process. A financial assistance award shall not exceed full tuition for any one student. **The maximum award shall generally not exceed 90% of tuition.**

Each school year, the School will budget up to 10% of total budgeted tuition revenue for financial assistance. If financial assistance requests exceed the budgeted funds, then additional funds may be requested from the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Financial Assistance Committee, consisting of the Head of School, the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Enrollment & Financial Aid and anyone else deemed necessary and appropriate by the Head of School, is responsible for administering the policy. The School takes appropriate measures to ensure that all aspects of the financial assistance process are confidential, and typically the Finance Committee will only have access to redacted information, with no family-identifying specifics.

Applying for Financial Assistance

Financial assistance awards at ACS are need-based. To be considered for financial assistance, a family must contact the Admission Office for information regarding the process. Application for financial assistance must be made each year that assistance is sought. Current recipients and new applicants are asked to complete their application by February 1 to allow for early processing and notification of financial assistance awards. Early notification enables a family to make an informed decision regarding the reenrollment of the student for the next school year.

The process requires families to 1) complete an application, which includes an application fee, 2) submit a parents' financial statement to the designated financial assistance service, 3) submit the past year's federal and state income tax returns with all schedules and W-2 forms, and 4) provide additional information as may be requested by the Financial Assistance Committee. Once the file is complete, the Financial Assistance Committee reviews the application and determines whether an award is indicated. The Financial Assistance Committee takes into account various information, including, but not limited to, the number of children in the household, additional dependents, assets, and all sources of income. In addition, the Committee considers lifestyle choices and discretionary spending patterns that may affect the family's ability to fund the student's education. Vacation homes, luxury vehicles, and similar lifestyle choices are typically viewed as disqualifying in the context of financial assistance applications. The Avery Coonley School is pleased to support qualified families living within or below their means.

The Director of Enrollment & Financial Aid communicates the decision of the Committee to the family and notifies the Business Office when an award is made. The Financial Assistance Committee strives to have all award decisions communicated by mid-March. The School upholds the confidentiality of personal financial data throughout the process and expects families to maintain the confidentiality of awards. Failure to maintain confidentiality risks future eligibility.

International Students

Students enrolled in the School from countries outside of the United States are required to ensure that their visas, health insurance coverage, and all other requirements applicable to domestic students (including vaccinations and completion of all enrollment and orientation forms) are in order prior to arriving on campus at the beginning of the school year. International students are also responsible for ensuring that their travel arrangements coincide with the School calendar.

General Information

Contacts

Delphine Lenoir
Director of Enrollment & Financial Aid
630-353-7213
dlenoir@averycoonley.org

Zoe Johnson
Associate Director of Admissions & Registrar
630-353-7214
zjohnson@averycoonley.org

Business Office & Tuition Payment

The Business Office is responsible for billing tuition, After-School Program charges, and various miscellaneous expenses. Bills are available through the parent's account on Finalsite Enrollment around the 20th of each month and are due by the 15th of the next month or a late fee is charged. You can view your billing summary, make payments, or adjust your account settings at any time by logging on to your parent account which can be accessed via the Parent Portal. For questions related to financial matters, please contact the Business Office at businessoffice@averycoonley.org or (630) 353-7217.

Tuition Payment Policy (2025–2026)

For all students, a non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 must accompany the enrollment contract to reserve their space for the following year. This deposit is applied against tuition.

The tuition for each level and a payment schedule showing due dates appear on the enrollment contract. **Statements are emailed to parents prior to the due dates.** Tuition payments are to be paid on or before each due date.

Tuition for late-entering students is prorated based on the number of attendance days remaining in the school year.

In view of the parent's obligation to pay the total tuition, a Partial Tuition Refund Insurance Plan is available. The Partial Tuition Refund Plan offers enrolled families an insurance policy for recovering tuition in the event of certain absences, withdrawals, or dismissals. Information

about the plan is sent to all parents with the enrollment contract, or may be obtained from the Business Office. The plan is optional, and families should assess their situation to determine whether to purchase the policy.

Acceptance of enrollment constitutes an agreement to pay the full academic year's account, composed of both total tuition and all related fees and expenses of the student. The School is entitled to be reimbursed for any attorney's fees and costs incurred in the collection of any unpaid balance.

REMINDER: IF YOU SELECTED THE THREE-PAYMENT TUITION PLAN FOR THE 2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR, YOUR FINAL PAYMENT WILL BE DUE ON NOVEMBER 15, 2025. IF YOU SELECTED THE 10-PAYMENT PLAN, YOUR FINAL PAYMENT WILL BE DUE ON FEBRUARY 15, 2026.

An account is considered delinquent if not paid within 10 calendar days of the due date. A late payment fee of 1.5% per month or fraction of a month will be charged on the unpaid balance of a delinquent account. Whenever a tuition or fee account becomes past due for a period of 30 days from its due date, the student will be withheld from classes until the delinquency is cured (unless the School obtains adequate security acceptable to the School for such account within said period). If the delinquency is not cured within an additional 30-day period, the student will be unenrolled from ACS. In all events, the first tuition installment payment must be paid on or before the first day of school or the student's place will not be reserved. The student will not be enrolled in classes. The School may take additional action(s) that it deems appropriate, as permitted by applicable law.

In order to ensure the integrity of the re-enrollment process, non-payment of any delinquent accounts by April 15 automatically will serve as notice of withdrawal for the next school year, and the spot will be filled with another student.

The School will assess a service charge for all returned payments.

General Information

Special Fees

When necessary, a fee is charged for some special School-sponsored activities and class projects. [Information on additional fees](#) is posted on the Tuition and Affordability page of the School's website.

Contacts

Business Office

businessoffice@averycoonley.org

Geraldine White

Chief Financial Officer

630-353-7215

gwhite@averycoonley.org

Debbie Wysopal

Business Associate

630-353-7217

wysodeb@averycoonley.org

School Communications

Overview

Open communication between parents and the School is essential. Parents are encouraged to establish communication with the classroom teacher early in the school year and to bring any questions and comments to the appropriate teacher. At ACS, there is a strong commitment to keeping parents informed on the progress of their children. Persistent behavioral, classroom, or curricular concerns should be addressed to the respective Division Head. Issues relating to school policies and procedures should be directed to the Head of School.

Parents are expected to read communication materials distributed by the School. Each week families should receive ACS News, via email, detailing important events and activities. Additional information and the school year calendar are posted on the Parent Portal. Some information is password-protected and specifically designed for current students and parents. School families must respect the confidentiality of this area of the website and refrain from sharing the password they are issued with people outside of the School community.

Current Family Contact Information

Parents are expected to keep the School informed of contact information for emergency situations. If a parent is going to be away from home for an extended length of time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number where the parent can be reached, as well as information regarding who will be responsible for the student and how they may be reached in case of illness or other emergencies.

Website

The Avery Coonley website contains general information on the School including access to the athletics schedule, an abbreviated School calendar, and the Parent Portal from the Parents Page.

Go to: averycoonley.org/parents

ACS Parent Portal

The Parent Portal is a password-protected private portal accessible by current ACS parents only. The portal allows you to access your child(ren)'s school information including schedules, report cards, and assignment. It also contains the full School calendar, the School directory, access to Magnus Health, and other tools.

To access the Parent Portal, go to: <https://accounts.veracross.com/averycoonley/portals/login>

The Parent Portal can also be accessed from the Parents page of the ACS website. Go to: averycoonley.org/parents. Then click on the Parent Portal button.

Email

Important announcements from the administration, reminders, and the all-School newsletter (ACS News) are sent via email. Please check your account profile on the Parent Portal to make sure the School has your correct email address on file. Be sure to read all communications from the School. To ensure you receive these communications, add the following email address to your contacts list/ address book so your email client recognizes them as not spam:

marcom@averycoonley.org

support@averycoonley.org

kmontgomery@averycoonley.org

General Information

Direct Communication

The School provides voicemail and email services for teachers and staff members. To keep classroom interruptions to a minimum, parents are asked to leave voicemail or email messages. All messages should be returned by the end of the next business day. ACS encourages all its staff to sign off email after 5:00 pm on weekdays where possible and also during weekends and holidays. Please do not expect a quick response during these times, and, whenever possible, refrain from sending emails outside the regular workday. If you have immediate needs during the day, please contact the respective Division Head for assistance. For urgent technology issues, contact the Technology Department at techteam@averycoonley.org.

Classroom Newsletter

Classroom teachers email parents regularly with a newsletter of updates and information about the Group's activities.

Take-Home Folders

Lower School students use take-home folders as a means of communication between school and home. Parents are asked to review their child(ren)'s take-home folder on a regular basis.

Social Media

The Avery Coonley School has active Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube accounts. School news and student accomplishments are shared by the School on these accounts.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are typically scheduled three times in the academic year. The goal is to share student learning and growth, troubleshoot challenges, and celebrate successes. Informal communications are welcome throughout the year, and parents are encouraged to reach out to teachers with any questions or concerns.

Tea with the Head of School

These meetings are typically held monthly in the Commons and/or virtually and are an opportunity to hear from the Head of School and ask questions. All ACS parents are encouraged to attend.

School Meetings and Gatherings

All-ACS Gatherings are held frequently. Many of these are devoted to the opportunity to watch other members of our community perform. On occasion, we are also fortunate to be able to welcome visiting speakers and performers. Every student is expected to arrive at Gatherings promptly and to exemplify mature, supportive, and appropriate audience behavior throughout the lecture or performance. Students who do not have classes before Gatherings are expected to arrive in time to attend Gatherings.

Emergency Notifications, School Closings, & Late Starts

In case of an emergency, ACS uses multiple channels to reach parents quickly, including texts, email, media notifications, and the School website.

In the event of weather closing or late start, the decision to open or close the School is made based upon weather and road conditions in the vicinity of the School. Decisions to hold school are normally made by 6:30 am, and information will typically be shared as follows:

1. An email and automated phone call will be sent to families providing relevant information regarding the School closing or late start.
2. School closings or late start will be announced both on the main School voicemail greeting and the School website.
3. Major Chicago television and radio stations are informed of school closing or late start through use of the Emergency Closing Center. Parents can listen for an Avery Coonley School announcement on these stations or can access this information on-line at www.emergencyclosingcenter.com/. In the rare event of a mid-day closing, if parents cannot be reached at home, emergency numbers listed on the Emergency Information Record Form will be used to advise them of an early closing.

NOTE: TRAVELING IN INCLEMENT WEATHER. SINCE MANY AVERY COONLEY SCHOOL FAMILIES LIVE QUITE A DISTANCE FROM THE SCHOOL, PARENTS ARE THE FINAL JUDGES IN DETERMINING THE ADVISABILITY OF TRAVELING TO SCHOOL ON ANY GIVEN DAY.

General Information

Health & Safety

Wellness Guidelines

The Avery Coonley School acknowledges the CDC's framework of engaging the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) approach to supporting the health and wellness of our students and staff. This model is student-centered and emphasizes the role of the community in supporting the School, the connections between health and academic achievement, and the importance of evidence-based School policies and practices. The WSCC model includes ten important areas of a healthy school: health education, physical education and activity, nutrition environment and services, health services, social-emotional support, counseling, employee wellness, physical environment, community involvement, and family engagement. The Avery Coonley School acknowledges the important role schools play in helping students establish healthy behaviors early in life and strives to promote an environment that supports a culture of health and wellness. Faculty and staff are continually working on ways to build upon and improve School policies ensuring that every student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

Health Records (Magnus Health)

Magnus Health is an online software solution for collecting, managing, and securely storing student health information for schools. Parents benefit from less paperwork and easy online form submission for all school required documents including those necessary for participating in interscholastic sports. Other benefits include having continuous access to your child's health record and the ability to make updates as needed. Having up-to-date, accurate information, medical action plans for chronic illnesses and medication information enables the school nurse to better care for your student during their school day. Magnus streamlines the collection and secure storage of student health information in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations employing military-level security technology to address the privacy and security concerns of its over one thousand programs in various institutions nationwide.

The sharing of protected health information with others in the School will be limited to a need-to-know basis. Only information that is relevant and necessary to preserve the health and safety of a student is shared.

Required Forms and Records

State law requires that each student have a physical examination record showing a complete series of immunizations on file at the School.

- 1. Physical Exam Form (Child Health Exam):** Required for all **NEW** students, returning students in **PreK 4, Groups 2 and 6, AND** students in **Groups 5, 7, and 8** if they are participating in sports.
- 2. Immunization record:** Required for **ALL** students (Illinois combines immunization records with the physical exam form.) Refer to the most current published Illinois vaccination schedule.
- 3. Eye Exam Form:** Required for students in Kindergarten and **NEW** students entering in groups 1-8.
- 4. Dental Form:** Required for all new students in **K-8** and returning students in **Groups 2 and 6**.
- 5. Medication Authorization Form:** Required for **ALL** students. This form must be completed annually and requires a **parent AND physician signature** to receive any over-the counter medicines such as Tylenol, cough drops, lip balm, etc., or prescription medication during the school day or on overnight school trips.

ALL MEDICAL FORMS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE PARENT PORTAL AND SHOULD BE FILLED OUT AND SUBMITTED THROUGH MAGNUS HEALTH BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

Medications Policy, Procedures, & Guidelines (2025–2026)

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the administration of medication to their children. The administration of medication to students during regular school hours is strongly discouraged, unless the medication is absolutely necessary and critical to the health of the student.

Emergency medication: Emergency medication required to treat a medical condition must be provided to the Health Office by the first day of school, or as soon as possible after the student is prescribed the medicine for the first time.

General Information

Self-carry: (a) A rescue inhaler may be carried with parent permission and physician order. (b) An epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) may be carried with parent permission and physician order. Self-carry privileges may be withdrawn if a student exhibits behavior indicating lack of responsibility toward self or others with regards to medication.

Stock Epinephrine/Albuterol: ACS will maintain a supply of undesignated epinephrine (junior and adult) and albuterol in accordance with Public Act 100-0726 when supply is available. This law allows the use of these medications with a standing order of a physician. Any trained personnel may administer epinephrine to any person suspected of experiencing an anaphylactic reaction. Albuterol may be administered by the School Nurse or trained personnel to any person believed to be having respiratory distress.

Medication storage: Medicines provided to the School will be stored in the Health Office. Parents/guardians must arrange to collect the medication at the end of the school year. Unclaimed medication will be discarded.

Prescription medications: Prescription medications must be provided to the Health Office in the original container and include the following instructions for administration: prescriber's name, name of the medication, dosage, frequency, time, and route of delivery. The prescription portion of the ACS Medical Authorization Form must be on file with the School.

Medication administration: (a) During the school day, medications will be administered by the School Nurse, or other designated personnel. (b) Medications for overnight trips should be limited to only those that are absolutely essential to a student's survival and/or well-being. Medications will be self-administered by the student under the supervision of designated School personnel, who will be responsible for holding the medication for the duration of the trip. The exception to this is emergency medication where the student is permitted to self-carry.

Expired medication: ACS will not administer expired medication. Expired medication will be safely discarded.

Homeopathic medicines & preparations: Homeopathic medications are not FDA approved and cannot be administered by School personnel, even with a medical order. A parent/guardian may come to School to administer but must be pre-arranged with the student's teacher and the School Nurse via email.

Medical cannabis: Parents or guardians may administer a cannabis infused product on School premises to students provided: 1) the student is an authorized medical cannabis user, 2) has a physician's order on file, 3) has a copy of the student's medical cannabis user card on file, and, 4) has a parent/guardian medical cannabis user card on file.

Medical marijuana may be delivered via patch, pump, or edible, but not in the form of inhaled smoking. The Health Office may only store FDA approved medical cannabis in the case of a qualified medical cannabis user. Presently, the FDA has approved only one CBD product available by prescription to treat two rare forms of epilepsy. Under federal law, this is the only cannabis medication that School personnel will administer to an authorized medical user with the appropriate documentation on file.

Food Allergy Policy (2025-2026)

Introduction

Food allergies affect approximately 1 in 13 children in the United States and are a growing burden to food safety and public health. **A food allergy is a very serious (and potentially fatal) medical condition in which the body's immune system responds to contact or ingestion of a normally harmless food protein in a virulent manner. Ninety percent of food allergic reactions are caused by nine different foods: peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish (exoskeleton), milk, eggs, and sesame. Please note that while a packaged food product may not contain a specific food protein, it may be manufactured in a facility that processes these food proteins, which means that the proteins may still be present in the packaged food.**

While no school can guarantee a 100% allergen-free environment, we take the threat of food allergies very seriously at The Avery Coonley School. We strive to work cooperatively with families to maintain the health and safety of students diagnosed with food allergies in ways that are developmentally appropriate and inclusive. The safety of a child with life-threatening food allergies is a shared partnership between the family, school, and student. Our philosophy focuses on teaching children how to navigate living in a world that is not allergen free. Educating your child about food allergies is an ongoing and collaborative process.

General Information

Our Policy

The Avery Coonley School requires that all students & parents observe the following when bringing personal lunch/snacks to School or on School-sponsored field trips:

- DO NOT bring food from home that contains tree nuts or peanuts. Tree nuts include, but are not limited to, **almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts.**
- DO NOT share personal food items of any kind with other students.

The Avery Coonley School requires that all students & parents observe the following when bringing treats to School to the classroom for planned activities and celebrations:

- DO NOT bring food from home that contains tree nuts or peanuts. Tree nuts include, but are not limited to, **almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts.**
- BRING food items in original packaging (if items are prepackaged)
- PROVIDE the classroom teacher and room parent with a list of ingredients, and/or a link to the product being served, **at least two weeks** before the event/activity so that the information can be shared with the School community. This includes cultural activities that may feature home prepared items that are not in its original packaging. Room Parents will communicate information on the planned activity with families so that they can make an informed choice on their child's participation.

For all other events & activities (including HSA events, Heritage Fest) where parents will be present with their children to supervise what they consume, the Avery Coonley School requires that all community members observe the following:

- DO NOT bring food from home that contains tree nuts or peanuts. Tree nuts include, but are not limited to, **almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts.**
- DISPLAY a list of ingredients contained in the food being served (if making a traditional dish) and/or a list of ingredients alongside the pre-packaged item.

- PROVIDE HSA and/or the event coordinator with a list of ingredients, or a link to the product being served, **at least four weeks** before the event/activity so that the information can be shared with the School community.

Our Commitment to You

The Avery Coonley School is committed to preserving the safety of its students with food allergies in the following ways:

1. Threats, harassment, or jokes directed towards children with allergies will be treated as disciplinary infractions and may result in suspension or expulsion as determined by the Head of School.
2. Emergency medication provided by families will be stored securely in the Health Office and in the classroom if a second pen is provided.
3. Stock epinephrine (junior and adult) will be stored securely in the Health Office, when available through designated programming.¹
4. Copies of Student Individual Allergy Action Plans (when available) will be provided to classroom teachers.
5. Students are allowed and encouraged to self-carry epinephrine when age or developmentally ready; some students may demonstrate independence earlier than others, while other students may take longer to develop these skills. Any self-carry arrangements must be approved, in advance by the School Nurse.
6. Parents should contact the Health Office with special seating/lunchroom requests. Designated "Allergy Tables" have not been definitively proven to reduce the risk of food allergic reactions. Rather, the focus is on the avoidance of allergen ingestion and access to prompt epinephrine in the event of an exposure.²

¹ Stock supply is contingent upon national supply shortages, medication recalls, and lack of access to an ordering provider.

² Allergy tables are less common due to social isolation but still implemented in some schools and can be implemented upon parent/guardian request.

General Information

Vaccination Policy (2025-2026)

ACS Board of Trustees Student Vaccination Policy

Vaccinations may be the single most important health-promoting intervention that health care providers and parents can do for children. Based on all available literature, evidence, and current studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), vaccines are safe and effective. Parents/guardians electing not to vaccinate their children put both their children and other individuals who are not able to receive vaccines for medical reasons at risk.

The Avery Coonley School has the following policy on student immunizations:

- All enrolled students must have up-to-date immunizations as required by the State of Illinois.*
- The only accepted vaccination waivers will be for a valid medical or religious exemption.*
- For the School to accept a medical exemption, the family must consent to a medical examination of the child by a doctor of the School's choosing. Based on the recommendations made to the School, the School may or may not allow a medical exemption.
- For the School to accept a religious exemption, the family must file a valid and complete Certificate of Religious Exemption that complies with all required elements under Illinois law.
- All students must have their immunizations up to date by October 15 of each school year to remain enrolled. ACS is required to follow the Illinois Department of Public Health Vaccine Schedule.*
- The School may allow on rare occasions, a slight variation of the recommended immunization schedule based on medical circumstances.
- If proof of vaccination or a valid exemption is not provided as required, the child will not be allowed to return to school.
- There are also times when the School may require additional immunizations beyond which the state requires for attendance.

- If there is a risk of a vaccine-preventable disease impacting campus or the School community, the School may exclude non-immunized students, including those with valid religious or medical exemptions, from school and all School activities. Excluded students will not be permitted to return until (1) the danger of the outbreak has passed; (2) the student becomes ill with the disease and completely recovers; or (3) the student is immunized. In determining whether there is a risk of a vaccine-preventable disease, the School may consult with appropriate medical professionals and/or the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- Questions regarding immunization objections should be directed to the Head of School.

* For more information, see Illinois Department of Public Health: [Minimum Immunization Requirements Entering a Childcare Facility or School, 2025–2026](#), the [ACS Medical Exemption Waiver](#), and the [ACS Religious Exemption Waiver](#) on the Parent Portal.

Sick Procedure

If your child is exhibiting any of the symptoms below, please keep your child at home:

- Has a temperature at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Has been vomiting or experiencing diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- Has heavy cold symptoms such as deep or uncontrollable coughing or significant lack of energy (even without a fever).
- Exhibits yellow or green discharge from the eyes (possible pink eye).
- Has acute pain and requires the use of narcotics to manage.
- Displays an unusual rash or skin lesion (possibly impetigo, scabies, monkeypox).
- Has been diagnosed with a communicable disease.*
- Has poorly controlled asthma.
- Has any symptoms that would potentially compromise the health and safety of other children.

General Information

If a child develops or exhibits any of the above symptoms while at School, a parent/guardian or designated emergency contact will be notified, and the child will need to be picked up from the School within 45 minutes. For the attendance policy and reporting absences, see [Lower School Attendance Policy & Procedures](#), page 39 and [Middle School Attendance Policy & Procedures](#), page 60.

Communicable Illnesses

Parents/Guardians are expected to report to the School if their child has a communicable illness.

The School may exclude any student who (a) has a communicable illness, (b) has been exposed to an infected person, and/or (c) has traveled to an area impacted by a communicable illness, if the School determines that such exclusion is appropriate for the welfare of the student or the School community. The School may also screen students or require students to be screened by appropriate medical professionals to determine whether they pose a risk to the community. The School's decisions shall be based on current and well-informed medical judgments concerning the illness, the risks of transmitting the illness to others, the symptoms and special circumstances of each individual who has a communicable illness, and an analysis of the identified risks and available alternatives for responding to an individual with a communicable illness.

If and when appropriate, the School will disseminate information to students and families regarding campus health and safety issues through regular internal communication channels. For example, the School may provide families with information about the nature and spread of communicable illnesses, including symptoms and signs to watch for, as well as required steps to be taken in the event of an epidemic or outbreak. We encourage all parents and guardians to contact medical professionals with any questions or concerns about communicable illnesses or immunization issues.

Head Lice

Head lice infestation is common among school age children three to twelve years of age. Family units, not the school institution itself, are the primary cause of cases leading to outbreaks of lice in schools. **The American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention do not consider head lice to be a health hazard or a medical condition.** Lice do not spread disease, and personal hygiene is not a contributing factor. If your child has live head lice, you may send them to school after treating them at home. For more information, see ACS information sheet on [Head Lice Management](#), on the Parent Portal.

Injury Procedure

ACS has a full-time registered nurse onsite to respond to medical situations. In the event of a serious medical emergency, Downers Grove paramedics are called and, if necessary, the student will be transported to the Emergency Department of Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, 3815 Highland Ave., Downers Grove, IL 60515, unless directed to a different trauma center by the paramedics. The School will attempt to contact as soon as practicable the parents/guardians or emergency contact in the event of a serious medical emergency. If unable to reach the contacts provided, a School representative will accompany the student to the hospital. It is critical that parents update their emergency contact information annually in the Parent Portal and whenever there is a change mid-year. (Note: If a student who is not a resident of Downers Grove is transported by Downers Grove paramedics to a hospital or care facility, the student's parents/guardians will be billed by the Village of Downers Grove for that service.)

Accident Insurance/Permission to Treat

The School does not carry individual accident insurance for students who may be injured while at School. The School expects that all families carry appropriate medical insurance. The parent/guardian shall be financially responsible for any and all medical treatment or medical transportation provided to the student while in attendance both at the School and at any School event.

By allowing your child to attend The Avery Coonley School, you grant permission for The Avery Coonley School to act on behalf of your child to secure emergency medical and/or emergency surgical treatment for your

child while at School or on School related trips. This permission also extends to any program or travel outside the continental limits of the United States and allows for the provisions of emergency transportation.

Other Parent Responsibilities

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for informing the School of any health conditions that may require care during the school day (e.g., allergies, asthma, diabetes, seizures, etc.) Any medication required to treat the condition and a corresponding medical plan must be provided to the Health Office before the school year begins. If your student has one of the above listed conditions, a medical provider must complete a corresponding Medical Action Plan outlining the course of treatment. All Medical Action Plan forms can be found on the Parent Portal in Magnus Health.
- It is in the best interest of students for the School to be fully aware of their medical and emotional health history so that appropriate support can be put in place while at school. Therefore, families are expected to disclose their child's complete social, disciplinary, medical, and academic history, including any psychological and educational evaluations, and outpatient or inpatient treatments for emotional or psychological issues that may impact the school experience.

Medical & Dental Appointments

A student may be excused for medical, dental, and personal appointments when such appointments cannot be scheduled during non-school hours. If a student needs to leave school early to go to a medical, dental, or personal appointment during school hours, a parent or guardian must complete the Absence Report Form located on the Parent Portal or call the Attendance Reporting Line at 630-969-0800 (press 5) by 8:30 am on the day of the appointment. Lower School families must also notify the child(ren)'s classroom teacher(s) via email (when possible) AFTER notifying the School via the Absence Report Form or Attendance Reporting Line. (See [Lower School Attendance Policy & Procedures](#), page 39. See [Middle School Attendance Policy & Procedures](#), page 60.)

Hearing & Vision Screening Programs

Free hearing screens are administered by certified technicians under the supervision of the DuPage County Health Department. The purpose of the hearing screening is to discover mild hearing losses before they become more serious problems. The test is NOT a comprehensive exam, but a screen to help discover mild hearing losses before they become more serious problems. New students and students in PreK 3, PreK 4, Kindergarten, and Groups 1 through 3 are tested. Students who require further testing will be referred for a comprehensive examination.

Free vision screens: The specific goal of the vision screening is to identify those students who do not meet criteria for visual performance; it is not a comprehensive examination. Vision tests are administered to students in PreK 3, PreK 4, Kindergarten, Group 2, Group 4, and Group 8, new students, and any child with a suspected vision problem. Children who wear glasses will not be administered a vision screening.

Physical Education Restrictions

A written parent request for a restriction from physical education class/recess will be accepted for up to three days. After this time, a physician's note is required. These requests should be submitted to the School Nurse who will share the information with the appropriate staff and faculty. Students will report to physical education class for instruction or modified activities.

Drug & Alcohol Use

Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol or any controlled substance on campus by parents or students is prohibited. The Head of School may authorize the consumption of alcohol for adult events on campus.

Any student who is taking, carrying, or keeping anywhere on campus non-prescription medication or medications prescribed to him or her without following the procedures outlined above is in violation of this policy (see [Medications Policy, Procedures & Guidelines](#), page 27). Sharing of medications between students is a violation of federal and state laws and will be dealt with severely.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

If an employee of Avery Coonley has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be an abused or neglected child, the employee is obligated to immediately report it to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Head of School. If appropriate, the child's family will be notified of the report. Any parent or guardian who has a concern that his or her child may be suffering from abuse or neglect may raise any such concerns with the Head of School.

School Safety & Security

The safety and security of our students, faculty, staff, visitors, and facilities is our highest priority. The campus is staffed by one full-time School Safety Officer. All visitors must sign in at the Main Entrance by providing a State ID and using the SchoolPass system and wear a visitor's badge at all times while on campus. All visitors must leave the campus via the Main Entrance. **Parents are asked to see teachers, Division Heads, and the Head of School by appointment only.**

Students Attending After-School Activities

Students attending after-school activities (e.g., sporting events, parent/teacher conferences, etc.) should remain at the event or activity at all times, until the completion of the event. Students are not permitted to roam the campus, enter other buildings, or play on the playground or challenge course. The playground and challenge course are closed when the school day ends, and students (other than those supervised in the After-School Program) may not use these areas.

Campus Security Surveillance

The Avery Coonley School is committed to protecting the safety and property of the community while respecting the privacy rights of our faculty, staff, students, and visitors. The primary use of surveillance cameras is to record images for future identification of individuals and activity in the event of violations of law or policy. In all cases, security equipment is used in a manner that adheres

to legal statutes and ethical standards where the right of privacy is concerned and is not used where there exists a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as in restrooms, locker rooms, etc. These surveillance cameras record visual footage in each location, but do not record any sound or other audio. (See [Appendix: Campus Security/Video Surveillance Policy 2025–2026](#))

Emergency Preparedness Drills

School personnel conduct and supervise regular fire, severe weather, and other safety drills. Tornado emergency procedures and fire evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. The School also practices procedures to be used in the event of an outside threat requiring a lockdown of the facility.

Campus Access

Campus access is limited during the school day. All external doors are kept locked. All visitors to campus are required to enter through the main entrance and be cleared through the School's security system.

Students are not permitted in any outdoor areas during school hours (excluding the cloister) without supervision and/or permission from an adult.

In the interest of safety, liability, and concern for the School maintenance schedule, school facilities may not be used after normal school hours except with direct written permission from the Business Office and the Head of School. Further, an administrator or designee must be present anytime the facilities are being used. Anyone caught using The Avery Coonley School's facilities without written permission will be immediately escorted off the premises.

Skateboards, Scooters, Roller Blades, & Bikes

Skateboards, scooters, and roller blades are not allowed on campus, unless they are a supervised school activity. Bicycles may be used for transportation to and from school with proper safety gear worn by the rider. Bikes must be walked while on School grounds and locked near the west side of the School during the day.

Firearms

For the safety of the entire School community, firearms and other weapons are prohibited on School grounds, except by emergency personnel.

Use of Rideshare Services

Parents should be aware that many rideshare companies, such as Uber, have policies that prohibit transporting unaccompanied minors. The School prohibits the use of these services by students and will not take responsibility for calling car services for students.

Miscellaneous

Use of the ACS Brand

All families are required to obtain permission from the Head of School prior to utilizing The Avery Coonley School name, brand, or logo with any outside or previously unapproved group. All requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Solicitations and Posting on Campus

Permission must be obtained from the Head of School to display any information (including posters, signs, and banners) or soliciting on School grounds.

Animals on Campus

A student or other visitor to campus who has a disability that requires the assistance of a service animal, as defined by applicable law, is generally permitted to bring the service animal to campus and School programs. When it is not obvious what service the animal provides, the School may ask whether the animal is required because of a disability and the job or task the animal is trained to perform. Animals, other than service animals, are not allowed on campus. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the Head of School.

Lower School



Lower School

Logistics

Location

The Lower School is located on the South side of campus with classrooms adjoining the Cloister. The Lower School includes Preschool through Group 4 students.

Hours & Daily Schedule

The Receptionist is typically on duty between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday–Friday.

Daily Regular Hours for Each Group:

PreK 3 (Half Day)	8:15 am–11:00 am
PreK 3 (Full Day)	8:15 am–2:45 pm
PreK 4 (Half Day)	8:15 am – 11:15 am
PreK 4 (Full Day)	8:15 am–2:45 pm
Kindergarten	8:25 am–2:45 pm
Groups 1–4	8:25 am–3:05 pm

Before-School Supervision

Beginning at 7:45 am, students in Kindergarten through Group 8 may be dropped off and must report to the playground (blacktop) by the South Entrance, or the Commons during inclement weather, for supervised play. No students will be admitted to the building before 7:45 am except for those students attending supervised before-school extracurricular activities.

Morning Arrival

Drop-off typically takes place on the East side of the building from the Main Entrance to the South Entrance.

7:30 am–7:45 am	Before-school extracurricular activities begin. Students must enter through Main Entrance.
7:45 am	Morning drop-off begins (K–8 only). Students are directed to the south playground (blacktop) for supervised play.
8:05 am	Earliest that students in PreK 3 and 4 may be dropped off and report to home room.
8:15 am	School begins for PreK 3 and 4
8:20 am	Bell rings. All students enter School via the South Entrance. All students must be dropped off by 8:20 am.
8:25 am	South Entrance and car line close. All students PreK 3–8 arriving at or after this time must be signed in by parents at Main Entrance reception. Students will be marked tardy.

Regular Dismissal

Dismissal Procedure

Dismissal typically takes place on the East side of the building between the Main Entrance and the South Entrance. For more information about car line procedures, see [Arrival & Dismissal Traffic Safety](#), page 37.

Pick-Up Times

Please do not arrive on campus more than 5 minutes prior to dismissal.

PreK 3 (Half Day)	11:00 am
PreK 3 (Full Day)	2:45 pm
PreK 4 (Half Day)	11:15 am
PreK 4 (Full Day)	2:45 pm
Kindergarten	2:45 pm
Groups 1–4	3:05 pm

Lower School

Arrival & Dismissal Traffic Safety

Arrival

When dropping off your child(ren) please pull all the way forward in the car line, even if your child is entering the building via the Main Entrance for before-school activities. Students should be ready to exit the vehicle when it stops. ACS staff, faculty, and volunteers will assist in getting your child safely out of the vehicle.

PLEASE DO NOT drop off students in the circle, as it is unsafe for pedestrians/other drivers and causes unnecessary car line delays.

PLEASE BE AWARE: Depending on ACS traffic, you may be in the car line for up to 15 minutes, so please plan your departure time accordingly.

Dismissal

Drivers may not arrive on campus for pick-up more than 5 minutes prior to their child(ren)'s dismissal time so as not to interfere with staggered divisional dismissal times. Cars entering the property for dismissal should come to a complete stop at the first stop sign, then drivers should alternate into the two lines being formed—one to the left down the main drive and one to the right in the parking lot along the fence. (See map, page 38.) **Drivers must display their color-coded, School-provided name card in the windshield.**

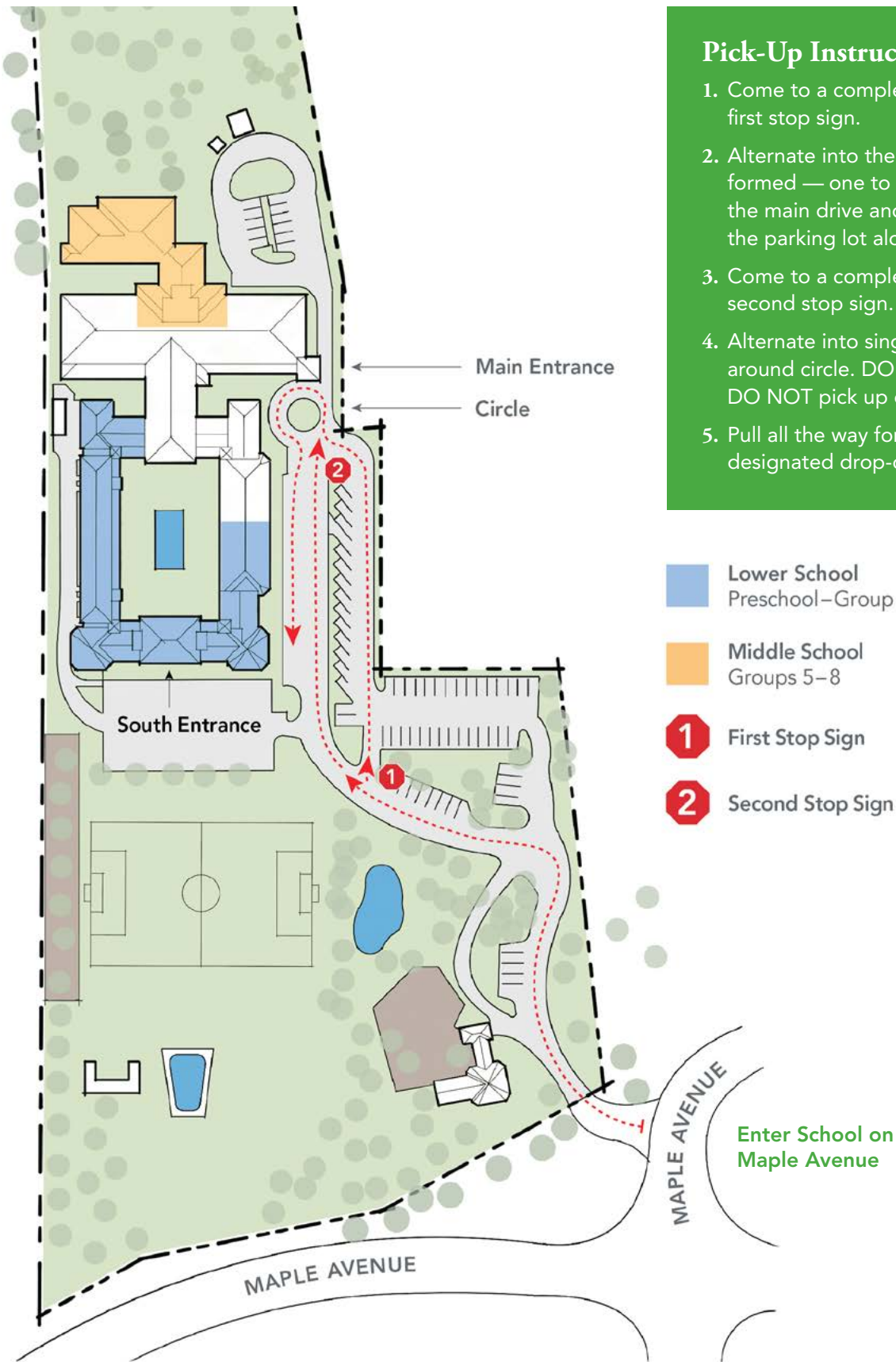
When picking up your child(ren), please pull all the way forward in the car line, even if your child is exiting the building via the Main Entrance. ACS staff, faculty, and volunteers will assist in getting your child safely in the vehicle. Parents wishing/needing to meet their child(ren) at the Main Entrance or South Entrance should park in the main parking lot, not on the driveway. Parents/guardians are expected to share parking, arrival, and dismissal procedures with any childcare providers who will be responsible for dropping off or picking up students.

It is the parents' responsibility and the School's expectation that **all students (PreK 3 through Group 8) will be picked up promptly from School at their designated dismissal time.** Any student in full-day PreK 4 through Group 8 not picked up at their scheduled dismissal time or at the end of their School-sanctioned, after-school activity (such as sports or clubs) will be escorted to the After-School Program by a faculty member, and families will be charged the drop-in rate for the service. Multiple instances of pick-up tardiness of any student(s) in PreK 3 through Group 8 will be brought to the attention of the School administration and, in extreme cases, may result in non-renewal of the student's enrollment contract. Students waiting for an older sibling or carpool member to be dismissed at a later time must be registered in the After-School Program but will not be charged for the service. (See [After-School Program](#), page 39.)

Traffic Safety

- The Avery Coonley School campus speed limit is 5 mph.
- Pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- Drivers must stop at all stop signs.
- The use of cell phones is not permitted by car drivers during drop off or pick up.
- Drivers are expected to obey the directions of ACS faculty & staff. Please respond to their requests with kindness and courtesy.
- Drivers should remain in their vehicle while students are being dropped-off or picked-up in the car line.
- U-turns are not allowed on campus.
- Students must get in and out of the vehicle on the passenger side only.

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Pick-Up Instructions

1. Come to a complete stop at the first stop sign.
2. Alternate into the two lines being formed — one to the left down the main drive and one to the right in the parking lot along the fence.
3. Come to a complete stop at second stop sign.
4. Alternate into single line forming around circle. **DO NOT** block driveway. **DO NOT** pick up or drop off in circle.
5. Pull all the way forward in the designated drop-off / pick-up area.

-  Lower School
Preschool–Group 4
-  Middle School
Groups 5–8
-  1 First Stop Sign
-  2 Second Stop Sign

Lower School

After-School Program

Avery Coonley students in PreK 3 (full day) through Group 8 may enroll in the After-School Program. The Program operates Monday through Friday, from 2:45 pm to 6:00 pm on regularly scheduled school days. The After-School Program is not available on early dismissal days.

An additional fee is charged for this Program and billed in the student's tuition statement. Students may be signed up for the entire year, or by day as needed. ACS's After-School Program is led by the After-School Program Coordinator and operated by qualified staff. The variety of daily activities planned for students participating in the Program include games and outdoor play, arts and crafts, hands-on activities, and structured homework time for Lower and Middle School students.

For more information see [After-School Program](#), page 54.

Daily Procedures

Dress Code

Students should arrive on campus appropriately attired for weather and interactive activities in all classes and environments. Students must wear securely fastened shoes at all times, and rubber soled shoes are encouraged.

On cold or rainy days, students are encouraged to wear extra clothing, such as a sweater or sweatshirt, as they are frequently outside when passing to and from classes. When there is snow on the ground, all students are required to wear boots and snow pants to participate in winter outdoor activities on the field and playground. Students in Preschool – Group 2 must keep a change of clothing at School in a bag labeled with their name.

Recess and some School activities will continue to take place outdoors when the "feels like" temperature is above 0 degrees or below 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The "feels like" temperature takes into account factors such as air temperature, relative humidity, and strength of the wind. Please make sure your child has the appropriate clothing with them each day to feel comfortable during these activities.

Any clothing containing references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, profanity, or other content deemed offensive by the School's administration or faculty is prohibited. Hats may be worn both indoors and outdoors provided

that their presence does not disrupt student learning. Without a formal school uniform requirement, it is impossible to delineate other instances when a student's clothing may not be considered appropriate, as clothing styles/sizes may look different from one student to another. As a general rule, all students must wear clothing that fully and adequately covers their undergarments and private areas. Low-cut tops, low-rise short-cut shorts, low-hanging pants, and crop tops exposing most of the midriff are examples of clothing that is in violation of the above. In these instances, students may be required to change their clothing. Families are asked to cooperate fully with the School in maintaining these standards.

Physical Education Classes

Appropriate clothing for unrestricted movement and appropriate gym shoes are required of each student. Students are required to wear shorts under skirts or dresses.

Toilet Training

All children must be toilet trained by the time they begin school. This means they must be able to determine when they need to go to the bathroom and be able to express that need to a teacher. They should also be able to deal with their clothing and their own toileting needs.

Attendance Policy & Procedures

It is impossible to replicate the experience of being in class. The Avery Coonley School offers an education that is immersive and rigorous, so for students to gain the full benefit and be successful lifelong learners, attendance is essential. We also teach our students that being present in their community, and honoring commitments to themselves and others is important. In support of our mission of a partnership of School and family, we ask that parents partner with us and avoid planning appointments, outside obligations, or family trips that result in unnecessary absences. Parents are our most important ally in teaching our students to prioritize their education.

Reporting an Absence

A parent must notify the School by 8:30 am on the day of their child(ren)'s absence. An absence can be reported by:

- submitting the Absence Report form located on the Parent Portal or
- calling the Attendance Reporting Line at 630-969-0800 (press 5). Please include your child(ren)'s

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name(s), Group number(s), reason for absence, your name, and a phone number where you can be reached (please speak slowly and clearly).

Lower School families must also notify the child(ren)'s classroom teacher(s) via email (when possible) AFTER notifying the School via the Absence Report Form or Attendance Reporting Line.

Work Missed Due to an Absence

During the course of the absence, certain class assignments may be set aside for the parent or child to collect either during the absence or upon their return to School. The student and parents should work directly with the teachers to determine a timeline for completing makeup work and assessments. Teachers are not required or expected to re-teach material that has been missed because of student absences, nor are they typically able to provide lesson materials in advance.

Absences Due to Vacation

Parents are urged to schedule family vacations during regularly scheduled School breaks. A student's attendance record will be taken into consideration at the time of re-enrollment.

Parents should be aware that many secondary schools require attendance records as part of the application process.

Excessive Absences

- After 5 consecutive days or 10 total absences during a school year, a student may be placed on a Progress Monitoring Plan (see page 39) and be required to engage supplemental tutoring services to support their learning.
- Students absent from School over 15 days during a school year, other than those granted a Leave of Absence (see below), may not be issued a re-enrollment contract for the following year or might not be promoted to the next Group level depending on their academic performance.

Leave of Absence

Should a student's extended absence from school be necessary or desired, the School may recommend or grant a request for a voluntary leave of absence. A leave for medical reasons will be handled in accordance with the School's Medical Leave policy in this Handbook. The School may recommend or grant a request for a voluntary leave of absence for other compelling reasons. The initial request for a voluntary leave of absence should be made to the appropriate Division Head. The School requires

sufficient supporting documentation prior to the approval of any leave. The sufficiency of any supporting documentation will be determined by the School.

The School makes the final determination as to whether to grant a leave of absence, as well as the duration of the leave and the conditions necessary for a student's return (including, but not limited to, whether the student must reapply for admission). Whether the period of leave is counted towards academic requirements for promotion and graduation will be determined by the School.

Leaves of absence may be noted in the student's educational record, including on the student's transcript. A leave of absence may be appropriate pending the outcome of an investigation involving student misconduct. However, a leave of absence will not be used in lieu of disciplinary action to address violations of the School's code of conduct, rules, or policies. Additionally, a student granted a leave of absence while on academic and/or disciplinary status may return on that same status.

Families remain financially responsible for tuition and other fees while the student is on a leave of absence.

Punctuality

Preschool begins promptly at 8:15 am and the Lower School day begins promptly at 8:25 am. To set our students up for a positive and productive day, and to prepare their minds for the school day, students should arrive at least 5 minutes prior to the start time and prepare to begin class promptly at the allotted time. Oversleeping, traffic etc. are not acceptable excuses for tardiness. Late arrival to class is disruptive and inconsiderate to teachers and classmates. If a pattern of regular tardiness develops, a student may receive additional support to arrive on time.

Tardiness Policy

- After 10 tardies the Lower School Head will typically contact the family inquiring about the student and the tardies.
- After 15 tardies the Head of School will typically require a meeting with the student and the family.

Division Organization

The Lower School Head works closely with the Head of School to manage the operations of the Lower School, which spans PreK 3 through Group 4. The Preschool Coordinator works closely with the Lower School Head to manage the operations of the PreK 3 and PreK 4 programs.

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Communication

Open communication between parents and the School is essential. Parents are encouraged to establish communication with the classroom teachers early in the school year and to bring any questions and comments to the appropriate teacher. At ACS, there is a strong commitment to keeping parents informed on the progress of their children. Persistent behavioral, classroom, or curricular concerns that are not resolved through initial discussion with the classroom teachers should be addressed to the Lower School Head. Issues relating to School policies and procedures should be directed to the Head of School. For parental expectations on communication, see [Family & School Partnership](#), page 19.

Classroom Newsletter

Classroom teachers email parents regularly with a newsletter of updates and information about the Group's activities.

Take-Home Folders

Lower School students use take-home folders as a means of communication between school and home. Parents should review their child(ren)'s take-home folder on a regular basis.

Contacting Teachers & Staff

All teachers have voicemail and email. Email is the preferred method to initiate contact. Teachers' School phone numbers and email addresses are listed in the Directory accessed through the Parent Portal. All messages should be returned by the end of the next business day.

Contacting Students During the School Day

Lower School students are not permitted to have cell phones or smartwatches on during the school day. Please do not use these methods of communication to contact your child.

Please contact the Receptionist with messages. A class will not be interrupted to give a student a message, except in an emergency. Typically, messages will be passed on during breaks, during lunch, and after school.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are typically scheduled three times in the academic year. The goal is to share student learning and growth, troubleshoot challenges, and celebrate successes. Informal communications are welcome throughout the year, and parents are encouraged to reach out to teachers with any questions or concerns.

Weekly Updates — ACS News

On Thursdays, during the school year, the School typically sends out an email with weekly updates. It includes information about the week's upcoming events, schedule changes, special events, and other time-sensitive information.

Cubbies

Students in most Group levels in the Lower School are assigned cubbies annually. Cubbies are used to store clothing, books, and other school materials. Items of value should not be brought to school. Please note:

- Decorations (outside or inside) are not permitted.
- Cubbies must not be switched without permission from the child's teacher.
- The School assumes no responsibility for items stored in cubbies.
- Open drinks and unsealed foods must not be stored inside.
- Defacing or damaging cubbies is not permitted and may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- For the safety of our students, The Avery Coonley School may search any student's cubby (see [Appendix: Search & Seizure Policy 2025-2026](#)).

Lunch

Lower School students in full-day PreK 3 through Group 4, may bring their lunches from home, or parents may pre-order their child(ren)'s lunches each month through the Catered Lunch Program. All drinks must be brought to School. Microwaves are available. If a student forgets their lunch, parents may drop it off at the table in the Main Entrance vestibule up until 11:45 am. After that time, a basic allergen-free lunch will be provided to the student. Bringing "fast food" special lunches to children is not permitted. (See [Dropping Off Items & Food Deliveries](#), below. See [Appendix: Food Allergy Policy 2025-2026](#)).

Gum Chewing

Students are not permitted to chew gum in any classes or during lunch, recess, or after school-activities (including on School-provided transportation).

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Dropping Off Items & Food Deliveries

Students forget things: homework, musical instruments, and so on. All visitors must check in through the Main Entrance. The Receptionist will collect the items and notify the student's teacher and the student will either come to the Front Desk to retrieve their belongings or the belongings will be brought to the student. To minimize the additional work this creates, the School does not permit "fast food," or other special lunches to be dropped off by parents. In addition, due to safety and security concerns, no outside food deliveries are allowed at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, Uber Eats, GrubHub, DoorDash, and individual restaurant deliveries.

Emergency Procedures

School personnel conduct and supervise regular fire, severe weather, and other safety drills. Severe weather emergency procedures and fire evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. The School also practices procedures to be used in the event of an outside threat requiring a lockdown of the facility.

Visitors

Campus Visitors, Volunteers, & Chaperones

All visitors (including volunteers) must sign in at the security kiosks located at the Main Entrance and show a state-issued ID to be cleared through the School's security system. Once cleared, visitors will be issued a visitor's badge which must be worn for the visit and returned to the front desk when leaving. All visitors must enter and exit through the Main Entrance.

Parents/guardians are asked to see teachers, Division Heads, and the Head of School by appointment only.

Academics

Overview

At ACS, gifted and high-achieving students collaborate within a curriculum that offers the depth, pace, and complexity to challenge them to the fullest. Our program serves highly motivated, high-ability learners.

PreK 3

Areas of development and study for PreK 3 include social-emotional learning and academic readiness skills to support reading, writing, mathematics, and fine and gross motor development.

PreK 4

Areas of development and study for PreK 4 include literacy, math, social-emotional learning, fine and gross motor development, art, technology, music, and physical education.

Kindergarten – Group 4

Areas of study for students in Kindergarten – Group 4 include math, literacy, science, social studies, French, drama, art, music, physical education, technology, research, and social-emotional learning.

Report Cards & Parent-Teacher Conferences

Lower School conferences are typically held three times per year (October, January, and May). Report cards are published at the end of each of the three trimesters. Parents will be notified via email when report cards are accessible in the Parent Portal. Phone calls, emails, and notifications in the Parent Portal are used to advise parents in the interim when a student's performance warrants more frequent communication. For assistance or questions regarding student progress, please contact the student's teacher(s).

Grading Scale

- **Extending** (Demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond the standard)
- **Proficient** (Demonstrates understanding of concepts and applies skills with independent proficiency)
- **Approaching** (Demonstrates competency that is developing and needs targeted practice and/or guided support to achieve proficiency)
- **Beginning** (Demonstrates a limited understanding of skills and application of concepts. Support and intervention are needed)

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Student Records and Transcripts

Students' records are kept on file at the School. Each student's record contains a transcript with grades, athletic involvement, commendations, test scores, formal academic, athletic and advisor comments, advisor letters, and letters involving any major discipline infractions.

Inconsistent / Insufficient Academic Progress & Monitoring Plan

When a Lower School student is significantly below grade-level benchmarks in reading, writing, math, or executive functioning, a Progress Monitoring Plan may be established. Circumstances that may prompt a Progress Monitoring Plan include proficiency in fewer than 60% of assessed benchmarks on a report card, below average performance on multiple standardized assessments subtests, and/or need for remediation support from both the math and literacy specialists. The Progress Monitoring Plan provides more targeted and strategic attention to the student by tracking the student's progress more closely and engaging the family and School in conferences (typically held on a monthly basis) to collaborate on intervention strategies. Strategies are applied at School, and interventions need to be applied at home to help the student meet their established goal(s). If insufficient progress continues to jeopardize the student's ability to succeed academically and perform within the range of typical development of ACS peers, the School may place a hold on or decline reenrollment for the following school year.

For further information on Academic Progress Monitoring Plans, see [Lower School Student Support Services](#), page 46.

Homework

Homework is critical in supporting students' academic growth and development and is designed to reinforce content as well as provide students with opportunities for enrichment. Homework guidelines for each group level/content area will generally be presented at Curriculum Night when teachers will typically set forth guidelines for homework completion. At-home resources are generally provided to PreK 3–Kindergarten students to help parents support their child's development. Formal homework is typically assigned in Groups 1–4. Students in Groups 1 and 2 receive literacy and math homework that is typically assigned on a weekly basis, allowing students to have a

predictable routine. Students in Groups 3 and 4 maintain an assignment notebook to record assignments that vary by day and span additional subjects.

All Lower School students should engage in basic computation practice and reading on a regular basis at home to support the applications that take place in the classroom. For example, preschool students should practice counting, and naming letter sounds. Kindergarten students should practice sums to ten and reading decodable books. Group 1 students should practice sums and differences to twenty and read daily. Students in Groups 2–4 should practice basic multiplication and division facts and read daily.

While the amount of time that a child spends on homework varies according to each student's unique study habits and needs, parents should encourage their child to discontinue working on any assignment that they are unable to complete within a reasonable amount of time (as suggested by the classroom or content area teacher). In such situations, parents are asked to communicate directly with the teachers to identify effective strategies for working with their child at home to better support their learning needs and study habits.

Standardized Testing

The Avery Coonley School administers the Educational Records Bureau's Comprehensive Testing Program 5 (CTP 5) to students in Groups 1 through 8. The computer-based assessment is given once per year during the second trimester. This standardized test provides the School and parents information about how students compare to other students in the nation (national norm), other independent schools (independent school norm), and their Group at ACS (grade norm). These scores are shared with parents and are used by the faculty and administration to assess and improve instruction.

The Lower School administers the Curriculum Associates iReady literacy assessments at least two times per year to students in PreK 4–Group 4 to track their literacy growth and ensure that students are reaching important foundational milestones along their journey of learning to read. Portions of the assessment are administered one-on-one with students and portions are computer-based. PreK 4 and Kindergarten assessments focus on letter naming, letter sounds, phonological awareness (rhyme production, phoneme segmentation and phoneme blending), and basic word decoding. Groups 1–4 assessments focus on oral reading fluency, multisyllabic word decoding, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

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Classroom Organization in the Preschool

The Pre K 3 and Pre K 4 programs have a suite of classrooms, two of which serve as larger community spaces. The Pre K 3 program typically has three teachers, and the Pre K 4 program has four. PreK 3 and PreK 4 students engage in both whole group and small group lessons and exploration.

Specialized and professionally endorsed content-area teachers provide “Essentials” classes to PreK 4 students, which take place in dedicated classrooms and spaces throughout the school. Essentials classes include physical education, art, music, and STEAM Lab.

Classroom Organization in Kindergarten — Group 4

The Lower School currently has two homerooms per Group. One full-time teacher works in each homeroom, and all teachers in each Group collaborate and communicate to apply a team-based approach to supporting the students. Students move fluidly among the classrooms as they are regrouped for different core subjects, and the full Group gathers together for social-emotional lessons, physical education, lunch, recess and Gathering. The Groups 1–4 classroom teachers departmentalize for certain subjects, such as math, reading, social studies, and science. Email correspondence should be addressed to the full teacher team of your child’s Group level.

Specialized and professionally endorsed content-area teachers provide “Essentials” classes, which take place in dedicated classrooms and spaces throughout the School. Essentials classes include French, physical education, art, music, drama, and STEAM lab. P.E. occurs every day. The remaining classes occur at varying frequencies and durations during the School’s 6-day schedule rotation: Currently French occurs four times for 20 minutes, music occurs three times for 20 minutes, drama occurs two times for 20 minutes, and art occurs one time for 60 minutes, and STEAM Lab occurs once for 60 minutes and once for 20 minutes.

Classroom Technology & Responsible Technology Use

Technology is used as a tool to deepen and extend learning in the classroom and to provide community and connection in a distance-learning environment. The School’s technology team works closely with teachers to integrate technology seamlessly into the classroom and to leverage its power for online learning. The goal is to teach students how to use computers and the Internet appropriately. Adherence to ACS’s **Responsible Use of Technology Policy** is expected of all Preschool and Lower School students. (See **Appendix: Responsible Use of Technology Policy 2025–2026**).

Cell Phone & Electronic Devices Policy

Lower School students are not permitted to use cell phones, electronic devices, unapproved computers, iPads, smartwatches,* electronic book readers and hand-held devices, including but not limited to video games, image and/or audio recording devices—other than School-issued technology—from the time they exit their cars at drop-off in the morning until they enter their cars at the end of the day. If students elect to bring such devices to School, they must remain powered off and unused, and in students’ backpacks the entire day. Students may not use the devices between classes, during lunch or recess, or during any clubs, activities, or athletic events.

Students will have ready access to School telephones should they need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day. We also respectfully request that parents refrain from texting, calling, or emailing students directly during the school day. If there is an important message to be delivered to the student, parents should contact the Receptionist, and the message will be delivered to the student. Alternatively, when a message is less urgent, parents can email their child’s team of classroom teachers and a teacher will relay the message to the student.

*Exceptions may be made for students who need to wear smartwatches to monitor and/or support a specific medical condition. These medical exceptions must be approved by the School Nurse and the appropriate Division Head, and the student may only use the device at School for the specified medical purpose.

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Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy for Overnight Trips

Overnight trips are an extension of the ACS learning experience and therefore, the school has discretion concerning appropriate use of cell phones, *smart watches, and other internet-connected devices during the trip. Cell phones will be collected regularly by the students' chaperones and redistributed at certain times for photo opportunities and to check in daily with their parents. Students will not be permitted to have internet-connected devices or smart phones in their hotel rooms overnight.

Students are encouraged to bring cameras (digital SLR or pocket cameras without internet connectivity) to record the trip, as their cell phones will not always be available to take pictures.

In cases of emergency, parents will be provided with the cell phone numbers of trip chaperones, and chaperones have contact information for all parents/guardians. In addition, students will have the chaperones' room information should they need assistance during the night and can call them using the hotel room phone. In addition, students can reach the hotel reception desk, which is staffed 24 hours, via their room phone.

*Exceptions may be made for students who need to wear smartwatches to monitor and/or support a specific medical condition. These medical exceptions must be approved by the School Nurse and the appropriate Division Head, and the student may only use the device at school for the specified medical purpose.

Student Email

The School provides students with an email account which should be used only for School-related communication (e.g., contacting and receiving information from teachers, submitting homework and assignments, transferring files to and from School, etc.). Students are expected to comply with the policies outlined in the School's Responsible Use of Technology Policy when using their School-issued email account.

Field Trips & Outdoor Education

Field trips are an important part of student learning and serve to enrich ACS students' academic, social, and emotional skills. Students are expected and encouraged to attend and participate in all field trip activities. During the trip, students must continue to abide by School behavioral

expectations (see **Standards of Behavior**, page 45) in addition to any other rules set by the trip coordinator. No unauthorized individuals will be permitted on School field trips; please contact the Lower School Head with any questions or concerns regarding who is and who is not allowed to attend specific field trips. Parent permission for their child(ren) to participate in field trips is required for every trip. Parents will be notified about field trips via email in advance of the trip date. Some field trips will require that a disposable sack lunch be packed for each child. Additionally, parents should be aware that some field trips are not included in the cost of tuition and are billed separately. Parent chaperones may be selected to attend and assist with field trips. For parent chaperone guidelines, see **Parent/Guardian Classroom Volunteers**, page 55.

Lower School Educational Experiences & Traditions

- **Camp Edwards** is a two-day overnight field trip for Group 3 students. The trip is typically scheduled in September and serves as not only a community-building experience but also an immersive study of science.
- **Colonial Morning** and Candle Making is when Group 2 students engage in hands-on projects relating to life in the colonial days, and the highlight is dipping wicks into melted wax to create their own hand-made candles.
- **Community Day** is an interactive event in Group 1 where students create and run their own business or community role.
- **Book Fair** is a fall event for which the gymnasium is transformed into a bookstore, and students can shop for books. It coincides with Fall Fest Dinner
- **Family Fun Day** is typically held every fall on a Saturday morning to build School community and culture. It includes fun outdoor activities and all families are encouraged to attend.
- **Family Sledding Day** is an opportunity for PreK 3 families to gather for winter sledding on campus.
- **Gathering** is a time for students in Groups 1–8 to come together as a whole community for performances and events. Each Lower School student is partnered and seated with a Middle School student to enhance School-wide connection and collaboration.

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- **Heritage Fest Games** celebrate our School's rich cultural diversity. Held during the school day, students participate in games, crafts, and activities from cultures around the world.
- **Heritage Fest Dinner and Performances** is an opportunity for students to share aspects of their families and cultures through the sharing of food and performances. This evening event closes out Heritage Fest.
- **Holiday House** is an annual holiday market that brings in local vendors and artisans. It is typically held on the first Friday in December. Proceeds from Holiday House sales benefit enrichment programs offered to ACS students during the year.
- **Horizons** is a monthly enrichment experience for Group 1 students where parents/guardian volunteers apply their diverse expertise and passions to engage students in small group hands-on investigations. These novel experiences broaden the horizons of the children.
- **Maple Tapping** is a multi-day experience where Group 2 students harvest maple sap from trees on campus and transform it into delicious maple syrup.
- **Spring Fair** is an end-of-year School-wide community building event that celebrates the connection between our students, teachers, staff, and parents. It includes fun outdoor activities, and all families are encouraged to attend.
- **Thanksgiving Program** is an annual ACS tradition that dates back to the time of Queene Ferry Coonley herself! It is a time for the School community to come together in service of others and includes performances.
- **Variety Show** is an opportunity each fall for individual students or small groups of students to perform a skit or showcase a talent.
- **Winter Animal Fair** is an event during which Group 1 students showcase their research and learning about various animals and their adaptations to winter.

Student Support Services

Learning Support

Among bright and gifted children, it is common to observe asynchronous development, where different areas of their development progress at different rates, leading to varying learning needs among children. The School strives to support student learning differences through a variety of creative and sustainable means while maintaining the rigor and accelerated pace of its programming and the established Group-level benchmarks. Examples of the School's differentiation strategies may include: flexible grouping, student choice, small group reinforcement, extension work with teachers and learning specialists, flexible pacing, multisensory instruction, accelerated course placement, and resources for at-home practice or enrichment. Additionally, when a learning difference is diagnosed and documented, and impact of the diagnoses is observed in the academic setting, the School can provide certain reasonable, sustainable, and student-specific accommodations, which may include assistive technology, additional time for assessments, and/or preferential seating.

Lower School Math Specialist

The full-time Lower School Math Specialist works with classroom teachers to provide support and broaden differentiation in response to student learning needs. The specialist floats between two service models: (1) providing support to students in the classrooms, and (2) providing targeted small-group lessons in the Math Specialist office. Based on teacher referral, analysis of student data, and input from the Lower School Head, the Math Specialist provides two distinct types of interventions to students: (1) remediation to address gaps in understanding of foundational skills or (2) extension tasks to provide more complexity and enrichment. A combination of classroom assessments, standardized assessments and qualitative observations inform the selection process. Student support offerings remain fluid throughout the school year as students' needs change.

The Math Specialist is positioned to provide short-term, small group support and occasional one-on-one support. Continuous one-on-one support is typically not available. The Math Specialist's support is not sufficient to address significant learning needs. Support from

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sources outside of School may be necessary if a student has a significant learning difference, needs substantial support to self-regulate behavior or focus, or needs one-on-one, on-going intervention.

Lower School Literacy Specialist

Two part-time literacy specialists work with classroom teachers to provide support and broaden differentiation in response to student learning needs. The specialists float between two service models: (1) providing support to students in the classrooms, and (2) providing targeted small-group lessons in the Literacy Specialist Office. Based on teacher referral, analysis of student data, and input from the Lower School Head, the Literacy Specialists provide remediation to address gaps in understanding of foundational reading and spelling skills and provide coaching to develop a child's confidence and independence with writing (i.e., generating ideas and organizing ideas coherently).

The Literacy Specialists are positioned to provide short-term, small group support and occasional one-on-one support. The Literacy Specialists' support is not sufficient to address significant learning needs. Support from sources outside of School may be necessary if a student has a diagnosed and significant learning difference, needs substantial support to self-regulate behavior or focus, or needs one-on-one, on-going intervention.

One-on-One Tutoring

ACS students are encouraged to meet with teachers during the school day to receive additional academic support and clarification regarding course content. While providing students with additional small group or one-on-one support outside of designated class time is not an expectation, select teachers may offer to support students before or after school. Such support is allowed if no private fee is collected. No ACS teacher may tutor any enrolled ACS student for compensation.

If additional outside tutoring or support services are required or recommended, the School requests that parents be proactive in notifying the homeroom teachers and Lower School Head when any outside tutoring services are engaged to support student learning. This will best allow the School and family to collaboratively support student learning. When outside services are engaged, it is the parent and student's responsibility to share assignments with the outside professionals directly. ACS teachers are not responsible for communicating, planning, or sharing resources with outside professionals.

Accommodation

An "accommodation" refers to an adjustment made to the learning environment, instructional methods, or assessment procedures to support the student's specific learning needs. Accommodations made for students with disabilities aim to level the playing field, remove barriers, and provide equal access to education for students with learning differences, allowing them to effectively participate and demonstrate their knowledge and skills. These accommodations are intended to address the impact of the learning difference, while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum and its educational standards.

Differentiation

Differentiation refers to the intentional and purposeful adjustment of teaching methods, materials, groupings, and assessments to meet the diverse learning needs, abilities, interests, and preferences of students. A teacher may adjust lessons within a curriculum to provide support scaffolds or extension opportunities. In addition, a teacher may invite students to demonstrate learning in ways that are tailored to their individual needs or interests.

Learning Plans

ACS seeks to accommodate students with diagnosed learning differences while maintaining the integrity and rigor of its programming and curriculum. If a student has a clinically diagnosed psychological, neurological, or medical condition that affects their learning, and if supporting documentation is provided to the Lower School Head, the student may be eligible to receive accommodations that are in alignment with the stated diagnosis and are both reasonable and sustainable for the School to provide. The School is not able to provide accommodations that would threaten student safety, would fundamentally alter the learning environment or that the School determines are otherwise not reasonable in light of the School's capabilities and resources. The social worker, parents, Lower School Head, and classroom teachers will collaborate to create a formal Learning Plan for the student, identifying the accommodations that the School can provide and the supports that will be applied at home. In Lower School, many supports are already applied universally, such as access to noise-muffling headsets and wobble stools. Learning Plans will typically only be shared with those directly involved in the students' education (see Confidentiality Policy, page 48).

Lower School

The School has a robust assortment of supports for students, but some accommodations extend beyond the scope of what the School can sustainably provide. While each request for accommodations is considered on an individualized basis, examples of accommodations that the School is likely to consider unsustainable may include: continual one-on-one assistance from a teacher and modifications to the curriculum. Additionally, some challenges that students experience extend beyond the scope of what the School can resolve. In these instances, families will need to arrange additional support services and interventions outside of School, such as one-on-one specialized tutoring, occupational therapy, medical intervention, or counseling. ACS aims to help parents by providing referrals for outside testing, tutoring, therapy, and counseling as needed.

It is essential that parents/guardians work in partnership to dialogue with the School about the student's needs. Learning Plans will typically be reviewed at least annually. Documentation of a learning difference should be updated every three years to ensure compliance with ACT and college admissions standards.

Insufficient Academic Progress & Progress Monitoring Plans

If a Lower School student is significantly below Group-level benchmarks in reading, writing, math, or executive functioning, or if a student is absent excessively from School (10 or more days in a school year), a Progress Monitoring Plan is established. Circumstances that may prompt a Progress Monitoring Plan include proficiency in less than 60% of assessed benchmarks on a report card, below average performance on two or more standardized assessments subtests, and/or need for remediation support from both the math and literacy specialists. The Progress Monitoring Plan provides more targeted and strategic attention to the student by tracking data regarding the student's progress more closely and engaging the family and School in monthly conferences to collaborate on intervention strategies. Strategies are applied at School and at home to help the student meet their established goal(s).

Progress monitoring enables the School and family to make data-driven decisions and refine their approaches based on insights gathered about how effective the interventions are. The process also fosters accountability, goal-setting, and increased motivation for the student.

Some learning challenges that students experience are beyond the scope of what the School can resolve on its own. In these instances, families will need to arrange additional support services and interventions outside of School, such as one-on-one specialized tutoring, therapy, neurological assessment, medical intervention, or counseling. In some cases, if a student continues to struggle even with intervention, it may be determined that it is in the best interest of the student to not offer re-enrollment the following year. This would be determined through discussion with the Head of School, the Lower School Head, and the family, though the Head of School will make any final decision.

Social-Emotional & Counseling Support

ACS has two full-time, licensed social workers who provide social and emotional support to students. The social workers work closely with the classroom teachers to identify students who would benefit from their support. They provide short-term, solutions-focused, small group and one-on-one guidance and support to students who need support with self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. They also help students identify strategies they can use in the classroom to help them connect more effectively with peers and self-regulate their emotions more confidently. The social workers may recommend support services outside of School if a more intensive approach is warranted.

Confidentiality Policy

Members of the School community commit themselves to maintaining appropriate professional tact and discretion with regard to confidential information they receive. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the Head of School, appropriate administrators and faculty, outside professionals, law enforcement officers, parents/guardians, and others when there is a compelling reason for doing so, including, without limitation, in cases of health and safety emergencies (when students or others are in imminent danger of harm); when there is concern about a student's ability to function academically, emotionally, physically, and/or mentally within the School environment; or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed.

Lower School

Health Services

The School Nurse maintains student health records and manages medical health concerns. The School Nurse consults with teachers on the medical and physical well-being of all students. Parents/guardians should consult with the School Nurse if health conditions may impede a student's school performance. Students must be excused by the School Nurse if they miss a class or need to leave school due to illness. The School Nurse will call the student's parents/guardians, recommending that the child is picked up from School.

For information on medication and health policies, see [Health & Safety](#), page 27.

Standards of Behavior

Expectations for Students

All members of the ACS community share in a collective responsibility for fostering a school culture and climate that prioritizes mutual respect, engagement, and mindfulness, which are our core community expectations. Expectations for classrooms and campus spaces will be clearly and proactively communicated to students at the start of each school year.

Students should be aware that they represent the School community at all times, both on and off campus. While it is not the School's intention to monitor students in all of their off-campus activities, the School may take disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal, in response to inappropriate conduct occurring outside of campus.

The following is expected of all Lower School students at The Avery Coonley School:

- Be kind to others
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to self
- Walk safely when indoors
- Use appropriate language
- Be inclusive of others
- Refrain from use of pretend or toy weapons
- Seek permission from a teacher before leaving a classroom
- Answer questions honestly

In Preschool, students are expected to:

- Listen attentively
- Exhibit sustained engagement in activities, in both preferred and non-preferred activities

- Engage in expected behaviors that align with classroom norms and School rules
- Interact cooperatively with peers and teachers
- Accept necessary limits and attempt to self-regulate emotions and behavior
- Engage in taking turns and sharing of equipment
- Express needs and emotions verbally
- Assume responsibility and accountability for one's own actions.
- Work productively and completes assignments in a timely manner
- Follow oral instructions in a timely manner
- Demonstrate a willingness to try new experiences
- Share relevant observations and connections at appropriate times

In Kindergarten—Group 4, students are expected to:

- Engage effectively in collaborative discussions, speaking one at a time about the topics under discussion
- Engage in expected behaviors that align with classroom norms and School rules
- Take initiative to advocate for one's own needs and request assistance
- Develop positive relationships with peers, via inclusive, supportive, and flexible interactions
- Apply constructive approaches to resolving conflicts, such as perspective-taking and "I" Messages
- Effectively use strategies to self-regulate emotions independently when faced with a challenging situation or strong feelings
- Assume responsibility and accountability for one's own actions
- Exhibit sustained engagement in both preferred and nonpreferred activities
- Apply self-regulated focus to independent assignments
- Work productively and complete assignments in a timely manner
- Follow oral instructions effectively and in a timely manner
- Demonstrate responsibility for submitting homework when it is due
- Organize papers and materials effectively
- Work conscientiously and give attention to detail
- Effectively manage and control body movements within the classroom environment
- Persevere through academic challenges with a growth mindset, even when setbacks occur

Lower School

General Behavioral Management & Consequences

Proactive Measures

The Avery Coonley School is a community in which every member is expected to treat every other member with care and respect. Fostering this sense of community and personal responsibility in each student is an important goal. To achieve this goal, classroom teachers provide explicit instruction and practice of expected behaviors and self-regulation strategies. Additional proactive strategies include utilizing visual cues and reminders, teaching the “why” behind rules, and reinforcing positive behaviors.

Restorative Practices & Logical Consequences

When infractions or peer-to-peer conflict occur, restorative practices are often utilized. Typically, a structured conversation is mediated by a teacher that allows students to express their feelings, share their perspective, and collectively develop solutions and agreements that address the harm caused and promote repair and understanding. A “Think Sheet” may be used to guide the student through a reflection on their behaviors and the impact it caused. Emphasis is placed on maintaining a growth mindset and the importance of learning from mistakes. Logical and age-appropriate consequences applied in Lower School are designed to help students become empathetic and responsible members of an inclusive learning community.

Most behavioral issues are routine and are handled by the classroom teacher. Social workers may occasionally be consulted. Working closely with families in a collaborative and trusting manner is essential for supporting student growth. Parents will be notified of minor infractions if there is a pattern to this behavior.

Minor Infractions

The following are examples (i.e., a non-comprehensive list) of minor infractions, and these behaviors typically result in teacher-facilitated logical consequences and/or restorative practices:

- Off-task or mildly disruptive classroom behavior
- Discourteous or unkind behavior towards teachers, staff, or students
- Inappropriate language
- Running in the halls
- Play fighting/roughhousing
- Dress code violation

Major Infractions

The following are examples (i.e., a non-comprehensive list) of major infractions, and follow-up to these behaviors will typically be carried out by the Lower School Head and/or Head of School:

- Behavior that significantly disrupts the learning of others
- Oppositional or defiant behavior that persists after two attempts to redirect behavior
- Aggressive or inappropriate physical contact
- Stealing
- Abusive or derogatory language
- Cheating / plagiarism
- Bullying/harassment
- Racially or sexually inappropriate behaviors or comments
- Possession of look-alike weapons or dangerous objects such as matches or lighters

The consequence for major infractions will be commensurate with the infraction and aligned to students’ developmental needs. Parents of students struggling to meet behavioral expectations will be contacted to discuss potential consequences and develop a plan of support for their child. In certain cases, if a student commits a major infraction or continual minor infractions, suspension, nonrenewal of enrollment contract, or expulsion may be necessitated as determined by the Head of the School.

Severe Infractions

Severe infractions are defined as behaviors that pose a significant safety risk to the student or a member of the ACS community. Severe infractions are handled by the Lower School Head and Head of School. Such incidents typically warrant severe consequences, up to and including, suspension, expulsion, and in rare cases criminal or civil prosecuting.

Below is a non-comprehensive list of severe infractions:

- Possession of any weapons, look-alike weapons, or any other dangerous objects (including, but not limited to, knives, matches, and lighters) that are a source of injury to themselves and others.
- Possession of any drugs, look-alike drugs, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, vaping products, or any other controlled substances.
- Making/creating a false alarm. This includes, but is not limited to, tampering with fire or security systems alarms, making a bomb threat, misusing a fire extinguisher, or alarming others in a way that endangers them.

Lower School

- Making obscene telephone calls or sending obscene electronic communications
- Acts of vandalism—defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy any School property or equipment, the data of another technology user, the ACS network, or other networks that are connected to the School’s network.
- Inflicting deliberate physical harm/fighting.
- Any action or threat that seriously jeopardizes the safety of ACS community members.

Suspension

Suspension may occur when a student commits a severe infraction, a major infraction or engages in a pattern of minor infractions. The length and type of suspension are determined by the Lower School Head and Head of School. Suspensions may take the form of in-school or off-campus suspensions. In both instances, the student will spend the day engaged in reflection activities designed to help the student process, understand, and address their behaviors. All suspensions impact a student’s academic work because the student misses the learning that took place during their absence. Teachers are not required to provide tutorial work for missed classes due to a suspension. However, the student is required to complete all missed academic work. A student serving either an in-school or out-of-school suspension cannot participate in any School-sponsored activities which occur on that day. A suspension may be taken into consideration at contract renewal time.

Expulsion

In rare circumstances, the Head of School may expel a student for an egregious behavioral violation or a serious or behavioral violation and/or any act that is in violation of any local, state, or federal laws.

Parental Involvement with Disciplinary Matters

Disciplinary matters and student issues are handled directly by teachers, administrators, and appropriate staff. If a student is having an issue with another student, parents should not attempt to deal with the other student directly about that matter. Doing so may put a student in an intimidating situation and is best resolved, when appropriate, through a School administrator. Please speak to the appropriate School administrator for guidance with respect to any questions about contacting another student or parent about a School-related matter.

Disclosure to Community

For purposes of providing an opportunity for the student body to learn and grow, information about disciplinary consequences or other corrective action will be shared with the School community as deemed appropriate by the Head of School. Such announcement may be made in person, by electronic communication, or otherwise.

Disclosure to Next Schools

It is the School’s policy to support students in reporting disciplinary consequences to colleges and next schools where they are required to do so. ACS may also communicate with any next schools, or any other educational institution, regarding the student’s disciplinary record.

Other Specific Behaviors & Policies

Anti-Harassment/Anti-Bullying Policy

The Avery Coonley School is committed to maintaining an inclusive and equitable School community. Our students need to learn in an environment that is free from behaviors that cause physical, psychological, and/or emotional harm and that negatively impact our students’ achievement and social-emotional well-being. The Avery Coonley School community members agree to treat each other with respect, which is one of the School’s core values. Any form of harassment and/or discrimination, including comments or conduct relating to a person’s race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, class, physical appearance or limitations, neurodiversity, or ethnic background, which fail to respect the dignity of the individual, will not be tolerated. At the beginning of each school year, students and parents are required to read and sign the Anti-Harassment/Anti-Bullying Policy. (See [Appendix: Anti-Harassment/Anti-Bullying Policy 2025–2026](#))

Sexting and Sexually Explicit Material

The School prohibits students from creating, requesting, sending, or possessing any written or verbal message, image, or video that contains explicit representations or references to sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or nudity. This includes messages, images, and videos that are created through the use of AI technology or other artificial means. Illinois law prohibits anyone (regardless of age) from disseminating obscene or pornographic images of minors, and the School may contact law enforcement should any student violate this policy.

Lower School

Academic Integrity

ACS strives to teach each student to be an independent thinker. In order to instill this quality, the School teaches and expects integrity and original thought from each student. In all areas of the School, from the curriculum to artistic endeavors, these values are promoted. Originality of thought is expected in every class, regardless of the medium of expression. Any act that does not embody such qualities violates the School's core values and will not be tolerated.

Cheating

All members of the School community are expected to act with integrity. Cheating is not only academically dishonest but also an ethical offense in violation of the School's core values. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Obtaining quiz or test materials prior to assessment without the teacher's knowledge;
- Inappropriate use of calculators, phones, smartwatches, or any other electronic devices for academic gain;
- Sharing student work that should be individually/independently produced;
- Using unauthorized notes or other study aids during a quiz or exam;
- Substituting another source in place of completing an assignment;
- Discussing information about a quiz or test with students who have not completed the assessment or while completing the assessment;
- Altering an answer on a graded exam or assignment and requesting that it be re-graded; or
- Submitting another person's work as the student's own original work.

Consequences for Cheating

The respective teacher and Lower School Head will determine the consequences for an incidence of cheating, according to the severity of the offense. The student may be expected to redo the assignment and engage in conversation about the importance of academic honesty and integrity. Severe or repeat offenses may result in further disciplinary action including and up to expulsion.

Plagiarism

The School feels an obligation to educate the students about plagiarism. This education includes activities designed to teach students what plagiarism is and explain its ethical and legal ramifications. While this policy was established for students to follow at school, it is incumbent upon parents to reinforce these ethical principles at home by emphasizing integrity, originality, and independence. The student is responsible for asking the teacher if they have any questions about paraphrasing, quoting, or citing a source.

The School defines *plagiarism* as a failure to give appropriate acknowledgement when repeating another's wording or particularly apt term, paraphrasing another's argument, presenting another's line of thinking, or claiming authorship over generative AI content.

Consequences for Plagiarism

A minor offense occurs when a student uses isolated sentences, phrases, and/or paraphrases without proper citation, with most of the work being their original creation. Minor offenses will be handled by the classroom teacher. Depending on the nature of the plagiarism, a student may be given the opportunity to rewrite or redo the assignment for partial credit. The teacher will typically notify parents of the incident and discuss ways to help prevent plagiarism from occurring in the future.

A *major* offense occurs when a student presents a piece where the ideas, themes, diction, or structure is not their own, and the teacher determines that the majority of the work is not the student's original creation. A major offense may result in serious consequences including a meeting with parents and the Lower School Head. The student will receive a zero (0) score for the assignment or essay. Severe or repeat offenses may result in further disciplinary action including and up to expulsion.

Lower School

Extracurriculars & After-School Program

Lower School Clubs & Activities

Art Club

Art Club offers students interested in art additional fine arts in enrichment. Projects are student led and teacher directed. *Eligibility: Groups 1-4*

Art Club Kids

Students learn the basics of drawing through a combination of technical instruction and free drawing time. *Eligibility: Groups K-4*

BAMtheatre

Students learn the foundations of musical theater and present a small showcase piece at the end of each session. *Eligibility: Groups K-4*

Beginning Orchestra

Orchestra offers students an opportunity to hone their instrumental skills and play with others. *Eligibility: Group 3*

Board Games

Students work together to learn strategy and teamwork through a variety of exciting board games. *Eligibility: Groups 3-4*

Book Club

Students meet monthly during lunch to explore and discuss stories and enjoy fun book-themed activities. *Eligibility: Groups 3-4*

Brass for Beginners: Around the World in Twenty-One Trumpets

Students learn to play the natural trumpet as well as discovering the amazing history of lip-blown instruments. No prior brass experience or music reading skills are necessary. *Eligibility: Groups 2-4*

Chess-Ed

Chess-Ed provides students with an opportunity to practice and play chess with peers as well as advance their strategic thinking and tactical skills. *Eligibility: Groups K-4*

Chess Team

Chess Team is a competitive, strategy-focused club that emphasizes preparing students for competition. *Eligibility: Groups K-4*

FIRST® LEGO® League Robotics Team

Students get hands-on experience in designing, building, and programming LEGO® robots while working on real-world problem-solving projects. No prior experience is needed. *Eligibility: Groups 1-4*

Intermediate Orchestra

Orchestra offers students an opportunity to hone their instrumental skills and play with others. *Eligibility: Group 4*

The Leadership Academy

Through hands-on activities, team challenges, and real-life leadership experiences, students learn the essential skills great leaders use daily. *Eligibility: Groups 2-4*

LEGO® Robotics

Students explore the basics of robotics through hands-on activities using LEGO robotics education sets. *Eligibility: K*

Makerspace Club (Cricut)

Students learn the basics vinyl cutting while designing and making art, stickers, cards, and more using a Cricut machine. *Eligibility: Groups 3-4*

Makerspace Club (Laser Cutter)

Students learn the of CO2 laser cutting while designing and making art, stuffed animals, frames, and more. *Eligibility: Groups 3-4*

Makerspace Club (3D Printer)

Students learn the basics 3D design while designing and making art, builds, prints, and more. *Eligibility: Groups 3-4*

Overture Games

Overture teaches hands-on music composition through software and the playing of video games. *Eligibility: Groups K-4*

Quantum Computing of Tomorrow Club

Through fun coding activities using Scratch Jr., Makerspace technology, and robotics, students are introduced to the world of quantum computers. *Eligibility: Groups 1-4*

Scaled Heart Basketball Camp

Basic basketball skills are taught and practiced. Students will learn stretching and meditation to help focus, prevent injuries, and build confidence. *Eligibility: Group 4*

Sticky Fingers

Sticky Fingers is a healthy cooking class specifically for Lower School students. *Eligibility: Groups K-4*

Student Council (LS)

Student Council is for students interested in leadership, collaboration, and an opportunity to serve the ACS community. *Eligibility: Groups 1-4*

Variety Show

Students create and perform a variety of acts focused on a unique theme each year. *Eligibility: Groups 1-8*

For more information on these activities, please contact Sally Johnston, Auxiliary Programs Director at auxiliaryprograms@averycoonley.org

Lower School

After-School Program

Avery Coonley students in full day PreK 3 through Group 8 may enroll in the After-School Program. An additional fee is charged for this program and billed in the student's tuition statement. Students may be signed up for the entire year, or by day as needed. ACS's After-School Program is led by a Program Coordinator and operated by qualified staff. The variety of daily activities planned for students participating in the program include games and outdoor play, arts and crafts, hands-on activities, and structured homework time for Lower and Middle School students.

Contact Information

Receptionist (7:00 am–6:00 pm)
630-969-0800 ext. 7203

Program Coordinator

Quinn Everts
630-353-7204
qeverts@averycoonley.org

Hours of Operation

Monday–Friday, 2:45 pm–6:00 pm

Not available on early dismissal days or days the School is closed.

Program Fees

\$6 per half hour; per child

- Fees are charged from a student's regular dismissal time (based on grade) until they are picked up
- Late fees are charged after 6:00 pm at the rate of \$25 per 15 minutes late

Note: Full-day PreK 3 – Group 4 student(s) may attend the After-School Program at **no charge** if they are waiting for their older sibling(s) to finish school at the regular dismissal time. Charges apply if the older sibling is attending extra-curriculars, and the younger sibling(s) is required to wait beyond the regular dismissal times.

STUDENTS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS OR ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS DO NOT NEED TO BE ENROLLED IN THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM UNLESS THEY WILL NEED TO REMAIN AT SCHOOL AFTER THEIR CLUB OR ENRICHMENT PROGRAM ENDS.

Automatic Daily Enrollment

Any student not picked up within 15 minutes of their scheduled pick-up time or at the end of their School-sanctioned, after-school activity (such as sports or clubs) will be escorted to the After-School Program by a faculty member. The student will check in with the After-School Program Coordinator and be given the opportunity to call a parent.

Billing Schedule

After-School Program fees are billed quarterly. The following schedule will apply:

- August and September — billed in the October statement
- October, November, and December — billed in the January statement
- January, February, and March — billed in the April statement
- April, May, and June — billed in the June statement

Registration

Registration and attendance for the After-School Program is managed through SchoolPass. Instructions for registering were posted in the Back-to-School information on the School's website posted on the Parent Portal, and listed in the ACS News.

To register, go to: averycoonley.school-pass.net

Select the program for which you want to enroll your child(ren):

- After-School PreK–Kindergarten: for students in full-day PreK 3, full-day PreK 4, or Kindergarten
- After-School Lower School: for students in Groups 1–4
- After-School Middle School: for students in Groups 5–6
- Sibling Lower School Pick-Up: for students in full-day PreK 3, full-day PreK 4, or Kindergarten who have a sibling or carpool member in Lower School and will not be picked up until 3:05 pm
- Sibling Middle School Pick-Up: for students in full-day PreK 3, full-day PreK 4, Kindergarten, or Groups 1–4 who have a sibling or carpool member in Middle School and will not be picked up until 3:35 pm

Meeting Locations

Beginning at 2:45 pm, the After-School Program will meet on the blacktop by the South Entrance or in the Commons during inclement weather. On occasion, the After-School Program may meet elsewhere. At all

Lower School

times, the Receptionist on duty at the Main Entrance will be aware of the Program location and be able to direct parents to the proper location.

Student Daily Sign In/Out

Students must sign in with the After-School Program Coordinator upon arrival. Once a student is signed into the After-School Program, they will not be allowed to leave without the signature of an authorized pick-up person. Authorized pick-up persons are those listed on the Authorized Driver List in the family's SchoolPass account.

Student Expectations

Students attending the After-School Program are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct expected during the school day and outlined in this Handbook.

Last Minute Changes to Your Child(ren)'s Schedule

Parents may make updates/changes in SchoolPass to their child(ren)'s after-school schedule for the day up until 3:00 pm. If you need assistance, please contact the After-School Program Coordinator (Quinn Everts at qeverts@averycoonley.org).

Last Minute Change to Authorized Pick-Up Person

You may update your Authorized Drivers List in SchoolPass at any time. If the change is last minute, update your Authorized Drivers List in SchoolPass and email the information to the After-School Program Coordinator (Quinn Everts at qeverts@averycoonley.org). The newly authorized person must present a valid photo ID in order to pick up the student.

Volunteering & Parent Involvement

The Home & School Association (HSA)

The HSA offers many opportunities for parents/guardians to meet each other, share parenting questions and advice, and participate in the life of the School. The HSA encourages and supports family involvement in the School and offers many opportunities to get involved, depending on individual interests and availability. Additional information about the HSA can be found on the School website.

Parent/Guardian Classroom Volunteers

Classroom Volunteer Guidelines

Volunteers are a major strength of the ACS community, and many parents choose to become involved in various aspects of learning. As the classroom is the students' space to grow, take risks, make mistakes, and achieve success, all volunteers are required to respect the confidentiality of student interactions in the classroom and not discuss individual students with others. Observations made while working with students, accompanying field trips, or visiting classrooms should remain confidential and should not be shared with others.

Class Parties (Preschool through Group 4)

To create an inclusive and welcoming environment, decorations, including all paper products, should be in keeping with the event's overall goal. For example, the Winter Party should focus on celebrating the upcoming break, winter activities, and the upcoming New Year. Please avoid characters and themes that are religious and/or particular to only one culture or group. The budget for decorations (including all paper products), should not exceed \$30. We discourage awarding prizes or goody bags for classroom parties. No monetary gifts or gift cards may be awarded.

Field Trip Chaperones

The School may select parent chaperones to attend and assist with classroom field trips. Parent chaperones are responsible for actively monitoring and gently redirecting student behavior to ensure safety, enhance engagement, and promote respectful conduct. Chaperones are expected to refrain from engaging in work-related matters and minimize phone usage, except for capturing memorable moments through photography. Classroom teachers determine how many parent chaperones may attend, and volunteers are selected via equitable processes. Chaperones are not permitted to purchase items or food for students during the trip.

Middle School



Middle School

Logistics

Location

The Middle School is located on the North side of campus with classrooms adjoining the Commons. The Middle School includes students in Groups 5–8.

Hours & Daily Schedule

The Receptionist is typically on duty between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday–Friday. Daily regular hours for Middle School students are 8:25 am–3:35 pm.

Before-School Supervision

Beginning at 7:45 am, students in Kindergarten through Group 8 may be dropped off and must report to the playground (blacktop) by the South Entrance, or the Commons during inclement weather, for supervised play. No students will be admitted to the building before 7:45 am except for those students attending supervised before-school extracurricular activities.

Morning Arrival

Drop-off typically takes place on the East side of the building from the Main Entrance to the South Entrance.

7:30 am – 7:45 am Before-school extracurricular activities begin. Students must enter through Main Entrance.

7:45 am South playground (blacktop) is supervised for morning care (K–8 only)

8:20 am All Middle School students must be dropped off by 8:20 am.

8:25 am **South Entrance and car line close.** All students PreK 3–8 arriving at or after this time must sign in at the Main Entrance reception. **Students will be marked tardy.**

Regular Dismissal

Dismissal Procedure

Dismissal typically takes place on the East side of the building from the Main Entrance to the South Entrance at 3:35pm. Please do not arrive on campus more than 5 minutes prior to dismissal. For more information about car line procedures, see [Arrival & Dismissal Traffic Safety](#), below.

Arrival & Dismissal Traffic Safety

Arrival

When dropping off your child(ren) please pull all the way forward in the car line, even if your child is entering the building via the Main Entrance for before-school activities. Students should be ready to exit the vehicle when it stops. ACS staff, faculty, and volunteers will assist in getting your child safely out of the vehicle.

PLEASE DO NOT drop off students in the circle as it is unsafe for pedestrians/other drivers and causes unnecessary car line delays.

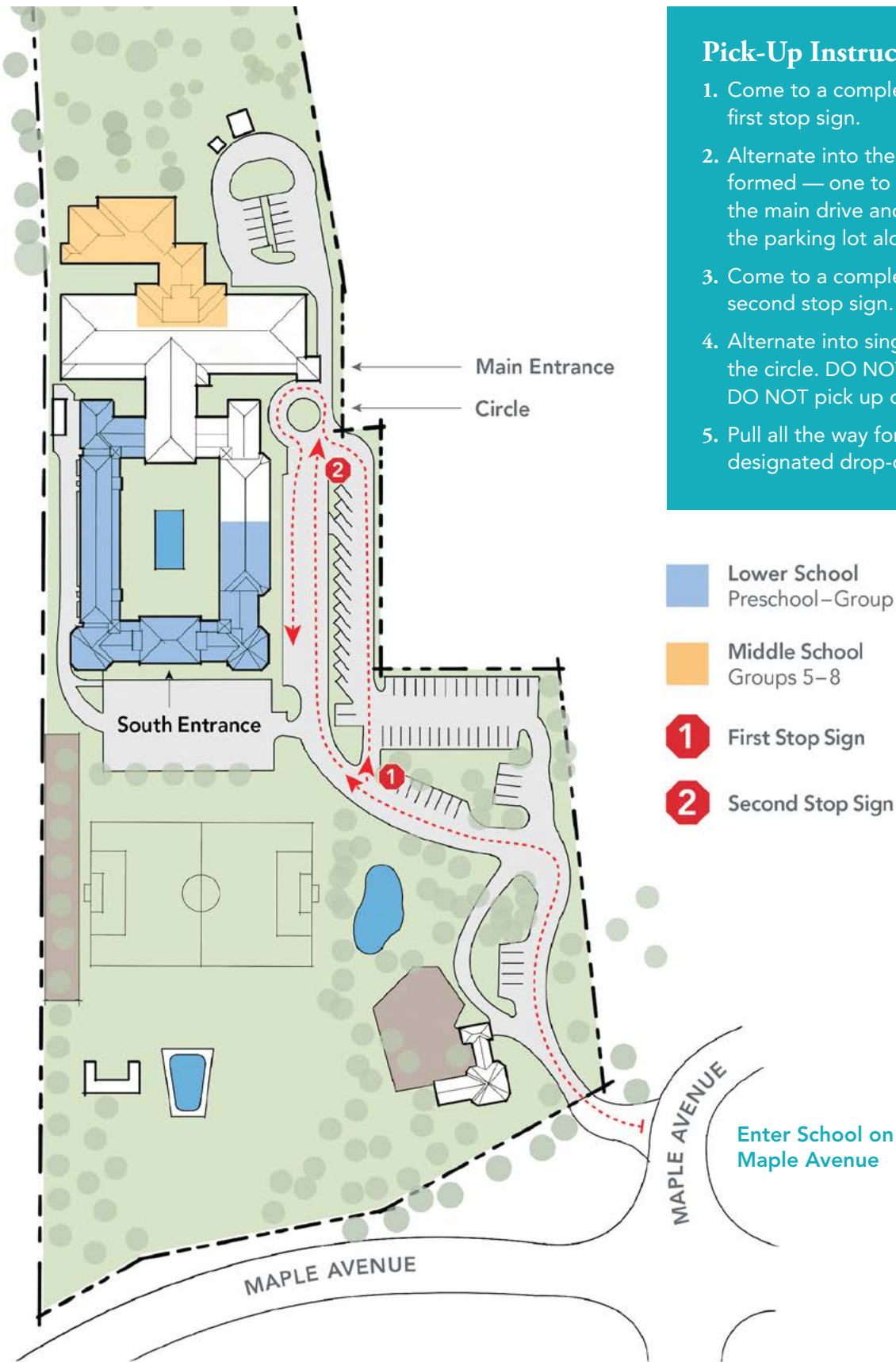
PLEASE BE AWARE: Depending on ACS traffic, you may be in the car line for up to 15 minutes, so please plan your departure time accordingly.

Dismissal

Drivers may not arrive on campus for pick-up more than 5 minutes prior to their child(ren)'s dismissal time so as not to interfere with staggered divisional dismissal times. Cars entering the property for dismissal should come to a complete stop at the first stop sign, then drivers should alternate into the two lines being formed—one to the left down the main drive and one to the right in the parking lot along the fence. (See map, page 58.) **Drivers must display their color-coded, School-provided name card in the windshield.**

When picking up your child(ren), please pull all the way forward in the car line, even if your child is exiting the building via the Main Entrance. ACS staff, faculty, and volunteers will assist in getting your child safely in the vehicle. Parents wishing/needing to meet their child(ren) at the Main Entrance or South Entrance should park in the main parking lot, not on the driveway. Parents/guardians are expected to share parking, arrival, and dismissal procedures with any childcare providers who will be responsible for dropping off or picking up students.

Middle School



Pick-Up Instructions

1. Come to a complete stop at the first stop sign.
2. Alternate into the two lines being formed — one to the left down the main drive and one to the right in the parking lot along the fence.
3. Come to a complete stop at second stop sign.
4. Alternate into single line forming around the circle. DO NOT block driveway. DO NOT pick up or drop off in circle.
5. Pull all the way forward in the designated drop-off / pick-up area.

-  Lower School
Preschool–Group 4
-  Middle School
Groups 5–8
-  1 First Stop Sign
-  2 Second Stop Sign

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It is the parents' responsibility and the School's expectation that **all students (PreK 3 through Group 8) will be picked up promptly from School at their designated dismissal time.** Any student in full-day PreK 3 through Group 8 not picked at their scheduled dismissal time or at the end of their School-sanctioned, after-school activity (such as sports or clubs) will be escorted to the After-School Program by a faculty member, and families will be charged the drop-in rate for the service. Multiple instances of pick-up tardiness of any student(s) in PreK 3 through Group 8 will be brought to the attention of the School administration and, in extreme cases, may result in non-renewal of the student's enrollment contract. Students waiting for an older sibling or carpool member to be dismissed at a later time must be registered in the After-School Program but will not be charged for the service. (See [After-School Program](#), below.)

Traffic Safety

- The Avery Coonley School campus speed limit is 5 mph.
- Pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- Drivers must stop at all stop signs.
- The use of cell phones is not permitted by car drivers during drop-off or pick-up.
- Drivers are expected to obey the directions of ACS faculty & staff. Please respond to their requests with kindness and courtesy.
- Drivers should remain in their vehicle while students are being dropped off or picked up in the car line.
- U-turns are not allowed on campus.
- Students must get in and out of the vehicle on the passenger side only.

After-School Program

Avery Coonley students in full-day PreK 3 through Group 8 may enroll in the After-School Program. The Program operates Monday through Friday, from 2:45 pm to 6:00 pm on regularly scheduled school days. The After-School Program is not available on early dismissal days. **An additional fee is charged for this Program and billed in the student's tuition statement.** Students may be signed up for the entire year, or by day as needed. ACS's After-School Program is led by the After-School Program Coordinator and operated by qualified staff. The variety of daily activities planned for students participating in the Program include

games and outdoor play, arts and crafts, hands-on activities, and structured homework time for Lower and Middle School students.

For more information see [After-School Program](#), page 75.

Daily Procedures

Dress Code

Students should arrive on campus appropriately attired for weather and interactive activities in all classes and environments. Students must wear securely fastened shoes at all times, and rubber soled shoes are encouraged. On cold or rainy days, students are encouraged to wear extra clothing, such as a sweater or sweatshirt, as they are frequently outside when passing to and from classes. When there is snow on the ground, all students are required to wear boots and snow pants to participate in winter outdoor activities on the field and playground.

Recess and some School activities will continue to take place outdoors when the "feels like" temperature is above 0 degrees or below 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The "feels like" temperature takes into account factors such as air temperature, relative humidity, and strength of the wind. Please make sure your child has the appropriate clothing with them each day to feel comfortable during these activities.

Any clothing containing references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, profanity, or other content deemed offensive is prohibited. Hats may be worn provided that their presence does not disrupt student learning. Without a formal school uniform requirement, it is impossible to delineate other instances when a student's clothing may not be considered appropriate, as clothing styles/sizes may look different from one student to another. As a general rule, all students must wear clothing that fully and adequately covers their undergarments and private areas. Low-cut tops, low-rise short-cut shorts, low-hanging pants, and crop tops exposing most of the midriff are examples of clothing that is in violation of the above. In these instances, students may be asked to change their clothing. Families are asked to cooperate fully with the School in maintaining these standards.

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Physical Education Classes

Appropriate clothing for unrestricted movement and appropriate gym shoes are required of each student. Students are required to wear shorts under skirts or dresses.

Attendance Policy & Procedures

It is impossible to replicate the experience of being in class. The Avery Coonley School offers an education that is immersive and rigorous, so for students to gain the full benefit and be successful lifelong learners, attendance is essential. We also teach our students that being present in their community, and honoring commitments to themselves and others is important. In support of our mission of a partnership of School and family, we ask that parents partner with us and avoid planning appointments, outside obligations, or family trips that result in unnecessary absences. Parents are our most important ally in teaching our students to prioritize their education.

Reporting an Absence

A parent must notify the School by 8:30 am on the day of their child(ren)'s absence. An absence can be reported by:

- submitting the Absence Report form located on the Parent Portal or
- calling the Attendance Reporting Line at 630-969-0800 (press 5). Please include your child(ren)'s name(s), Group number(s), reason for absence, your name, and a phone number where you can be reached (please speak slowly and clearly).

Work Missed Due to an Absence

During the course of the absence, certain class assignments may be set aside for the parent or child to collect either during the absence or upon their return to School. The student and parents should work directly with the teachers to determine a timeline for completing makeup work and assessments. Teachers are not required or expected to re-teach material that has been missed because of student absences, nor are they typically able to provide lesson materials in advance.

Absences Due to Vacation

Parents are urged to schedule family vacations during regularly scheduled School breaks. A student's attendance record will be taken into consideration at the time of re-enrollment.

Parents should be aware that many secondary schools require attendance records as part of the application process.

Excessive Absences

- After 5 consecutive days or 10 total absences during a school year, a student may be placed on a Progress Monitoring Plan (see page 62) and be required to engage supplemental tutoring services to support their learning.
- Students absent from School over 15 days during a school year, other than those granted a Leave of Absence (see below), may not be issued a re-enrollment contract for the following year or might not be promoted to the next Group level depending on their academic performance.

Leave of Absence

Should a student's extended absence from school be necessary or desired, the School may recommend or grant a request for a voluntary leave of absence. A leave for medical reasons will be handled in accordance with the School's Medical Leave policy in this Handbook. The School may recommend or grant a request for a voluntary leave of absence for other compelling reasons. The initial request for a voluntary leave of absence should be made to the appropriate Division Head. The School requires sufficient supporting documentation prior to the approval of any leave. The sufficiency of any supporting documentation will be determined by the School.

The School makes the final determination as to whether to grant a leave of absence, as well as the duration of the leave and the conditions necessary for a student's return (including, but not limited to, whether the student must reapply for admission). Whether the period of leave is counted towards academic requirements for promotion and graduation will be determined by the School.

Leaves of absence may be noted in the student's educational record, including on the student's transcript. A leave of absence may be appropriate pending the outcome of an investigation involving student misconduct.

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However, a leave of absence will not be used in lieu of disciplinary action to address violations of the School's code of conduct, rules, or policies. Additionally, a student granted a leave of absence while on academic and/or disciplinary status may return on that same status.

Families remain financially responsible for tuition and other fees while the student is on a leave of absence.

Punctuality

The Middle School day begins promptly at 8:25 am. To set our students up for a positive and productive day, and to prepare their minds for the school day, students should arrive at least 5 minutes prior to the start time and prepare to begin class promptly at the allotted time. Oversleeping, traffic etc. are not acceptable excuses for tardiness. Late arrival to class is disruptive and inconsiderate to teachers and classmates.

Tardiness Policy

- After 10 tardies the Middle School Head will typically contact the family inquiring about the student and the tardies.
- After 15 tardies the Head of School will typically require a meeting with the student and the family.

Division Organization

The Middle School Head works closely with the Head of School to manage the operations of the Middle School. The Middle School spans Groups 5 through 8.

Communication

Open communication between parents and the School is essential. Parents are encouraged to establish communication with the classroom teachers early in the school year and to bring any questions and comments to the appropriate teacher. At ACS, there is a strong commitment to keeping parents informed on the progress of their children. Persistent behavioral, classroom, or curricular concerns that are not resolved through initial discussion with the classroom teachers should be addressed to the Middle School Head. Issues relating to School policies and procedures should be directed to the Head of School. For parental expectations on communication, see [Family & School Partnership](#), page 19.

Contacting Teachers & Staff

All teachers have voicemail and email. Email is preferred to initiate contact. Teachers' School phone numbers and email addresses are listed in the School Directory accessed through the Parent Portal. All messages should be returned by the end of the next business day.

Contacting Students During the School Day

Middle School students are not permitted to have cell phones or smartwatches on during the school day. Please do not use these methods of communication to contact your child.

Please contact the Receptionist with messages. A class will not be interrupted to give a student a message, except in an emergency. Typically, messages will be passed on during breaks, during lunch, and after school.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are typically scheduled three times in the academic year. The goal is to share student learning and growth, troubleshoot challenges, and celebrate successes. Informal communications are welcome throughout the year, and parents are encouraged to reach out to teachers with any questions or concerns.

Weekly Updates — ACS News

On Thursdays, during the school year, the School typically sends out an email with weekly updates. It includes information about the week's upcoming events, schedule changes, special events, and other time-sensitive information.

Lockers

Middle School students are assigned lockers annually. Students are not issued locks nor are they permitted to bring locks from home. Lockers are used to store clothing, books, and other School materials. Items of value should not be brought to School. Please note:

- Decorations (outside or inside) must be magnetic, easily removable, and appropriate.
- Lockers must not be switched without permission from the student's advisor.
- The School assumes no responsibility for items stored in lockers.

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- Open drinks and unsealed foods must not be stored inside.
- Defacing or damaging lockers is not permitted and may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- For the safety of our students, The Avery Coonley School may search any student's locker (See [Appendix: Search & Seizure Policy 2025-2026](#)).

Lunch

Middle School students may bring their lunches from home, or parents may pre-order their child(ren)'s lunches each month through the Catered Lunch Program. All drinks must be brought to School. Microwaves are available. If a student forgets their lunch, parents may drop it off at the table in the Main Entrance vestibule up until 11:25 am. After that time, a basic allergen-free lunch will be provided to the student. Bringing "fast food" special lunches to children is not permitted. (See [Dropping Off Items & Food Deliveries](#), next column. See [Appendix: Food Allergy Policy 2025-2026](#)).

Gum Chewing

Students are not permitted to chew gum in any classes or during lunch, recess, or after-school activities.

Dropping Off Items & Food Deliveries

Students forget things: homework, musical instruments, and so on. All visitors must check in through the Main Entrance. The Receptionist will collect the items and notify the student's teacher and the student will either come to the Front Desk to retrieve their belongings or the belongings will be brought to the student. To minimize the additional work this creates, the School does not permit "fast food," or other special lunches to be dropped off by parents. In addition, due to safety and security concerns, no outside food deliveries are allowed at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, Uber Eats, GrubHub, DoorDash, and individual restaurant deliveries.

Emergency Procedures

School personnel conduct and supervise regular fire, severe weather, and other safety drills. Severe weather emergency procedures and fire evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. The School also practices procedures to be used in the event of an outside threat requiring a lockdown of the facility.

Visitors

Campus Visitors & Volunteers

All visitors (including volunteers) must sign in at the security kiosks located at the Main Entrance and show a state-issued ID to be cleared through the School's security system. Once cleared, visitors will be issued a visitor's badge which must be worn for the visit and returned to the front desk when leaving. All visitors must enter and exit through the Main Entrance.

Parents/guardians are asked to see teachers, Division Heads, and the Head of School by appointment only.

Academics

Overview

At ACS, gifted and high-achieving students collaborate within a curriculum that offers the depth, pace, and complexity to challenge them to the fullest. Our program serves highly motivated, high-ability learners.

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Areas of study for students in Groups 5 through 8 include: Math, Literacy, Science, Social Studies, French, Drama, Art, Creative Movement, Music, and Physical Education.

Report Cards & Parent-Teacher Conferences

Middle School Conferences are typically held three times per year (October, January, and May). Report cards are published at the end of each of the three trimesters. Parents will be notified via email when report cards are accessible in the Parent Portal. Phone calls, emails, and notifications in the Parent Portal are used to advise parents in the interim when a student's performance warrants more frequent communication. For assistance or questions regarding student progress, please contact the student's teacher(s).

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Grading

Middle School Groups 5 through 8 report cards include a rating scale for academics and enrichment classes.

- A+, A, A-** Performance of superior quality
- B+, B, B-** Performance of good quality; appropriate for achievement at a higher level of study
- C+, C, C-** Performance of marginal quality; improvement in this area is desirable
- D+, D, D-** Performance of low quality; immediate improvement is essential for achievement at a higher level
- F** Failing performance
- I** Incomplete; course requirements need to be completed within two weeks of the trimester's end
- P** Passing performance
- EX** Excused for medical reasons; does not affect GPA

Middle School students' GPA is calculated based on the scale below:

A+ = 4.3	B+ = 3.3	C+ = 2.3	D+ = 1.3	F = 0
A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0	
A- = 3.7	B- = 2.7	C- = 1.7	D- = 0.7	

Middle School students' proficiency in various sub-domains of each content area are assessed using the scale below:

- **Extending** (Demonstrates in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond the standard)
- **Proficient** (Demonstrates understanding of concepts and applies skills with independent proficiency)
- **Approaching** (Demonstrates competency that is developing and needs targeted practice and/or guided support to achieve proficiency)
- **Beginning** (Demonstrates a limited understanding of skills and application of concepts. Support and intervention are needed)

Honor Roll

Honor Roll certificates are distributed after the end of each trimester to qualifying Middle School students. In an effort to recognize exceptionally strong academic performance, honor roll recognition is indicated on the trimester report card. Students receiving no grade lower than a "B-" and having attained a GPA of 3.7 or higher will be recognized on the "High Honor Roll." Those receiving no grade lower

than a "C" and having attained a GPA between 3.3 and 3.69 will be recognized on the "Honor Roll." GPAs are not rounded up in the determination of Honor Roll status.

Academic Probation

Single Trimester: Middle School students whose grade reports indicate performance of low quality (D or below) in three or more courses in a single trimester will be placed on academic probation and will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities or ACS athletics until the probationary status has been lifted.

Core Content Area Summer Remediation: Academic probation occurs when a Middle School student earns a failing GPA (0.7 or less averaged across the three trimester reports) in any of their core content classes: Literacy, Math, Social Studies, Science, French, Physical Education, or the Fine Arts (Music, Art, Creative Movement and Drama). Students who have earned a failing GPA must enroll in a School-approved summer course or tutoring service designed to remediate content gaps.

Students who do not complete the required summer coursework will not be promoted to the next Group level. Group 8 students earning a GPA of 0.7 or less in their first two trimesters may be barred from participation in graduation activities.

Student Records and Transcripts

Students' records are kept on file at the School. Each student's record contains a transcript with grades, athletic involvement, commendations, test scores, formal academic, athletic and advisor comments, advisor letters, and letters involving any major discipline infractions.

Homework

Homework is critical in supporting students' academic growth and development and is designed to reinforce content as well as provide students with opportunities for enrichment, exploration, and creative expression. Homework guidelines for each group level/content area are set forth by the respective content-area teacher. While the amount of time that a child spends on homework is contingent upon each student's unique learning style, study habits, and needs, parents should encourage their child to discontinue working on any assignment that they are unable to complete within a reasonable amount of time (as suggested by the content-area teacher). In such situations, parents are asked to communicate directly with the teacher(s) to identify effective strategies for working with their child at home to better support their learning needs and study habits.

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Standardized Testing

The Avery Coonley School administers the Educational Records Bureau's Comprehensive Testing Program 5 (CTP 5) to students in Groups 1 through 7. This standardized test provides the School and parents information about how students compare to other students in the nation (national norm) and other challenging independent schools (independent school norm). These scores are shared with parents when they are received at the end of each year and are used by the faculty and administration to assess and improve instruction.

Middle School Advisory Program

The Middle School Advisory Program is designed to focus on the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, psychological, and ethical development of students. It is intended to provide consistent, caring, and continuous guidance at School through the organization of a supportive and stable peer group that meets regularly under the guidance of a teacher serving as an advisor. Advisors see their advisees each morning for check-in and again for advisory or resource. Advisory meets on A, C, and E days. Through daily communication and support, advisors get to know students individually in terms of their academic and social development, and keep the Middle School faculty informed of pertinent student information.

The goals of the advisory program are to:

- Develop students' problem-solving and conflict resolution skills;
- Provide a support system for each student;
- Foster strong study habits and organizational skills;
- Increase awareness of how health impacts both physical and mental wellbeing, and
- Promote students' social and emotional development

Textbooks

All non-consumable textbooks are loaned to students in Groups 5 through 8. The loan fee is included in tuition. If a student loses or damages a book, the student is required to purchase a new book.

Classroom Technology & Responsible Technology Use

Technology is used as a tool to deepen and extend learning in a classroom and to provide community and connection in a distance-learning environment. The School's technology team works closely with teachers to integrate technology seamlessly into the classroom and to leverage its power for online learning. The goal is to teach students how to use computers and the Internet appropriately. Adherence to ACS's **Responsible Use of Technology Policy** is expected of all Middle School students (See [Appendix: Responsible Use of Technology Policy 2025-2026](#)).

Cell Phone & Electronic Devices Policy

Middle School students are not permitted to use cell phones, electronic devices, unapproved computers, iPads, smartwatches,* electronic book readers and hand-held devices, including but not limited to video games, image and/or audio recording devices—other than School-issued technology—from the time they exit their cars at drop-off in the morning until they enter their cars at the end of the day. If students elect to bring such devices to School, they must remain powered off and unused, and in students' backpacks the entire day. Students may not use the devices between classes, during lunch or recess, or during any clubs, activities, or athletic events.

Students will have ready access to School telephones should they need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day. We also respectfully request that parents refrain from texting, calling, or emailing students directly during the school day. If there is an important message to be delivered to the student, parents should contact the Receptionist, and the message will be delivered to the student. Alternatively, when a message is less urgent, parents can email their child's team of classroom teachers and a teacher will relay the message to the student.

*Exceptions may be made for students who need to wear smartwatches to monitor and/or support a specific medical condition. These medical exceptions must be approved by the School Nurse and the appropriate Division Head, and the student may only use the device at School for the specified medical purpose.

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Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy for Overnight Trips

Overnight trips are an extension of the ACS learning experience and therefore, the school has discretion concerning appropriate use of cell phones, *smart watches, and other internet-connected devices during the trip. Cell phones will be collected regularly by the students' chaperones and redistributed at certain times for photo opportunities and to check in daily with their parents. Students will not be permitted to have internet-connected devices or smart phones in their hotel rooms overnight.

Students are encouraged to bring cameras (digital SLR or pocket cameras without internet connectivity) to record the trip, as their cell phones will not always be available to take pictures.

In cases of emergency, parents will be provided with the cell phone numbers of trip chaperones, and chaperones have contact information for all parents/guardians. In addition, students will have the chaperones' room information should they need assistance during the night and can call them using the hotel room phone. In addition, students can reach the hotel reception desk, which is staffed 24 hours, via their room phone.

*Exceptions may be made for students who need to wear smartwatches to monitor and/or support a specific medical condition. These medical exceptions must be approved by the School Nurse and the appropriate Division Head, and the student may only use the device at school for the specified medical purpose.

Student Email

The School provides students with an email account which should be used only for School-related communication (e.g., contacting and receiving information from teachers, submitting homework and assignments, transferring files to and from School, etc.). Students are expected to comply with the policies outlined in the School's Responsible Use of Technology Policy when using their School-issued email account.

Field Trips & Outdoor Education

Field trips are an important part of student learning and serve to enrich ACS students' academic, social, and emotional skills. Students are expected and encouraged to attend and participate in all field trip activities. During the trip, students must continue to abide by School behavioral

expectations (see **Standards of Behavior**, page 64) in addition to any other rules set by the trip coordinator. No unauthorized individuals will be permitted on School field trips; please contact the Middle School Head with any questions or concerns regarding who is and who is not allowed to attend specific field trips. Parent permission for their child(ren) to participate in field trips is required for every trip. Parents will be notified about field trips via email in advance of the trip date. Some field trips will require that a disposable sack lunch be packed for each child. Additionally, parents should be aware that some field trips are not included in the cost of tuition and are billed separately.

Middle School Educational Experiences & Traditions

- **Book Fair** is a fall event for which the gymnasium is transformed into a bookstore, and students can shop for books. It coincides with Fall Fest Dinner.
- **Fall Fest Dinner** is an annual family get-together where dinner is served by our Group 8 students. The money these students earn in "tips" is used to purchase a class gift for the School.
- **Family Fun Day** is typically held every fall on a Saturday morning to build school community and culture. It includes fun outdoor activities and all families are encouraged to attend.
- **French Exchange** refers to a ten-day exchange trip eligible to students in Group 7 who participate in a student exchange, first visiting their pen pals in France before hosting their pen pal in October of their Group 8 year.
- **Gathering** is a time for students in Groups 1–8 to come together as a whole community for performances and events. Each Lower School student is partnered and seated with a Middle School student to enhance School-wide connection and collaboration.
- **Graduation** provides a special opportunity for friends, relatives, and their extended family to celebrate the unique gifts of the graduating students. Graduation is a special, formal occasion. The Graduation date is published in the School calendar. Rarely, due to excessive snow days, is the date of Graduation changed. Should this happen, the new date would be announced before Spring Break.
- **Group 8 Play** is the capstone project for the dramatic arts, bringing together all that the students have learned about theater during their Middle School careers.

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- **Heritage Fest Games** celebrate our School's rich cultural diversity. Held during the school day, students participate in games, crafts, and activities from cultures around the world.
- **Heritage Fest Dinner and Performances** is an opportunity for students to share aspects of their families and cultures through the sharing of food and performances. This evening event closes out Heritage Fest.
- **Holiday House** is an annual holiday market that brings in local vendors and artisans. It is typically held on the first Friday in December. Proceeds from Holiday House sales benefit enrichment programs offered to ACS students during the year.
- **Quebec Trip** is an immersive French experience for Group 8 students. The trip is a five-day, four-night excursion to Quebec where students speak only French.
- **Spring Fair** is an end-of-year School-wide community building event that celebrates the connection between our students, teachers, staff, and parents. It includes fun outdoor activities, and all families are encouraged to attend.
- **Thanksgiving Program** is an annual ACS tradition that dates back to the time of Queene Ferry Coonley herself! It is a time for the School community to come together in service of others and includes performances.
- **Variety Show** is an opportunity each fall for individual students or small groups of students to perform a skit or showcase a talent.
- **Washington DC Trip** is an enriching experience where students see the inner workings of the Capitol and get to experience policy and politics in action.

Student Support Services

Learning Support

Among bright and gifted children, it is common to observe asynchronous development, where different areas of their development progress at different rates, leading to varying learning needs among children. The School strives to support student learning differences through a variety of creative and sustainable means while maintaining the rigor and accelerated pace of its programming.

One primary way ACS addresses asynchrony is through curricular differentiation, which refers to a wide variety of teaching techniques used to instruct, enrich, and best address student learning needs for all ACS students. Differentiation refers to the intentional and purposeful adjustment of teaching methods, materials, groupings, and assessments to meet the diverse learning needs, abilities, interests, and preferences of students. A teacher may adjust lessons within a curriculum to provide support scaffolds or extension opportunities and invite students to demonstrate learning in different ways, tailored to their individual needs.

One-on-One Tutoring

ACS students are encouraged to meet with teachers during the school day to receive additional academic support and clarification regarding course content. While providing students with additional small group or one-on-one support outside of designated class time is not an expectation, select teachers may offer to support students before or after school. Such support is allowed if no private fee is collected. No ACS teacher may tutor any enrolled ACS student for compensation.

If additional outside tutoring or support services are required or recommended, the School requests that parents be proactive in notifying the advisor and Middle School Head when any outside tutoring services are engaged to support student learning. This will best allow the School and family to collaboratively support student learning. When outside services are engaged, it is the parent and student's responsibility to share assignments with the outside professionals directly. ACS teachers are not responsible for communicating, planning, or sharing resources with outside professionals.

Accommodation

An "accommodation" refers to an adjustment made to the learning environment, instructional methods, or assessment procedures to support the student's specific learning needs. Accommodations made for students with disabilities aim to level the playing field, remove barriers, and provide equal access to education for these students, allowing them to effectively participate and demonstrate their knowledge and skills. These accommodations are intended to address the impact of the learning difference, while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum and its educational standards.

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Learning Plans

ACS seeks to accommodate students with diagnosed learning differences while maintaining the integrity and rigor of its programming and curriculum. If a student has a clinically diagnosed psychological, neurological, or medical condition that affects their learning, and if supporting documentation is provided to the Middle School Head, the student may be eligible to receive accommodations that are in alignment with the stated diagnosis and are both reasonable and sustainable for the School to provide. The School is not able to provide accommodations that would threaten student safety, would fundamentally alter the learning environment or that the School determines are otherwise not reasonable in light of the School's capabilities and resources. The Social Worker, parents, Middle School Head, and classroom teachers will collaborate to create a formal Learning Plan for the student, identifying the accommodations that the School can provide and the supports that will be applied at home. Learning Plans will typically only be shared with those directly involved in the students' education (see Confidentiality Policy, page 68.)

When creating the Learning Plan, the School is committed to working creatively to apply the most effective and supportive accommodations possible. Examples of sustainable student accommodations include, but are not limited to: assistive technology, preferential seating, extra time on tests, extra movement breaks, visual timer, and sensory supports.

The School has a robust assortment of supports for students, but some accommodations extend beyond the scope of what the School can sustainably provide. While each request for accommodations is considered on an individualized basis, examples of accommodations that the School is likely to consider unsustainable include: continual one-on-one assistance from a teacher and modifications to the curriculum. Additionally, some challenges that students experience extend beyond the scope of what the School can resolve. In these instances, families will need to arrange additional support services and interventions outside of School, such as one-on-one specialized tutoring, occupational therapy, medical intervention, or counseling. ACS aims to help parents by providing referrals for outside testing, tutoring, therapy, and counseling as needed.

It is essential that parents/guardians work in partnership to dialogue with the School about the student's needs. Learning Plans will typically be reviewed at least annually.

Documentation of a learning difference should be updated every three years to ensure compliance with ACT and college admissions standards.

Inconsistent / Insufficient Academic Progress & Progress Monitoring Plans

When a student experiences excessive absenteeism (10 or more total absences during a school year) or is significantly below grade-level benchmarks in reading, writing, math, or executive functioning and is not showing sustained growth, a Progress Monitoring Plan is established. The purpose of the Plan is to provide more targeted and strategic support and to track data on the student's progress more closely. The process engages a team of constituents, including parents, classroom teachers, the student, Middle School Head, and social workers. Student goal(s) are established, intervention strategies are identified, and a system of data collection is determined.

Strategies and interventions are applied both at home and at School to help the student meet the established goal(s). The progress is formally reviewed at bi-monthly or monthly check-in meetings with the family and Middle School Head. Progress monitoring enables the School and families to make data-driven decisions and refine their approaches by providing insights into how effective the interventions are. The process also fosters accountability, goal-setting, and increased motivation for the student. Some learning challenges that students experience are beyond the scope of what the School can resolve on its own. In these instances, families will need to arrange additional support services and interventions outside of School, such as one-on-one specialized tutoring, therapy, neurological assessment, medical intervention, or counseling. In rare cases, if a student continues to struggle even with intervention, it may be determined that it is in the best interest of the student to not offer re-enrollment the following year. This would typically be determined through discussion with the Head of School, the Middle School Head, and the family.

Social-Emotional & Counseling Support

ACS has two full-time licensed social workers who provide social and emotional support to students. The social workers work closely with the classroom teachers to identify students who would benefit from their support. They provide short-term, solutions-focused, small group and one-on-one guidance and support to students who need support with self-awareness, self-management,

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responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. They also help students identify strategies they can use in the classroom to help them connect more effectively with peers and self-regulate their emotions more confidently. The social workers may recommend support services outside of school if a more intensive approach is warranted.

Confidentiality Policy

Members of the School community commit themselves to maintaining appropriate professional tact and discretion with regard to confidential information they receive. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the Head of School, appropriate administrators and faculty, outside professionals, law enforcement officers, parents/guardians, and others when there is a compelling reason for doing so, including, without limitation, in cases of health and safety emergencies (when students or others are in imminent danger of harm); when there is concern about a student's ability to function academically, emotionally, physically, and/or mentally within the School environment; or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed.

Health Services

The School Nurse maintains student health records and manages medical health concerns. The School Nurse consults with teachers on the medical and physical well-being of all students. Parents/guardians should consult with the School Nurse if health conditions may impede a student's school performance. Students must be excused by the School Nurse if they miss a class or need to leave school due to illness. The School Nurse will call the student's parents/guardians, recommending that the child is picked up from School.

For information on medication and health policies, see [Health & Safety](#), page 27.

Standards of Behavior

Expectations for Students

All members of the ACS community share in a collective responsibility for fostering a School culture and climate that prioritizes mutual respect, engagement, and mindfulness, which are our core community expectations. Expectations for classrooms and campus spaces will be clearly and proactively communicated to students at the start of each school year. Expectations are based, in large part, on SEL standards from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making.

Students should be aware that they represent the School community at all times, both on and off campus.

The following is expected of all Middle School students at The Avery Coonley School:

Be Respectful

- Use language that promotes a safe and inclusive environment for all
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to oneself

Be Mindful

- Be inclusive of all students
- Be aware of how actions and words impact those around you

Be Engaged

- Be an active listener
- Embrace a growth mindset

In Middle School, students are expected to:

- Exhibit engagement, sustained attention in activities, and curiosity as a learner in both preferred and non-preferred activities
- Adhere to classroom routines, schedules, and assignment timelines
- Work effectively in group settings
- Apply approaches to resolving conflicts constructively
- Assume responsibility and accountability for their actions
- Exhibit perseverance in the face of academic challenges, even when setbacks occur
- Demonstrate healthy risk-taking behaviors with new academic and social experiences

Middle School

General Behavioral Management & Consequences

Proactive Measures

The Avery Coonley School is a community in which every member is expected to treat every other member with care and respect. Fostering this sense of community and personal responsibility in each student is an important goal. Middle School behavioral consequences are designed to help students become compassionate, kind, responsible members of an inclusive learning community, and breaches of School policies and procedures are typically viewed as opportunities for learning and growth. Most behavioral issues are routine and are handled by content-area teachers, oftentimes in partnership with the family. Working closely with families in a collaborative and trusting manner is essential for supporting student growth.

Minor Infractions and Restorative Practices

When minor infractions involve peer-to-peer conflict, restorative practices are utilized, such as structured conversations mediated by a teacher, advisor, or an appropriate member of the Student Support Services Team. Mediation is designed to allow students to express their feelings, share their perspective, and collectively develop solutions and agreements that address the harm caused and promote repair and understanding. Parents will be notified of minor infractions if there is a pattern to this behavior.

The following are examples (i.e., a non-comprehensive list) of minor infractions that will result in developmentally appropriate consequences:

- Off-task and mildly disruptive classroom behavior
- Being discourteous or unkind to teachers, staff, or students
- Playing computer games, not appropriately using technology, or playing with toys during class
- Inappropriate language, e.g. cursing
- Running in the halls
- Play fighting
- Pushing or shoving (not fighting)
- Dress Code violations

Major Infractions

Students will typically be sent to the Middle School Head and/or Head of School if a major infraction occurs. The consequence will be commensurate with the infraction and

aligned to students' developmental needs. Parents of students struggling to meet behavioral expectations will be contacted to discuss consequences and determine a plan of support for their child. In rare cases, if a student commits a major infraction or continuously struggles to abide by the established expectations, suspension, nonrenewal of enrollment contract, or expulsion may be necessitated as determined by the Head of the School.

Examples of major infractions may include, but are not limited to:

- Behavior that consistently disrupts the learning of others
- Oppositional/ defiant behavior that persists after two attempts to redirect behavior
- Aggressive or inappropriate physical contact
- Stealing
- Abusive or derogatory language
- Bullying/harassment
- Racially or sexually inappropriate behaviors or comments
- Possession of look-alike weapons or dangerous objects such as matches or lighters

Severe Infractions

Severe infractions are defined as behaviors that pose a significant safety risk to the student or a member of the ACS community. Severe infractions are handled by the Middle School Head and Head of School. Such incidents typically warrant severe consequences, up to and including, suspension, expulsion, and in rare cases criminal or civil prosecution. Severe infractions include, but are not limited to:

- Possession of a weapon
- Possession of any drugs, look-alike drugs, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, vaping products, or any other controlled substances
- Making/creating a false alarm. This includes, but is not limited to, tampering with fire or security systems alarms, making a bomb threat, misusing a fire extinguisher, or alarming others in a way that endangers them
- Making obscene telephone calls or sending obscene electronic communications
- Acts of vandalism — defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy any School property or equipment, the data of another technology user, the ACS network, or other networks that are connected to the School's network

Middle School

- Inflicting deliberate physical harm/fighting
- Any action or threat that seriously jeopardizes the safety of ACS community members

Suspension

Suspension may occur when the student has committed a severe infraction, a major infraction, or has engaged in a pattern of minor infractions. The severity and type of suspension are determined by the Middle School Head and Head of School. Suspensions may take the form of in-school or off-campus suspensions. In both instances, the student will spend the day engaged in reflection activities designed to help the student process, understand, and address their behaviors. All suspensions impact a student's academic work because the student misses the learning that took place during their absence. Teachers are not required to provide tutorial work for missed classes due to a suspension. However, the student is required to complete all missed academic work. A student serving either an in-school or out-of-school suspension cannot participate in any School-sponsored activities which occur on that day. A suspension may be taken into consideration at contract renewal time.

Expulsion

In rare circumstances, the Head of School may expel a student for egregious behavioral violations and/or any act that is in violation of any local, state, or federal laws.

Parental Involvement with Disciplinary Matters

Disciplinary matters and student issues are handled directly by teachers, administrators, and appropriate staff. If a student is having an issue with another student, parents should not attempt to deal with the other student directly about that matter. Doing so may put a student in an intimidating situation and is best resolved, when appropriate, through a School administrator. Please speak to the appropriate School administrator for guidance with respect to any questions about contacting another student or parent about a School-related matter.

Disclosure to Community

For purposes of providing an opportunity for the student body to learn and grow, information about disciplinary consequences or other corrective action will be shared with the School community as deemed appropriate by the Head of School. Such announcement may be made in person, by electronic communication, or otherwise.

Disclosure to Next Schools

It is the School's policy to support students in reporting disciplinary consequences to colleges and next schools where they are required to do so. ACS may also communicate with any next schools, or any other educational institution, regarding the student's disciplinary record.

Other Specific Behaviors and Policies

Anti-Harassment/Anti-Bullying Policy

The Avery Coonley School is committed to maintaining an inclusive and equitable School community. Our students need to learn in an environment that is free from behaviors that cause physical, psychological, and/or emotional harm and that negatively impact our students' achievement and social-emotional well-being. The Avery Coonley School community members agree to treat each other with respect, which is one of the School's core values. Any form of harassment and/or discrimination, including comments or conduct relating to a person's race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, class, physical appearance or limitations, neurodiversity, or ethnic background, which fail to respect the dignity of the individual, will not be tolerated. At the beginning of each school year, students and parents are required to read and sign the Anti-Harassment/Anti-Bullying Policy. (See [Appendix: Anti-Harassment/Anti-Bullying Policy 2025-2026](#))

Sexting and Sexually Explicit Material

The School prohibits students from creating, requesting, sending, or possessing any written or verbal message, image, or video that contains explicit representations or references to sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or nudity. This includes messages, images, and videos that are created through the use of AI technology or other artificial means. Illinois law prohibits anyone (regardless of age) from disseminating obscene or pornographic images of minors, and the School may contact law enforcement should any student violate this policy.

Academic Integrity

ACS strives to teach each student to be an independent thinker. In order to instill this quality, the School teaches and expects integrity and original thought from each student. In all areas of the School, from the curriculum to artistic endeavors, these values are promoted. Originality of thought is expected in every class, regardless of the medium of expression. Any act that does not embody such qualities violates the School's core values and will not be tolerated.

Middle School

Cheating

All members of the School community are expected to act with integrity. Cheating is not only academically dishonest but also an ethical offense in violation of the School's core values. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Obtaining quiz or test materials prior to assessment without the teacher's knowledge;
- Inappropriate use of calculators, phones, smart watches, or any other electronic for academic gain;
- Sharing student work that should be individually/independently produced;
- Using unauthorized notes or other study aids during a quiz or exam;
- Substituting another source in place of completing an assignment;
- Discussing information about a quiz or test with students who have not completed the assessment or while completing the assessment;
- Altering an answer on a graded exam or assignment and requesting that it be re-graded; or
- Submitting another person's work as the student's own original work.

Consequences for Cheating

The respective teacher and Middle School Head will determine the consequences for an incidence of cheating, according to the severity of the offense. The student may be expected to redo the assignment and engage in conversation about the importance of academic honesty and integrity. Severe or repeat offenses may result in further disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Plagiarism

The School feels an obligation to educate the students about plagiarism. This education includes activities designed to teach students what plagiarism is and explain its ethical and legal ramifications. While this policy was established for students to follow at School, it is incumbent upon parents to reinforce these ethical principles at home by emphasizing integrity, originality, and independence. The student is responsible for asking the teacher if they have any questions about paraphrasing, quoting, or citing a source.

The School defines plagiarism as a failure to give appropriate acknowledgement when repeating another's wording or particularly apt term, paraphrasing another's argument, presenting another's line of thinking, or claiming authorship over generative AI content.

Consequences for Plagiarism

A minor offense occurs when a student uses isolated sentences, phrases, and/or paraphrases without proper citation, with most of the work being their original creation. Minor offenses will be handled by the classroom teacher. Depending on the nature of the plagiarism, a student may be given the opportunity to rewrite or redo the assignment for partial credit. The teacher will typically notify parents of the incident and discuss ways to help prevent plagiarism from occurring in the future.

A major offense occurs when a student presents a piece where the ideas, themes, diction, or structure is not their own, and the teacher determines that the majority of the work is not the student's original creation. A major offense may result in serious consequences including a meeting with parents and the Middle School Head. The student will receive a zero (0) score for the assignment or essay. Severe or repeat offenses may result in further disciplinary action including and up to expulsion.

Extracurriculars & After-School Program

Athletics

Students in Groups 5-8 have the opportunity to participate in interscholastic sports. By participating in sports, students develop their individual skills, increase their knowledge of a sport, and enhance their self-esteem in an environment intended to inspire athletes to pursue personal excellence. Through goal setting, teamwork, succeeding and failing, athletes may learn more about themselves as well as others, and often apply the lessons learned on the field or court to other areas of their lives.

The School offers the following team sports:

- **Fall – Soccer (Co-ed), Volleyball (G)**
- **Winter – Basketball (B)(G)**
- **Spring – Track & Field (Co-ed), Volleyball (B)**

Teams typically practice on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday except for Track and Field which typically practices on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (for current schedules see Athletics on the Parent Portal). Students are expected to attend every practice. If a student needs to be excused from practice, the student must speak to the coach ahead of time.

Middle School

Sportsmanship

Athletics enhance the overall educational experience and build well-rounded students and leaders. Integrity, fairness, and respect—these are the principles of good sportsmanship. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of the results. Sportsmanship goals include:

- Developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances;
- Respecting the rules of the game, the officials who administer the rules, and their decisions;
- Respecting opponents as fellow students and acknowledging them for striving to do their best while students seek to do their best at the same time;
- Looking at athletic participation as a potentially beneficial learning experience, whether a win or loss;
- Educating other students and fans to understand the rules of the game, and the value of sportsmanship; and
- Accepting the personal responsibility that comes with one's actions on the court/field.

The School also encourages parents and other family members to act in a sportsman-like manner. As such, the School hopes parents and other individuals associated with the student will:

- Realize that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game;
- Encourage students to perform their best, just as we would urge them on with their classwork, knowing that others will always turn in better or lesser performances;
- Participate in positive cheers and encourage our athletes, and discourage any cheer that would redirect that focus;
- Learn, understand, and respect the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions;
- Respect the task our coaches face as teachers, and support them as they strive to educate our youth;
- Respect our opponents as students, and acknowledge them for striving to do their best; and
- Remember that we would all like to be victorious in every situation we face in life, but just like in athletic competition, sometimes we fall short.

Students, parents, teachers, coaches, and spectators are all expected to refrain from:

- Use of profanity or displays of anger that draw attention away from the game;

- Booing or heckling an official's decisions, criticizing officials in any way, or displaying temper with an official's call;
- Trash talking or yelling that antagonizes opponents;
- Using verbal abuse or intimidation tactics;
- Disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs, gestures, signs, posters, or banners;
- Any distracting activity such as yelling, waving arms, or feet-stomping during an opponent's free-throw attempts or other solo efforts; and
- Use of artificial noisemakers of any kind.

Parent-Coach Communications

As with parent-teacher and parent-advisor relations, athletics promote the establishment of good communication between parents and coaches. It is assumed that parents and coaches will understand their respective roles in order to best support our student athletes. In an effort to promote effective communication, the following guidelines should be followed:

Parents may expect to learn from coaches information about:

- The coach's and program's philosophy;
- Individual and team expectations;
- Location and times of all practices and games;
- Team requirements (i.e., practices, equipment, off-season conditioning);
- Procedures regarding injuries during practices/games; and
- Discipline that may result in the denial of participation.

Parents are expected to:

- Express concerns directly to the coach;
- Notify coaches well in advance of any schedule conflicts;
- Support the program; and
- Encourage students to strive for excellence.

Appropriate concerns for parents to discuss with coaches include, but are not limited to:

- Students' psychological or physical treatment;
- Ways to help students develop and improve;
- Questions about the coach's philosophy; and
- Concerns regarding students' behavior during athletics.

Middle School

Inappropriate concerns for parents to discuss with coaches include, but are not limited to:

- The amount of playing time for students;
- Team strategies or play calls; and
- Other student-athletes.

If a parent has a concern to discuss with a coach, the parent should call to set up an appointment with the coach. If the coach cannot be reached, a parent should call the Athletic Director, who will help to set up a meeting with the coach. Parents should not confront a coach before, after, or during a practice or game. If, after meeting with a coach, a parent still has concerns, the parent should call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.

Athletic Director

Joe Schallmoser
630-353-7248
jschallmoser@averycoonley.org

Middle School Clubs & Activities

In addition to athletics, ACS offers extracurricular activities designed to meet students' creative and cognitive interests. Below is a list of clubs typically offered to ACS students. With the exception of Debate, Treble Makers, and the Group 8 Play, most clubs will begin in late September or early October. For more information on these activities, please contact Sally Johnston, Auxiliary Programs Director at auxiliaryprograms@averycoonley.org

Advanced Orchestra

Orchestra offers students an opportunity to hone their instrumental skills and play with others. *Eligibility:* Groups 5–8

Art Club

Students who love art should consider joining Art Club. Projects are self-directed and teacher motivated. *Eligibility:* Groups 5–8

Art Club Kids

Students learn elements of art and design through the practice of painting and the combination of technical instruction and open studio time. *Eligibility:* Groups 5–8

Book Club

Book Club is for all who love to read. Bibliophiles and aspiring bibliophiles are welcome. *Eligibility:* Groups 5–8

Chess-Ed

Chess-Ed provides students with an opportunity to practice and play with peers as well as advance their strategic thinking and tactical skills as chess players. *Eligibility:* Groups K–8

Chess Team

Chess Team is a competitive, strategy-focused club that emphasizes preparing students for competition. *Eligibility:* Groups 5–8

Choir

Choir is for anyone who likes to sing with friends. *Eligibility:* Groups 5–8

Debate Team

The ACS Debate Club gives arguments a formal structure, turning it into a form of verbal chess. You need to think fast and outmaneuver your opponents to win your case. Students in Groups 5 – 8 will divide into two-person teams and use research, logic, and persuasion in pursuit of victory. Students are encouraged to come out and hone their reasoning and speaking skills in a fun and friendly environment. *Eligibility:* Groups 5–8

Drama Club

Drama Club is for those interested in honing their theatrical skills through the art of improvisation. *Eligibility:* Groups 7–8

Fiber Arts Club

The Fiber Arts Club is open to Group 6 and 7 students and is capped at 12 students. Students will bring their fiber art projects (knitting, crocheting, embroidery, etc.) and enjoy creating together and learning new skills together. *Eligibility:* Groups 6–7

FIRST® Tech Challenge (FTC)

Robotics Team

A beginner-friendly robotics team for students interested in exploring STEAM through FTC. This team participates in competitions at a less competitive level than the Cyber Seahorse Team. The focus of this Team is on learning, teamwork, and skill development. No prior experience is needed. *Eligibility:* Groups 5–8

FIRST® Tech Challenge Cyber Seahorse Robotics Team

This competitive Robotics Team for Middle School students participates in the FIRST Tech Challenge. It requires a high level of commitment from members with 10–20 hours per week of practice. *Eligibility:* Groups 7–8

Middle School

Group 8 Play

The Group 8 Play serves as a capstone opportunity for the ACS theatre program; all Group 8 students are strongly encouraged to participate. *Eligibility: Group 8*

Hydro Bloom Society

Students learn about sustainable farming techniques through this award-winning club. Members take care of the school's hydroponic gardens, growing fresh flowers, vegetables, and herbs, and using them to make smoothies, herbal teas, and cooking salts. *Eligibility: Groups 5–8*

Literary Magazine Club

Students take on publishing roles in this club to create a digital literary magazine that showcases the creative writing and artwork of ACS students. *Eligibility: Groups 5–8*

Math Counts

Math Counts is for students who would like to further develop their problem-solving skills and learn the “tricks and traps” of contest problems. *Eligibility: Groups 5–8*

Middle School Morning STEAM

Using makerspace equipment, including Prusa 3D printers, laser cutters, circuit, robotics kits, and electronics tools, students bring their ideas to life while learning to innovate and collaborate on projects. *Eligibility: Groups 5–8*

Poetry Club

Poetry Club offers a space for aspiring poets to explore different poetic forms. Students will engage in individual and collaborative writing and have the opportunity to share their writing with their peers. *Eligibility: Groups 5–8*

Scaled Heart Basketball Camp

Basic basketball skills are taught and practiced. Students will learn stretching and meditation to help focus, prevent injuries, and build confidence. *Eligibility: Groups 5–8*

STEAM Club

STEAM Club provides students with the opportunity to explore the variety of activities and applications that can be found within Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. During STEAM Club, students apply their prior knowledge of diverse topics alongside new knowledge to complete various challenging tasks and activities. *Eligibility: Groups 5–8*

Strategic Gaming Club

The strategic gaming club is for people who want to enjoy some time playing (non-electronic) games in a friendly, non-competitive environment. Each week, there will be a selection of board games, card games, and miniature games for the members to try, or students may bring their favorite games from home to share with the group. If we are really motivated, there may even be a Dungeons and Dragons campaign at the end of the year! *Eligibility: Groups 5–8*

Student Council (MS)

Student Council is for all students interested in leadership, collaboration, and an opportunity to serve the ACS community. *Eligibility: Groups 5–7 and Group 8 with prior Student Council service*

Tech Club

Tech Club is for students who are interested in supporting lights and sound for theatrical productions and School events. *Eligibility: Groups 8*

Treble Makers

Treble Makers is an elite acapella choir that performs around School and the community. Auditions are typically held in early September. *Eligibility: Groups 5–8 (audition based)*

Unconventional Careers

Students learn about unusual and interesting careers from people working in those fields. Speakers present via Zoom. *Eligibility: Groups 7–8*

Variety Show

Students create and perform a variety of acts focused on a unique theme each year. *Eligibility: Groups 1–8*

Yearbook

Yearbook is a student-focused publication club where students work together to create the ACS yearbook. Students have the opportunity to cooperatively plan page designs, curate photos, and record memories of students' time at ACS. *Eligibility: Groups 6–8*

For more information on these activities, please contact Sally Johnston, Auxiliary Programs Director at auxiliaryprograms@averycoonley.org

After-School Program

Avery Coonley students in full day PreK 3 through Group 8 may enroll in the After-School Program. An additional fee is charged for this program and billed in the student's tuition statement. Students may be signed up for the entire year, or by day as needed. ACS's After-School Program is led by a Program Coordinator and operated by qualified staff. The variety of daily activities planned for students participating in the Program include games and outdoor play, arts and crafts, hands-on activities, and structured homework time for Lower and Middle School students.

Contact Information

Receptionist (7:00 am–6:00 pm)
630-969-0800 ext. 7203

Program Coordinator

Quinn Everts
630-353-7204
qeverts@averycoonley.org

Hours of Operation

Monday–Friday, 2:45 pm–6:00 pm

Not available on early dismissal days or days the School is closed.

Program Fees

\$6 per half hour; per child.

- Fees are charged from a student's regular dismissal time (based on Group) until they are picked up
- Late fees are charged after 6pm at the rate of \$25 per 15 minutes late

Note: Full-day PreK 3–Group 4 student(s) may attend the After-School Program at **no charge** if they are waiting for their older sibling(s) to finish school at the regular dismissal time. Charges apply if the older sibling is attending extra-curriculars, and the younger sibling(s) is required to wait beyond the regular dismissal times.

STUDENTS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS OR ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS DO NOT NEED TO BE ENROLLED IN THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM UNLESS THEY WILL NEED TO REMAIN AT SCHOOL AFTER THEIR CLUB OR ENRICHMENT PROGRAM ENDS.

Automatic Daily Enrollment

Any student not picked up within 15 minutes of their scheduled pick-up time or at the end of their School-sanctioned, after-school activity (such as sports or clubs) will be escorted to the After-School Program by a faculty member. The student will check in with the After-School Program Coordinator and be given the opportunity to call a parent.

Billing Schedule

After-School Program fees are billed quarterly. The following schedule will apply:

- August and September — billed in the October statement
- October, November, and December — billed in the January statement
- January, February, and March — billed in the April statement
- April, May, and June — billed in the June statement

Registration

Registration and attendance for the After-School Program is managed through SchoolPass. Instructions for registering were posted in the Back-to-School information on the School's website posted on the Parent Portal, and listed in the ACS News.

To register, go to: averycoonley.school-pass.net.

Select After-School Middle School: for students in Groups 5–8

Meeting Locations

The program will meet on the blacktop by the South Entrance or in the Commons during inclement weather. On occasion, the After-School Program may meet elsewhere. At all times, the Receptionist on duty at the Main Entrance will be aware of the program location and be able to direct parents to the proper location.

Student Daily Sign in/Out

Students must sign in with the After-School Program Coordinator upon arrival. Once a student is signed into the After-School Program, they will not be allowed to leave without the signature of an authorized pick-up person. Authorized pick-up persons are those listed on the Authorized Driver List in the family's SchoolPass account.

Student Expectations

Students attending the After-School Program are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct expected during the school day and outlined in this Handbook.

Last Minute Changes to Your Child(ren)'s Schedule

Parents may make updates/changes in SchoolPass to their child(ren)'s after-school schedule for the day up until 3:00 pm. If you need assistance, please contact the After-School Program Director, Coordinator (Quinn Everts at qeverts@averycoonley.org).

Last Minute Change to Authorized Pick-Up Person

You may update your Authorized Drivers List in SchoolPass at any time. If the change is last minute, update your authorized drivers list in SchoolPass and email the information to the After-School Program Coordinator (Quinn Everts at qeverts@averycoonley.org). The newly authorized person must present a valid photo ID in order to pick up the student.

Volunteering & Parent Involvement

The Home & School Association (HSA)

The HSA offers many opportunities for parents/guardians to meet each other, share parenting questions and advice, and participate in the life of the School. The HSA encourages and supports family involvement in the School and offers many opportunities to get involved, depending on individual interests and availability. Additional information about the HSA can be found on the School website.

Parent/Guardian Classroom Volunteers

Classroom Volunteer Guidelines

Volunteers are a major strength of the ACS community, and many parents choose to become involved in various aspects of learning. As the classroom is the students' space to grow, take risks, make mistakes, and achieve success, all volunteers are required to respect the confidentiality of student interactions in the classroom and not discuss individual students with others. Observations made while working with students, accompanying field trips, or visiting classrooms should remain confidential and should not be shared with others.

Class Parties (Groups 5 through 8)

To create an inclusive and welcoming environment, decorations, including all paper products, should be in keeping with the event's overall goal. For example, the Winter Party should focus on celebrating the upcoming break, winter activities, and the upcoming New Year. Please avoid characters and themes that are religious and/or particular to only one culture or group. The budget for decorations (including all paper products), should not exceed \$30. We discourage awarding prizes or goody bags for classroom parties. No monetary gifts or gift cards may be awarded.

Appendix



Appendix

Academic Integrity Policy (2025–2026)

ACS strives to teach each student to be an independent thinker. In order to instill this quality, the School teaches and expects integrity and original thought from each student. In all areas of the School, from the curriculum to artistic endeavors, these values are promoted. Originality of thought is expected in every class, regardless of the medium of expression. Any act that does not embody such qualities violates the School's core values and will not be tolerated.

Cheating

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Consequences for Cheating

The respective teacher and Division Head will determine the consequences for an incidence of cheating, according to the severity of the offense. The student may be expected to redo the assignment and engage in conversation about the importance of academic honesty and integrity. Severe or repeat offenses may result in further disciplinary action including and up to expulsion.

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Appendix

Anti-Harassment/ Anti-Bullying Policy (2025–2026)

Purpose

The Avery Coonley School is committed to maintaining an inclusive and equitable school community. Our students need to learn in an environment that is free from behaviors that cause physical, psychological and/or emotional harm and that negatively impact our students' achievement and social-emotional well-being. The Avery Coonley School community members agree to treat each other with respect, which is one of the School's core values. Any form of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination, including comments or conduct relating to a person's real or perceived race, religion, age, gender, or sexual orientation, class, socio-economic status, homelessness, pregnancy or parenting status, physical appearance or limitations, neurodiversity, or ethnic background, which fail to respect the dignity of the individual, will not be tolerated.

Policy

The Avery Coonley School expressly prohibits the harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying of any persons by any means. All parties at The Avery Coonley School assert that:

1. We belong to a School community, and we expect to be treated with dignity and respect.
2. We are each accountable for our actions.
3. We do not tolerate harassment and/or bullying (as defined below) in our School buildings, on School grounds, in School-related activities (including travel to School-sponsored extracurricular activities), or that occurs outside of school but creates a hostile school environment for the targeted student in school.
4. We protect each other and report such behaviors to The Avery Coonley School faculty and staff.

Harassment and bullying, including cyberbullying are defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Examples can include, but are not limited to, offensive, intimidating, or derogatory verbal, nonverbal, written, digital (cyber-bullying), graphic, psychological, or physical conduct that reflects adversely on an individual or makes the individual feel unsafe. Other behaviors that are one-off in nature but that cause physical, psychological and/or emotional harm, and that negatively impact our student's achievement and social-emotional well-being are also subject to this policy. In other words, harassment and bullying can be a one-time, isolated incident if the experience is so egregious that the behavior and impact warrant immediate administrative action.

Harassment and/or bullying may take various forms and are defined as any of the following behaviors that is persistent or pervasive such that it creates an intimidating, hostile or unsafe educational environment:

- **Physical**—aggression such as hitting, punching, kicking, or intimidating interference with the normal school routine or damaging a person's property/possessions or taking them without permission
- **Written/Verbal**—use of derogatory remarks, name calling, jokes, slurs, mean-spirited comments, and belligerent or threatening gestures or words spoken to/directed at another, either in person, in print, or via the Internet or other technology
- **Relational**—behavior that is intended to harm someone by damaging or manipulating his or her relationships with others such as stalking, public humiliation, exclusion, spreading rumors, ganging-up as well as any other forms of physical, verbal, or cyber harassment.
- **Sexual**—unwelcome advances of either a physical, verbal, or cyber nature (including unwelcome sexual jokes and written or verbal abuse of a vulgar nature), when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interference with a person's performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment.

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Note that bullying and/or harassment may occur in any/all divisions, although the nature and severity will likely differ between age groups. Furthermore, based on child development, our early group levels are in the process of skill acquisition as it relates to social interaction, perspective taking, and conflict resolution.

This prohibition against acts of harassment and/or bullying applies to all people (students in all divisions, regular or part-time employees, visitors/guardians/parents, and volunteers), engaged in any School-related activities in our School buildings, on School grounds, in School-related activities including travel to School-sponsored extracurricular activities. This prohibition also applies to acts that in certain circumstances (for example, cyberbullying) occur outside of school but create a hostile school environment for the targeted students in school. NOTE: Bullying is contrary to Illinois State law. The Anti-Harassment/Anti-Bullying Consequences Framework only applies to students currently enrolled at The Avery Coonley School. (For other members of the ACS community engaged in acts of harassment and/or bullying, consequences will depend upon the individual's relationship with the School).

Reporting

The Avery Coonley School, including its students, faculty, staff, and administrators, is committed to eliminating the presence of harassment, bullying, or behaviors that may be perceived as bullying. Eliminating bullying requires all members of the community to pay attention, to act on, and report concerns. Parents/guardians and students who become aware of a bullying incident or pattern should report their concerns to acssafe@averycoonley.org or 630-969-0800 ext. 7208 (Pre-K–4) or ext. 7244 (5–8) as soon as possible. The Avery Coonley School recognizes that the issue of whether bullying or harassment has occurred requires a factual determination based on all the evidence received. The Avery Coonley School also recognizes that false accusations of bullying or harassment can have serious effects on innocent parties. Disciplinary action may be taken against any individual(s) found to falsely accuse a member of the ACS Community of bullying or harassment. When the School's administration becomes aware of an allegation of bullying, it will make diligent efforts to inform the parents or guardians of all students involved within 24 hours (in addition, the School will make diligent efforts to report all threats, suggestions, or instances of self-harm determined to be the result of

bullying within the same 24-hour period). All complaints will be investigated immediately, and all reasonable efforts will be made to complete the investigation within 10 days of the initial report; the investigation and its results will remain confidential to the extent possible. Any student found by The Avery Coonley School to have bullied or harassed a student may be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions that aim to build and restore relationships, when possible. Examples of these sanctions are a conversation with family/student/administration, referral to outside therapeutic counseling. For serious incidents of bullying or harassment, disciplinary action may include suspension or expulsion. Retaliating or discriminating against a student for complaining about bullying, harassment, or participating in an investigation is prohibited.

The Avery Coonley School takes each report of bullying, harassment, and behaviors that may be perceived as bullying seriously. The School will provide opportunities for discussion for parties involved, including students, parents/guardians, and administrators, prior to the conclusion of any subsequent investigation. The classification of "first incident," "second incident," and "third incident" is made by the Division Head at the conclusion of the investigation.

Anti-Harassment /Anti-Bullying Policy Evaluation:

The Head of School will assist the Board of Trustees with its evaluation and assessment of the policy's outcomes and effectiveness. This process shall include, but is not limited to, factors such as:

1. The frequency of incidents.
2. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at School.
3. Identification of areas of a School where bullying occurs.
4. The types of bullying being utilized.
5. Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that The Avery Coonley School already collects for other purposes. The information developed as part of the evaluation process will be posted on The Avery Coonley School's website.

The Avery Coonley School will provide information regarding counseling, support services and other programs to those who are victims of bullying and/or harassment.

Appendix

The Avery Coonley School's Anti-Harassment / Anti-Bullying Consequences Framework

1st Incident	2nd Incident	3rd Incident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/guardian notification • Minimum: Reflection sheets, loss of privileges* • "First Incident" documented by Division Head† • Any other requirements deemed necessary by the administration • Head of School Notification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/guardian notification • Division Head and Head of School notification • Minimum: Reflection sheets, loss of privileges, educational development, time owed, and/or in-school suspension. • "Second Incident" documented by Division Head. • Regular meetings with the Division Head, School Social Worker, or outside counseling support • Any other requirements deemed necessary by the administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/guardian notification • Division Head and Head of School notification • Minimum: Reflection sheets, loss of privileges, educational development, time owed, in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension, up to expulsion. • "Third Incident" documented by Division Head. • Any other requirements deemed necessary by the administration

* Please note that this represents the minimum consequences for bullying and/or harassment. In severe cases of bullying and/or harassment, even the first incident may result in suspension or expulsion. Full descriptions of consequences for all types of behavioral issues, from minor infractions to major ones, can be found in the Student & Parent Handbook under "General Behavioral Management & Consequences."

† First Incident notification is required, regardless of the severity of the incident, in order to determine whether the behavior is a pattern. After any three-year period without incident, notation starts at "First Incident."

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Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act

This notification is required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA, 40 CFR Part 763 of Title II of the Toxic Substances Control Act). Asbestos Management Plans have been developed for the School. These plans are available and accessible to the public at the School's Maintenance Office.

This notification is required by law and should not be construed to indicate the existence of any hazardous conditions in our School buildings.

Attendance Policy (2025–2026)

It is impossible to replicate the experience of being in class. The Avery Coonley School offers an education that is immersive and rigorous, so for students to gain the full benefit and be successful lifelong learners, attendance is essential. We also teach our students that being present in their community, and honoring commitments to themselves and others is important. In support of our mission of a partnership of school and family, we ask that parents partner with us and avoid planning appointments, outside obligations, or family trips that result in unnecessary absences. Parents are our most important ally in teaching our students to prioritize their education.

Absence Policy & Procedures

Reporting an Absence

A parent must notify the School by 8:30 am on the day of their child(ren)'s absence. An absence can be reported by:

- submitting the Absence Report form located on the Parent Portal; or
- by calling the Attendance Reporting Line at 630-969-0800 (press 5). Please include your child(ren)'s name(s), Group number(s), reason for absence, your name, and a phone number where you can be reached (please speak slowly and clearly).

Lower School families must also notify the child(ren)'s classroom teacher(s) via email (in advance, when possible).

Work Missed Due to an Absence

During the course of the absence, certain class assignments may be set aside for the parent or child to collect either during the absence or upon their return to School. The student and parents should work directly with the teachers to determine a timeline for completing makeup work and assessments. Teachers are not required or expected to re-teach material that has been missed because of student absences, nor are they always able to provide lesson materials in advance.

Absences Due to Vacation

Parents are urged to schedule family vacations during regularly scheduled School breaks. A student's attendance record will be taken into consideration at the time of re-enrollment.

Parents should be aware that many Independent secondary schools require attendance records as part of the application process.

Excessive Absences

- After 5 consecutive days or 10 total absences during a school year, a student may be placed on a Progress Monitoring Plan (see page X) and be required to engage supplemental tutoring services to support their learning
- Students absent from school over 15 days during a school year may not be issued a re-enrollment contract for the following year or might not be promoted to the next Group level depending on their academic performance.

Punctuality

To set our students up for a positive and productive day, and to prepare their minds for the school day, students should arrive at least 5 minutes prior to the start time and prepare to begin class promptly at the allotted time. Oversleeping, traffic etc. are not acceptable excuses for tardiness. Late arrival to class is disruptive and inconsiderate to teachers and classmates. If a pattern of regular tardiness develops, a student may receive additional support to arrive on time.

Tardiness Policy

- After 10 tardies, the Division Head will typically contact the family inquiring about the student and the tardies.
- After 15 tardies, the Head of School will typically require a meeting with the student and the family.

Appendix

Campus Security/Video Surveillance Policy (2025–2026)

Purpose

The Avery Coonley School (ACS) is committed to protecting the safety and property of the community while respecting the privacy of our faculty, staff, students, and visitors. Cameras provide a visual deterrent to crime, assist with overall security measures, and increase the potential identification and apprehension of person(s) who breach School policies and/or commit criminal acts. Cameras are not a guarantee of safety; however, they do serve as deterrents and can alert the School and police to potential danger. The primary use of surveillance cameras is to record images for future identification of individuals and activity in the event of violations of law or policy. Cameras are not actively monitored. They are viewed only upon report of a crime or violation. This policy regulates the use of surveillance cameras to protect the legal and privacy interests of ACS and the community. This policy applies to all ACS persons and organizations in the use of surveillance systems and devices for monitoring and/or recording activity. This policy does not apply to the use of video for non-surveillance purposes, examples include:

1. The academic use of cameras for educational purposes.
2. Cameras used for capturing public events and performances.
3. Webcams used for purposes of communication between specific persons.

Policy Statement

ACS may place video surveillance cameras where necessary and appropriate consistent with applicable law. ACS respects the privacy of the community members and balances privacy considerations with the safety needs of the school community. Use of video cameras to record public areas for security purposes will be conducted in a manner consistent with existing School policies and applicable law.

Procedures Access & Use

1. Only authorized personnel, as determined by this policy and authorized by the Head of School or designee, will be involved in, or have access to surveillance camera data.
2. When an incident is suspected to have occurred, only authorized personnel may review the images from surveillance camera data.

3. Only the Head of School or designee may authorize copies of surveillance images.
4. All requests to release surveillance records must be authorized by the Head of School.
5. The School does not record audio for surveillance purposes.
6. Video monitoring will be conducted only in areas where the public does not have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Cell Phone & Electronic Devices Policy (2025–2026)

Students are not permitted to use cell phones, electronic devices, unapproved computers, iPads, smartwatches,* electronic book readers and hand-held devices, including but not limited to video games, music players, image and/or audio recording devices—other than School-issued technology—from the time they exit their cars at drop-off in the morning until they enter their cars at the end of the day. If students elect to bring such devices to School, they must remain powered off and unused, and in students' backpacks the entire day. Students may not use the devices between classes, during lunch or recess, or during any clubs, activities, or athletic events.

Students will have ready access to School telephones should they need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day. We also respectfully request that parents refrain from texting, calling, or emailing students directly during the school day. If there is an important message to be delivered to the student, parents should contact the Receptionist, and the message will be delivered to the student. Alternatively, when a message is less urgent, parents can email their child's team of classroom teachers and a teacher will relay the message to the student.

*Exceptions may be made for students who need to wear smartwatches to monitor and/or support a specific medical condition. These medical exceptions must be approved by the School Nurse and the appropriate Division Head, and the student may only use the device at School for the specified medical purpose.

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Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy for Overnight Trips (2025-2026)

Overnight trips are an extension of the ACS learning experience and therefore, the school has discretion concerning appropriate use of cell phones, *smart watches, and other internet-connected devices during the trip. Cell phones will be collected regularly by the students' chaperones and redistributed at certain times for photo opportunities and to check in daily with their parents. Students will not be permitted to have internet-connected devices or smart phones in their hotel rooms overnight.

Students are encouraged to bring cameras (digital SLR or pocket cameras without internet connectivity) to record the trip, as their cell phones will not always be available to take pictures.

In cases of emergency, parents will be provided with the cell phone numbers of trip chaperones, and chaperones have contact information for all parents/guardians. In addition, students will have the chaperones' room information should they need assistance during the night and can call them using the hotel room phone. In addition, students can reach the hotel reception desk, which is staffed 24 hours, via their room phone.

*Exceptions may be made for students who need to wear smartwatches to monitor and/or support a specific medical condition. These medical exceptions must be approved by the School Nurse and the appropriate Division Head, and the student may only use the device at school for the specified medical purpose.

Confidentiality Policy (2025-2026)

Members of the School community commit themselves to maintaining appropriate professional tact and discretion with regard to confidential information they receive. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the Head of School, appropriate administrators and faculty, outside professionals, law enforcement officers, parents/guardians, and others when there is a compelling reason for doing so, including, without limitation, in cases of health and safety emergencies (when students or others are in imminent danger of harm); when there is concern about a student's ability to function academically, emotionally, physically, and/or mentally within the School environment; or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed.

Dress Code Policy (2025–2026)

Students should arrive on campus appropriately attired for weather and interactive activities in all classes and environments. Students must wear securely fastened shoes at all times, and rubber soled shoes are encouraged.

On cold or rainy days, students are encouraged to wear extra clothing, such as a sweater or sweatshirt, as they are frequently outside when passing to and from classes. When there is snow on the ground, all students are required to wear boots and snow pants to participate in winter outdoor activities on the field. Students in Preschool–Group 2 must keep a change of clothing at School in a bag labeled with their name.

Recess and some School activities will continue to take place outdoors when the "feels like" temperature is above 0 degrees. The "feels like" temperature takes into account factors such as air temperature, relative humidity, and strength of the wind. Please make sure your child has the appropriate clothing with them each day to feel comfortable during these activities.

Clothing containing references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, profanity, or other content deemed offensive is always prohibited. Hats may be worn provided that their presence does not disrupt student learning. Without a formal School uniform requirement, it is impossible to delineate other instances when a student's clothing may be not considered appropriate, as clothing styles/sizes may look different from one student to another. As a general rule, all students must wear clothing that fully and adequately covers their undergarments and private areas. Low-cut tops, low-rise short-cut shorts, low-hanging pants, and crop-tops exposing most of the midriff are examples of clothing that is in violation of the above. In these instances, students may be asked to change their clothing. Families are asked to cooperate fully with the School in maintaining these standards.

Physical Education Classes

Appropriate clothing for unrestricted movement and appropriate gym shoes are required of each student. Students are required to wear shorts under skirts or dresses.

Appendix

Food Allergy Policy (2025–2026)

Introduction

Food allergies affect approximately 1 in 13 children in the United States and are a growing burden to food safety and public health. A food allergy is a very serious (and potentially fatal) medical condition in which the body's immune system responds to contact or ingestion of a normally harmless food protein in a virulent manner. Ninety percent of food allergic reactions are caused by nine different foods: peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish (exoskeleton), milk, eggs, and sesame. Please note that while a packaged food product may not contain a specific food protein, it may be manufactured in a facility that processes these food proteins, which means that the proteins may still be present in the packaged food.

While no school can guarantee a 100% allergen-free environment, we take the threat of food allergies very seriously at The Avery Coonley School. We strive to work cooperatively with families to maintain the health and safety of students diagnosed with food allergies in ways that are developmentally appropriate and inclusive. The safety of a child with life-threatening food allergies is a shared partnership between the family, school, and student. Our philosophy focuses on teaching children how to navigate living in a world that is not allergen free. Educating your child about food allergies is an ongoing and collaborative process.

Our Policy

The Avery Coonley School requires that all students & parents observe the following when bringing personal lunch/snacks to School or on School-sponsored field trips:

- DO NOT bring food from home that contains tree nuts or peanuts. Tree nuts include, but are not limited to, **almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts.**
- DO NOT share personal food items of any kind with other students.

The Avery Coonley School requires that all students & parents observe the following when bringing treats to school to the classroom for planned activities and celebrations:

- DO NOT bring food from home that contains tree nuts or peanuts. Tree nuts include, but are not limited to, **almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts.**
- BRING food items in original packaging (if items are prepackaged)
- PROVIDE the classroom teacher and room parent with a list of ingredients, and/or a link to the product being served, **at least two weeks** before the event/activity so that the information can be shared with the School community. This includes cultural activities that may feature home prepared items that are not in its original packaging. Room Parents will communicate information on the planned activity with families so that they can make an informed choice on their child's participation.

For all other events & activities (including HSA events, Heritage Fest) where parents will be present with their children to supervise what they consume, the Avery Coonley School requires that all community members observe the following:

- DO NOT bring food from home that contains tree nuts or peanuts. Tree nuts include, but are not limited to, **almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts.**
- DISPLAY a list of ingredients contained in the food being served (if making a traditional dish) and/or a list of ingredients alongside the pre-packaged item.
- PROVIDE HSA and/or the event coordinator with a list of ingredients, or a link to the product being served, **at least four weeks** before the event/activity so that the information can be shared with the School community.

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Our Commitment to You

The Avery Coonley School is committed to preserving the safety of its students with food allergies in the following ways:

1. Threats, harassment, or jokes directed towards children with allergies will be treated as disciplinary infractions and may result in suspension or expulsion as determined by the Head of School.
2. Emergency medication provided by families will be stored securely in the Health Office and in the classroom if a second pen is provided.
3. Stock epinephrine (junior and adult) will be stored securely in the Health Office, when available through designated programming.¹
4. Copies of Student Individual Allergy Action Plans (when available) will be provided to classroom teachers.
5. Students are allowed and encouraged to self-carry epinephrine when age or developmentally ready; some students may demonstrate independence earlier than others, while other students may take longer to develop these skills.
6. Parents should contact the Health Office with special seating/lunchroom requests. Designated "Allergy Tables" have not been definitively proven to reduce the risk of food allergic reactions. Rather, the focus is on the avoidance of allergen ingestion and access to prompt epinephrine in the event of an exposure.²

¹ Stock supply is contingent upon national supply shortages, medication recalls, and lack of access to an ordering provider.

² Allergy tables are less common due to social isolation but still implemented in some schools and can be implemented upon parent/guardian request.

ALL OTHER HEALTH POLICIES, DOCUMENTS, AND FORMS CAN BE FOUND ON THE PARENT PORTAL UNDER RESOURCES AND IN MAGNUS HEALTH.

Medications Policy, Procedures, & Guidelines (2025–2026)

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the administration of medication to their children. The administration of medication to students during regular school hours is strongly discouraged, unless the medication is absolutely necessary and critical to the health of the student.

Emergency medication: Emergency medication required to treat a medical condition must be provided to the Health Office by the first day of School.

Self-carry: (a) A rescue inhaler may be carried with parent permission and physician order. (b) An epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) may be carried with parent permission and physician order. Self-carry privileges may be withdrawn if a student exhibits behavior indicating lack of responsibility toward self or others with regards to medication.

Stock Epinephrine/Albuterol: ACS will maintain a supply of undesignated epinephrine (junior and adult) and albuterol in accordance with Public Act 100-0726 when supply is available. This law allows the use of these medications with a standing order of a physician. Any trained personnel may administer epinephrine to any person suspected of experiencing an anaphylactic reaction. Albuterol may be administered by the School Nurse or trained personnel to any person believed to be having respiratory distress.

Medication storage: Medicines provided to the School will be stored in the Health Office. Parents/guardians must arrange to collect the medication at the end of the school year. Unclaimed medication will be discarded.

Prescription medications: Prescription medications must be provided to the Health Office in the original container and include the following instructions for administration: prescriber's name, name of the medication, dosage, frequency, time, and route of delivery. The prescription portion of the ACS Medical Authorization Form must be on file with the School.

Medication administration: (a) During the school day, medications will be administered by the School Nurse, or other designated personnel. (b) Medications for overnight trips should be limited to only those that are absolutely essential to a student's survival and/or well-being.

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Medications will be self-administered by the student under the supervision of designated School personnel, who will be responsible for holding the medication for the duration of the trip. The exception to this is emergency medication where the student is permitted to self-carry.

Expired medication: ACS will not administer expired medication. Expired medication will be safely discarded.

Homeopathic medicines & preparations: Homeopathic medications are not FDA approved and cannot be administered by School personnel, even with a medical order. A parent/guardian may come to school to administer but must be pre-arranged with the student's teacher and the School Nurse via email.

Medical cannabis: Parents or guardians may administer a cannabis infused product on School premises to students provided: 1) the student is an authorized medical cannabis user, 2) has a physician's order on file, 3) has a copy of the student's medical cannabis user card on file, and, 4) has a parent/guardian medical cannabis user card on file. Medical marijuana may be delivered via patch, pump, or edible, but not in the form of inhaled smoking. The Health Office may only store FDA approved medical cannabis in the case of a qualified medical cannabis user. Presently, the FDA has approved only one CBD product available by prescription to treat two rare forms of epilepsy. Under federal law, this is the only cannabis medication that School personnel will administer to an authorized medical user with the appropriate documentation on file.

Non-Discrimination Policy (2025–2026)

The Avery Coonley School admits qualified students of any sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, physical disability, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid program, athletic program, or other School-administered programs.

The Avery Coonley School provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants. Specifically, it is ACS's policy not to discriminate in making employment-related decisions (e.g., hiring, promotion, raises, termination) based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, relationship or marital status, military status, parental or family status, ethnicity, culture, size, appearance, or disability (except where the individual cannot perform the essential job functions despite reasonable accommodation). In addition, the School does not discriminate against victims of domestic or sexual violence.

Responsible Use of Technology Policy (2025–2026)

Introduction

Technology is used as a tool to deepen and extend learning in the classroom and to provide community and connection in a distance-learning environment. The School's technology team works closely with teachers to integrate technology seamlessly into the classroom and to leverage its power for online learning. The goal is to teach students how to use computers and the Internet appropriately. Adherence to ACS's Responsible Use of Technology Policy is expected of all ACS students, whether using ACS Technology, the ACS network, and/or (as applicable) any electronic device or network, whether at School or elsewhere, as long as the student is enrolled at ACS.

Definition of ACS Technology

Students are expected to take proper care of all ACS technology in their possession. ACS technology is defined as any hardware including, but not limited to, computer desktops, workstations, laptops, tablets, calculators, cameras, projectors, displays, video recording devices, scanners, sound/music players, telephones, and software installed on the local machines and network. Students should report any malfunctions to staff of the Technology Department, or the supervising teacher immediately and not attempt to move, repair, reconfigure, modify, or attach external devices to the systems themselves. No food or drink is permitted at any computer workstation.

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Responsible Use of Technology Policy

With access to computers and people all over the world comes the availability of material that may not be considered educational in the context of the school setting. School staff have taken precautions to restrict access to inappropriate content; however, on a global network it is impossible to control all content.

1. Both on and off-campus, ACS technology users will:

- Use their accounts wisely, honestly, and responsibly, and consistent with all ACS rules for students.
- Not login or use anyone else's account. If someone has left a computer logged on, users are expected to logout.
- Not impersonate or in any other way falsely represent themselves using an account that misrepresents the user.
- Only save data files to appropriate places as designated by the supervising teacher.
- Not use the computer lab or computer workstations without permission or supervision.
- Not use real-time chat online, such as instant messages, email, or any social media platform unless expressly authorized and managed by the supervising teacher or a member of the Technology Department.
- Not intentionally deactivate anti-virus software. No person shall by any willful or deliberate act jeopardize the integrity of the computing equipment, its systems' programs, or any other stored information.
- Not remove or deface any identifying stickers put on their machines by the Technology Department, i.e., American Capital Leasing stickers and student name/machine name stickers.
- Not host any Internet services (including web page hosting, FTP hosting, etc.) on their device.
- Not lend or trade their device to anyone.
- Not make additions, modifications, or deletion of files, except in the student's home folder.
- Not leave their device on the ground or in hallways where the technology might be damaged.
- Not post anything that reflects negatively upon the School, other students, the faculty or the administration on social networking sites, blogs, podcasts, or other web tools.

2. When using the Internet, students will:

- Not communicate with or make plans to meet any stranger in person.
- Not remove any School-owned computer equipment (including, but not limited to, network cables and keyboards) from the School without express permission.
- Not be "friends" with, or otherwise directly connect to via online networks and services, any School employee on any social networking site that is not used primarily for educational purpose. If a student is contacted by a School employee via non-School channels for noneducational purposes, the student should immediately notify either the Assistant Head of School & Middle School Head, Dr. Gwen Cooper or the Head of School, Dr. Kirsty Montgomery.
- Demonstrate appropriate digital citizenship.
- Abide by the Standards of Behavior expected of all ACS students.
- Not view, use, or download inappropriate content, including (but not limited to) games, audio, video, or graphic files.
- Respect copyright laws. The Internet should not be used to download or exchange pirated material or files. If the distinction between freeware, shareware, public domain, and copyrighted commercial software or files is unclear, the user should check with the Technology Department.
- Properly credit information obtained online by following appropriate guidelines for citing electronic information.
- Practice cyber safety and not reveal their or another's personal information.

3. Student Use of Social Media

The School understands the desire of students to use social networking websites, Internet bulletin boards, blogs, chat rooms, and other online resources or websites (e.g., TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, Pinterest) (collectively referred to as "Social Media"). Whether or not a student chooses to use Social Media is a decision the student should make in consultation with the student's parents. However, to the extent that students, parents, or members of the School community represent the School to each other and to the wider community, participation in such Social Media should be done responsibly with a mind toward how both the forum where one chooses to participate and the content posted reflect on that person individually and on the School. Moreover,

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issues concerning respect for the privacy of students, copyrights, trademarks, and confidentiality of sensitive information are all important to understand before participating in Social Media. With the foregoing in mind, the School encourages students and parents to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability when accessing Social Media and the School's network. Students are expected to comply with the policies outlined in the School's Responsible Use Policy regardless of whether they are using School-provided equipment or their own personal devices.

4. Graphing calculators and games

The use of computers, handhelds, and graphing calculator games is acceptable only under the following conditions:

- The supervising teacher must have express knowledge of and approve all game playing, and
- Game players must respect the academic setting and refrain from noise, sound effects, violent motion, etc., which may disturb others.

Misuse of games on a graphing calculator or any handheld device will result in the user being required to remove the game from the device.

5. Security

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system serves many users. If the user identifies any security problem on the ACS network, they must immediately notify the supervising teacher or a member of the Technology Department. They must not demonstrate the problem to other users.

6. Information Access and User Privacy

Users should be aware that the Technology Department and Division Heads can monitor all email, network transmissions, and any use of the ACS Technology, for the purpose of backups, network management, maintenance, security, improper usage, etc. In addition, others may inadvertently view information as a result of routine systems maintenance, monitoring, or misdelivery

7. General Use and Care of School-Issued Devices

- Students are expected to treat their device with care and respect. Students should not deface the device or the protective case in any way. This includes, but is not limited to, marking, painting, drawing, or marring any surface of the device and its case. Stickers, glitter, and any other decorative markings are expressly prohibited.
- Students should protect their device from extreme heat or cold. Devices should never be left in a car for an extended period, even if the car is locked.

- Devices should be protected from extreme weather, liquids, food, and pets. Students should never eat or drink while using their tablet or use their devices near others who are eating and drinking.
- Heavy objects should never be placed or stacked on top of the device. This includes books, musical instruments, sports equipment, etc.
- Students should use care when plugging any device into their tablet, such as a power cord, SD card, or flash drive.
- Devices should be turned off and placed in the protective case when coming to or leaving school.
- Devices should not be placed on or under soft items, such as pillows, chairs, sofa cushions, or blankets. This may cause the device to overheat, resulting in damage to the device.

8. Reliability of ACS Technology

ACS makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the technology service it is providing, nor will ACS be responsible for any damage incurred by technology users. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors, or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the ACS network is at the user's own risk. ACS specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

9. Student Expectations and Responsibilities at School

- Students are responsible for backing up important documents.
- Student file sharing is limited to School-related projects and activities.
- Devices are to be used only in classrooms and other learning areas of the School.
- While moving from one instructional area to another, and in the car pick-up line, devices should be stored in their protective case.
- During assemblies and other times when the devices are not permitted to be in use, the device should be stored in the case.
- At all times, students must have their School-issued devices either in their possession or in their locker.
- Students should report any suspected misuse of technology to the Technology Department of another trusted adult on campus.

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10. Student/Family Expectations & Responsibilities at Home

- The School will provide devices to students for use at School and at home. The device must be returned at the end of the academic year in the same condition that it was when issued to the student, less reasonable wear. This includes the cable, charger, stylus, and protective case.
- It is the student's responsibility to fully charge their device at home each night for use every school day.
- When transporting their device to and from School, students should always be sure it is placed in the protective case, and the case is fully closed.
- All device repairs must be provided by the ACS technology staff. Under no circumstances should students or parents attempt any repairs to the device.
- The cost of replacing the student's device and related components if lost becomes the responsibility of the parent(s). Consequences for misuse of the device will follow the guidelines below.

11. Consequences for Inappropriate Use of Technology

Failure to respect these privileges and to live up to these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action. When a policy violation occurs, the supervising teacher in concert with the respective Division Head will determine the seriousness of the situation. Serious infractions may result in suspension of technology privileges and/or other appropriate disciplinary action. ACS technology users will be held liable for the replacement costs of ACS technology equipment due to negligence or misuse.

Illegal activity may be prosecuted and may result in the immediate and permanent loss of privileges, suspension or expulsion from ACS.

What to Do When a Problem Arises?

- Email the Technology Department at techteam@averycoonley.org.
- If a loaner device, replacement stylus, or replacement charger is needed, the student will be asked to fill out and sign a loaner checkout form, which is available from the Technology Department.
- Students are responsible for any lost or broken styluses or chargers.

Search & Seizure Policy (2025–2026)

For the safety of our students, The Avery Coonley School may search any student's or visitor's person and/or property at School and/or during School-sponsored events, including but not limited to cubbies, lockers, bags, and laptops. Personal property and files found may be seized by the administration and may be claimed by the student or parent when any inquiry is complete.

Substance Abuse Policy (2025–2026)

Tobacco Free Campus

The Avery Coonley School is, by order of the Board of Trustees, a tobacco-free campus. If a student possesses, uses, or distributes any tobacco, nicotine and/or vaping products on ACS property or at a School-related event off-campus, the student will be subject to disciplinary probation and restriction for a period of time deemed appropriate by the ACS administration. Repeated violations will subject the student to more serious sanctions, including dismissal.

Alcohol and Drugs

The Avery Coonley School strictly prohibits the use and possession of alcohol and illegal and/or unauthorized drugs and/or paraphernalia associated with the use of illegal and/or unauthorized drugs and may not intentionally misuse products that can act as inhalants, while enrolled in the School. Consequently, any ACS student who possesses, consumes, uses, sells, requests to purchase, or distributes alcohol or illegal and/or unauthorized drugs (including drug paraphernalia), or is determined to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal and/or unauthorized drugs, will be subject to prompt disciplinary action.

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication

ACS students are prohibited from (i) sharing prescription medication of any kind with students or others for whom the prescription is not written and (ii) using prescription and over-the-counter medication other than exactly as prescribed or instructed. This policy applies to controlled

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substances and non-controlled substances. Students who violate this policy will be subject to the same disciplinary action as students who violate the alcohol and illegal drugs policies of ACS.

Voluntary Disclosure

While a student is subject to the discipline process any time ACS becomes aware of specific conduct that violates the School's policy regarding alcohol and illegal drugs, help is available for such students who struggle with substance abuse. Accordingly, ACS encourages and welcomes students and/or their families to approach School counselors, administrators, or faculty members to seek general help, without reference to a specific incident or event. Those who do so will be referred promptly and confidentially to appropriate health care professionals.

Tuition Payment Policy (2025–2026)

For all students, a non-refundable deposit of \$1,000 must accompany the enrollment contract to reserve their space for the following year. This deposit is applied against tuition.

The tuition for each level and a payment schedule showing due dates appear on the enrollment contract. Statements are emailed to parents prior to the due dates. Tuition payments are to be paid on or before each due date.

Tuition for late-entering students is prorated based on the number of attendance days remaining in the school year.

In view of the parent's obligation to pay the total tuition, a partial tuition refund insurance plan is available. Information about the plan is sent to all parents with the enrollment contract or may be obtained from the Business Office.

Acceptance of enrollment constitutes an agreement to pay the full academic year's account, composed of both total tuition and all related fees and expenses of the student. The School is entitled to be reimbursed for any attorneys' fees and costs incurred in the collection of any unpaid balance.

An account is considered delinquent if not paid within 10 calendar days of the due date. A late payment fee of 1.5% per month or fraction of a month will be charged on the unpaid balance of a delinquent account. Whenever a tuition or fee account becomes past due for a period of 30 days from its due date, the student will be withheld from classes until the delinquency is cured (unless the School obtains adequate security acceptable to the School for such account within said period). If the delinquency is not cured within an additional 30-day period, the student will be unenrolled from ACS. In all events, the first tuition installment payment must be paid on or before the first day of school or the student's place will not be reserved. The student will not be enrolled in classes. Final transcripts will be held for students until all unpaid tuition and fees are received.

In order to ensure the integrity of the re-enrollment process, non-payment of any delinquent accounts by April 15 automatically will serve as notice of withdrawal for the next school year, and the spot will be filled with another student.

The School will assess a service charge for all returned payments.

Families with any questions about this policy may reach out to the Head of School or Chief Financial Officer.

Vaccination Policy (2024-2025)

ACS Board of Trustees Student Vaccination Policy

Vaccinations may be the single most important health-promoting intervention that health care providers and parents can do for children. Based on all available literature, evidence, and current studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), vaccines are safe and effective. Parents/guardians electing not to vaccinate their children put both their children and other individuals who are not able to receive vaccines for medical reasons at risk.

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The Avery Coonley School has the following policy on student immunizations:

- All enrolled students must have up-to-date immunizations as required by the State of Illinois.*
- The only accepted vaccination waiver will be for a valid religious or medical exemption.*
- For the School to accept a medical exemption, the family must consent to a medical examination of the child by a doctor of the School's choosing. Based on the recommendations made to the School, the School may or may not allow a medical exemption.
- For the School to accept a religious exemption, the family must file a valid and complete Certificate of Religious Exemption that complies with all required elements under Illinois law.
- All students must have their immunizations up to date by October 15 of each school year to remain enrolled. ACS is required to follow the Illinois Department of Public Health Vaccine Schedule.*
- The School may allow on rare occasions, a slight variation of the recommended immunization schedule based on medical circumstances.
- If proof of vaccination is not provided as required, the child will not be allowed to return to school.
- There are also times when the School may require additional immunizations beyond which the state requires for attendance.
- If there is a risk of a vaccine-preventable disease impacting campus or the School community, the School may exclude non-immunized students, including those with valid religious or medical exemptions, from School and all School activities. Excluded students will not be permitted to return until (1) the danger of the outbreak

has passed; (2) the student becomes ill with the disease and completely recovers; or (3) the student is immunized. In determining whether there is a risk of a vaccine-preventable disease, the School may consult with appropriate medical professionals and/or the Illinois Department of Public Health.

- Questions regarding immunization objections should be directed to the Head of School.

* For more information, see Illinois Department of Public Health: [Minimum Immunization Requirements Entering a Childcare Facility or School, 2025–2026](#), the [ACS Medical Exemption Waiver](#), and the [ACS Religious Exemption Waiver](#) on the Parent Portal.

Parent & Student Acknowledgement 2025–2026

This Form acknowledges that we understand that, as Avery Coonley students and parents, we are asked to support the School and its mission and to acquaint ourselves with and abide by the School’s policies and procedures.


We understand that this Handbook is for informational purposes only and is only meant to be used by those affiliated with the School community. It is not intended to create, nor does it create, a contract or part of a contract in any way, including, but not limited to, between the School and any parent, guardian, or student affiliated with or attending the School. We understand that the terms and conditions of the Enrollment Contract signed by us determine our relationship with the School. We further understand that the School may add, revise, and/or delete School policies before, during, and after the school year and that such updates need not be in writing or incorporated into this Handbook.

Our signatures below indicate that we have reviewed and familiarized ourselves with the contents of the 2025–2026 Student & Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the School’s policies and procedures, as outlined in the Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
_____	_____
Print Full Name of Parent/Guardian	Date
_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
_____	_____
Print Full Name of Parent/Guardian	Date
_____	_____
Student(s) Signature – Students in Groups 6-8 only	Date
_____	_____
_____	Date
_____	Date
_____	_____
Print Full Name of Student(s)	_____

Please sign and submit this Acknowledgement by October 1, 2025.

Print this form, complete, and return to the Business Office. To submit online, scan the QR code or go to <https://qrco.de/SPHB2025receipt>





**Student & Parent
Handbook**
2025–2026