

Manual de Padres y Estudiantes
Parent & Student Handbook
Guide à l'intention des parents et de l'élève
2024-2025



Calle Principal No. 34
Urbanización Los Maestros
San Francisco de Macorís
República Dominicana

(809) 588-7925
WhatsApp (849) 506-7925

www.ArborChristianAcademy.org

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I. Welcome to Arbor Christian Academy

Dear Families,

We are so blessed to have you as a part of the Arbor Christian Academy community. Together we are **“equipping the mind and educating the heart to impact the nation.”** We strive to train up children in an understanding of the love of Jesus Christ while providing them with the necessary academic skills to become leaders in their communities. Students will be taught by North American and Dominican teachers, therefore receiving instruction in both English and Spanish. It is our goal for students to become completely bilingual in reading, speaking, and writing during their time at ACA.

In order for our student learning goals to be met, it is imperative that we all work together as a community to achieve them: parents, teachers, and students. We look forward to a wonderful and successful year.

God bless,

Ellen Kujawski
ACA Director

Purpose of the Handbook

The parent & student handbook serves to communicate basic policies and expectations with students, parents, and staff. This handbook is written to answer commonly asked questions and to set forth procedures and policies for ACA. These policies and procedures are set in place in order to help us achieve our goals and to provide a safe and efficient learning environment for each of our students. Commitment to these policies by all parties involved allows for the school to function in an orderly manner. We believe that Christian education serves to prepare students spiritually, emotionally and academically for their world that they may go out and be the light of Christ (John 8:12). Therefore, the overall purpose of this handbook is to allow us to be of “one-mind” as we train up children for the world around them. School leadership will review and approve these policies as needed.

II. Arbor Christian Academy

History

Arbor Christian Academy began as a dream of Iglesia Bautista San Francisco de Macoris. This church desired to open a school that provided both a quality Christian education and a thorough knowledge of the English language. Additionally, they wanted a school that would follow American curriculum and standards so that students would be prepared academically to enter our global world and become leaders in their communities. ACA offers kindergarten through sixth grade classes. ACA opened its doors to students for the first time in August 2017. Our goal is that the majority of the primary classroom teachers at ACA are English speakers with university degrees in Education.

Mission and Vision

Arbor Christian Academy exists to provide an exemplary Christian education with an English immersion program, where students are provided with age-appropriate academic rigor and students and families have the opportunity to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

We at Arbor Christian Academy strive to grow our students into fruitful leaders by **“Equipping the mind and educating the heart to impact the nation.”** This vision will be accomplished through:

- Implementing quality curriculum that is aligned to U.S standards and also complies with educational regulations of the Dominican Republic.
- Partnering with families who are the primary educators and leaders for their children.
- Obtaining highly qualified teachers and staff.
- Providing regular and applicable training for teachers, staff, and school leadership.
- Maintaining the expectation that all persons associated with Arbor Christian Academy will uphold high standards of Christian character.
- Focusing on discipleship and providing opportunities for all who are involved with Arbor Christian Academy to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

Core Values

At Arbor Christian Academy, our desire is to help our students become fruitful leaders. A fruitful leader is one who positively impacts his or her world for Christ. We want to train children up to understand and embody the following traits:

- A fruitful leader is **Rooted**, grounded in knowledge and Biblical wisdom.
- A fruitful leader is **Courageous**, choosing to persevere and be set apart in God's call.
- A fruitful leader is **Relational**, serving others with respect, generosity and love.
- A fruitful leader is **Wise**, having the qualities of reflection, growth and creativity while remaining a teachable, life-long learner.
- A fruitful leader has **Integrity**, modeling truth and discernment in order to lead a life above reproach.

Statement of Faith

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).
2. We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons-Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30).
3. We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Hebrews 4: 15, 7:26), His miracles (John 2:11), His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9), His Resurrection (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4), His Ascension to the right hand of God (Mark 16:19), and His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).

4. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ, and that only by God's grace, and through faith alone, are we saved (John 3:16–19, 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:8–9; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 3:5).
5. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28–29).
6. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, Galatians 3:26–28).
7. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13–14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19–20; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18).
8. We believe that the term *marriage* has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18–25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18, 7:2–5; Hebrews 13:4).
9. We believe that God wonderfully foreordained and immutably created people as either male or female in conformity with their biological sex. These two distinct yet complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26–27).
10. We believe in a literal translation of the creation account in Genesis (Genesis 1–2). All of creation, including mankind, was purposely ordained and designed by the omnipotent God. For this reason, we believe that all human life has value and should be respected, whether born or unborn (Psalm 139:13).

Our Statement of Faith is not exhaustive of all our beliefs. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with absolute authority regarding the proper conduct of mankind and is the unchanging foundation for all belief and behavior. Our school board acts as the final authority on the application and interpretation of this statement of faith.

School Philosophy

We at Arbor Christian Academy believe that God is the creator of all mankind and the ultimate source of Truth. In pursuit of this, our instruction, practices, discipline, and curriculum will be aligned with the teachings found in the Bible and executed with integrity. We believe that every child is made in the image of God and capable of learning. Therefore, we will teach students with respect, grace, and truth. ACA students will be held to high standards and pushed to reach their academic potential through our interactive, interdisciplinary teaching model.

Language Model

A Child's brain is an amazing creation of God, and it is highly capable of learning a new language at an early age. We want to capitalize on the rapid brain growth of young children, giving them the best chance and being fully bilingual as they grow. At ACA we desire to teach language in authentic and natural ways. This leads us to teach children their second language in the following ways.

- Students in kindergarten and 1st grade focus on oral English skills. Just as a child learns to speak before they read or write, we are building their vocabulary and communication skills in English before we add in the academic side of language. This means that our students will be learning to read and write in Spanish first. By focusing on these skills in their native language, we are providing the necessary knowledge base to add in English reading and writing later. This strategy often gets students talking and conversing in a new language faster and with a larger vocabulary.
- At the end of 1st grade students will begin learning to identify all English sounds and begin reading simple words and phrases.
- 2nd through 4th grade will be fully bilingual, with significant English immersion. The goal is to be sure that students are growing in both languages at the same time.
- 5th and 6th grade are also bilingual but will have a strong focus on Spanish writing and Spanish academic vocabulary in math, science and social studies. This is done to prepare them for their next school that may or may not provide a bilingual program.

Faculty and Staff

Our teachers come from universities in the United States, Canada, and the Dominican Republic and are highly qualified for their positions. All members of our support staff, both Dominican and North American, are committed to the values of ACA and actively model lifelong learning for our students by pursuing fluency in both English and Spanish.

Academic Overview

Primary Education (Elementary)

The elementary school offers a traditional academic program based upon United States and Dominican educational standards and is open to students who successfully pass the corresponding entrance assessment. Students are immersed in both English and Spanish during the school day. The elementary school day lasts from 8:00am-3:10pm.

III. Admissions

Policies

Arbor Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin and will not discriminate on the basis of these factors when following the school policies set forth in this handbook.

Restroom:

Each child must be able to consistently and independently use the restroom. Students in Kindergarten are required to have a change of clothes kept in their backpacks in case of an accident.

Health Forms:

Each child must submit a record of immunizations and proof of medical examination before being admitted to ACA and upon entering 4th grade (also known as the “segundo ciclo” of primary school).

Wait Pool:

Class sizes will remain small enough to promote student success. If there is more student interest than space, a list of prospective students will be kept in the office. Parents will be notified as space is available. Acceptance is not based on first-come, first-served. Acceptance is based upon student academic needs, principal recommendation, score on entrance assessment, etc.

Special Needs:

ACA strives to meet the needs of all students; however, students who have behavioral, physical or academic needs that exceed current programming will not be admitted. Should such needs become known during the school year, ACA may refer students to a different school that could better support their unique needs. We will continue to add programming, as space and staffing allows, to meet the needs of such students.

Previous Expulsion:

Students who have been previously expelled from school or who have been in serious disciplinary trouble will not be enrolled at ACA.

Important Notice to Parents and Students:

It is understood that attendance at ACA is a privilege, not a right. This privilege may be forfeited by any student or family who, in the opinion of the administration, does not uphold the expectations and regulations set forth by this institution. Additionally, ACA reserves the right to deny entrance to students who, in the discernment of the administration team, are not a good fit for the program.

Student Enrollment Procedures

New Student Enrollment (begins in March of the previous school year)

1. Complete the online enrollment application.
2. Contact the office to arrange the mandatory entrance exam and pay RD \$800 at the time of the assessment.
3. Wait to receive confirmation of your child's acceptance by phone.
4. Upon acceptance, you *must* provide the following to the main office before the start of school or your child's position in the school will be forfeited.
 - 50% payment of first month's tuition by April 30th, 2025.
 - Remaining 50% payment of first month's tuition by July 31st, 2025.
 - Medical records
 - Immunization records
 - Copy of birth certificate
 - Copy of previous school records (grade cards and proof of timely payments)
 - Copy of parents' cedulas
 - Current photo of student
 - Signed handbook and payment agreements
 - If applicable, students in 2nd-6th who have studied abroad or are recent expats to the DR, must also provide the validation letter from MINERD.

**Siblings of current students must complete this process for admission.*

Current Student Reenrollment (begins in February of the previous school year)

1. Complete the reenrollment forms online.
2. Provide the following updated documents to the main office.
 - Medical records signed by a doctor (Kindergarten and 4th Grade students only)
 - Immunization records
 - Signed handbook and payment agreements
3. 50% payment of first month's tuition by April 30th, 2025.
4. Remaining 50% payment of first month's tuition by July 31st, 2025.

Please note, students will only be allowed to attend the first day of school if all documentation and payments have been submitted to the office. If a student is missing one or both of these requirements, he/she will be denied entrance until the requirements have been met.

Student Withdrawal

A student is not considered withdrawn until the school office has been notified by the parent or, in the case of dismissal, the parent has been notified and met with the principal.

At ACA, 20% of monthly tuition goes toward the purchase of classroom materials and textbooks. As these items were purchased at the beginning of the year for your child, any family desiring to withdraw their child must first pay 20% of the remaining tuition for that school year. For example, should you choose to leave ACA at the end of December, you must pay 20% of tuition for the remaining months of that school year (January through July). Families who choose to withdraw their child during the months of May, June, or July, are required to pay full tuition for the remainder of the school year.

Documentation for student withdrawal will be provided upon receipt of all payments due and the return of any borrowed school materials (such as tablets or computers).

IV. Tuition & Payment

Policies

Due to parent request, ACA has elected to distribute the total yearly tuition amount over a period of twelve months (August 2025 – July 2026). This allows families to make consistent, lower payments each month towards their child's tuition, including the months of June and July. Tuition payment is expected on time each month of the year (August 2025 – July 2026).

PAYMENT WILL ALWAYS BE DUE BY THE LAST DAY OF EACH CALENDAR MONTH.

A late fee of \$500RD will be charged to accounts that are overdue in excess of 3 days.

Parents will be notified of late payment fees. Multiple late payments will affect a student's eligibility for reenrollment.

- No deduction is made from tuition due to student absences.
- No partial-month refund will be made for student withdrawal.

Tax Credit Receipt

- Parents who need to receive receipts with "Crédito Fiscal" must make this request at the beginning of the school year before receipts are provided.
- Any reprinting of invoices will have a cost of RD\$10 per page.

Scholarships (*process begins in February of the previous school year*)

There are a limited number of scholarships available for qualifying students. These scholarships are funded by our *Descubre Inglés* program and individual donors who partner with students or classes at ACA. Scholarships are awarded based on need and are offered to qualifying families by our sponsorship coordinator before the start of each school year. Families desiring to apply for a scholarship must do so during the months of February and March. All scholarships will be awarded during the month of April, prior to the start of the coming school year. Families who were previously awarded a scholarship must reapply during reenrollment and are not guaranteed to receive the same scholarship amount.

New families who desire to enroll their children in ACA and plan to apply for a scholarship must note this on their enrollment application. The application for a scholarship *must be completed* during the months of February or March in order to be considered eligible. No scholarships will be awarded outside of this timeline.

Textbooks and Supplies

All students will be given a supplies list in their enrollment packet. These basic supplies are to be purchased and brought to school with your child on the first day of classes and may need to be replenished later in the year. While some supplies are kept apart for your child, others (such as tissues, pencils, baby wipes, etc.) are used communally in the classroom and will not be returned at the end of the school year. All supplies not listed, including textbooks, will be provided by ACA as a part of the monthly tuition fee.

V. General School Policies

Spiritual Participation

Our Christian faith saturates all we do at Arbor Christian Academy, including our curriculum and teaching practices. Therefore, student participation in all events, including chapel, devotions, discipleship times, Service Week, and Bible class is expected.

Attendance

Attendance is an important component of academic success. Therefore, students must be in attendance at least 80% of school days, regardless of the reason for absence. Repeated unexcused absences will affect a student's eligibility for reenrollment.

When a student is absent, it is extremely important for the parent to contact the academic secretary by telephone or whatsapp on the day of the absence before 9:00 A.M. If the parent does not contact the school regarding the student's absence, the absence will be considered unexcused. If a child is absent for more than 3 days due to illness, a doctor's certificate will be required.

When it is known ahead of time that a student will be absent, the parent must submit a signed letter stating the date(s) of and reason for the student's absence. This letter must be received by the office at least three days before the absence. Similarly, should the student need to leave school early, a signed note detailing the reason for the absence and the type of transportation the child will use to get home must be delivered to the office at the start of the school day.

Students must arrive each day to school between 7:40 and 8:00am. Students who arrive after that time will be marked as tardy. If a child receives 3 tardies, it will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Excused Absences:

Excused absences may include illness, bereavement, prolonged trips out of the country with parents when prior request for absence has been approved, and for trips pertaining to cédulas, driver's licenses, visas, passports, and other legal paperwork.

Unexcused Absences:

All absences are first considered and recorded as unexcused until a written parent note or phone call is submitted to the office explaining the reason for the absence *and* the reason is determined to be excused.

Homework During Extended Absences:

Should families desire to bring schoolwork for their child during extended absences, they must notify their child's teacher **at least one week in advance**. If sufficient time is not given to prepare the child's work, it will be sent home as "make-up work" to be completed upon the child's return to school. Please refer to the "Make-up Work" section for more information.

Tardies:

It is necessary for students to arrive each morning before classes begin. Research shows that one of the most productive learning times is the first part of the day. Therefore, we have high expectations for all students to be at school on time each day. "Tardy" is defined as arriving to school after 8:00am. For every three tardies received, an unexcused absence will be added to the student's record.

Illness

Students who have had a temperature at or above 38° Celsius (100° Fahrenheit), experienced vomiting, diarrhea, severe cough, difficulty breathing, or lice will not be permitted to attend school **until the symptoms have subsided for at least 24 hours**.

If a student becomes ill while at school, a parent or guardian will be contacted to pick up the child early. It is expected that students again **wait at least 24 hours from the end of symptoms** to return to school.

If a child or anyone in their home has had known contact with a person who has tested positive for covid-19, the student needs to stay home in quarantine as determined by current practices with the CDC and the **school must be notified**. If all members of the household are vaccinated and the child themselves was not in direct contact with the sick individual, they may return to school as long as they are not exhibiting any symptoms.

Homework

Homework is a time to practice the skills being learned at school with a parent at home. In the younger grades, homework will be given at the teacher's discretion and will not exceed more than 20 minutes a day. Teachers will strive to assign homework that students are able to complete with minimal assistance. If parental assistance is needed, simple directions will be provided.

Make-up Work

After an absence, teachers may send home additional work with a child. This work will need to be completed in as many days as the child was absent. For example, if a child was ill and missed two school days, that child has the next two school days to complete and return any make-up work. Teachers may extend this time frame at their discretion.

Grading

At the conclusion of each quarter, a report card will be sent home with your child detailing his or her academic progress. This card is simply a tool to help you understand what your child is learning, the areas where he or she is excelling and the areas where he or she may need additional support. Instead of using a traditional grading scale, Arbor Christian Academy monitors progress using the goals that we desire each child to meet by the end of the school year. These goals are aligned with United States curriculum and are called "standards." Each child can receive a 1, 2, 3, or 4 for each standard. Following are the explanations for each number:

4 – Exemplary	<i>The student is performing skills above the expected level.</i>
3 – Accomplished	<i>The student is performing skills at the expected level.</i>
2 – Developing	<i>The student is beginning to show comprehension of skills.</i>
1 – Below	<i>The student has not shown progress in the expected skill.</i>

Each standard has multiple goals tied to it that are not listed on the report card. These goals are divided and spread out over all four quarters. If your child receives a 3 for a certain standard, this means that he or she has met the quarter-specific goals for that standard.

The goal is for your child to have 3's every quarter for each standard. 2's indicate that your child is making progress toward meeting the standard. 1's indicate areas of concern and a need for additional practice. 4's are only given if your child has *exceeded* the goals set for *this quarter*. A 4 does not mean that your child has accomplished this standard for the entire year.

In an effort to keep parents informed in a timely manner of their child's academic progress, the school will issue progress reports in the middle of each quarter. These reports are not as extensive as grade cards. However, they will provide insight on your child's progress and allow for additional opportunities to connect with your child's teacher about any concerns.

Tier 2 Intervention

Students who do not show significant growth in a specific subject by the end of a quarter will receive what is known as "Tier 2 Intervention" also known in Spanish as "Recuperación Pedagógica." This intervention will take place in a small group setting. Students will receive targeted instruction in the skills they are lacking, and their progress will be monitored weekly. The intention of this program is to ensure that students are making appropriate progress throughout the school year. Parents will be informed if their child is receiving this type of intervention, as well as receive biweekly updates on their child's progress.

Dress Code

All students at ACA are required to attend school in uniform. Students will be dressed in their ACA polo shirt with appropriately fitting khaki pants. Students are required to wear closed-toed shoes with a back at all times. No crocks allowed. Students must wear their ACA t-shirt and blue sport pants with white stripes on PE days.

PE Days for 2024-2025

K-3: Monday, Wednesday, Friday

4-6: Tuesday, Thursday

Please note that all clothes should be clean and without stains or tears. Additionally, should students arrive to school out of uniform, they will wait in the office until a parent arrives with the proper clothes, or they will be sent home if the proper uniform is not provided.

Lunch

Lunch will be held at school for all elementary students. In order to provide a well-monitored lunchtime where students have adequate time to eat, the following procedures will be enforced:

- Students may have lunch in one of three ways: 1) pack a cold lunch that does not require heating – students will not have access to a microwave to reheat cold food 2) have a lunch delivered to the school or 3) order a hot lunch through the church cafeteria. Please be sure your child knows how he or she is receiving lunch each day.
- At 11:45am, students in grades K-2 will go to lunch. At 12:15, students in grades 3-6 will go to lunch. Students will sit in their assigned seats for lunch.
- As soon as students have finished eating, they will clean their space and be released to the playground for recess.

Procedures for Delivering and Bringing Lunch:

- All lunch deliveries and payments must be arranged by the parent ahead of time. Students will not be able to pay for delivered lunches. Food must arrive labeled with the child's name and grade level to the office at least 5 minutes before the start of your child's lunch hour.
- Should a student's lunch not arrive at the school by the start of lunch, one will be given to the child from the church's cafeteria. If the lunch is not paid for by 4pm that day, the cost will be charged to that student's lunch account, along with a \$100RD fine. Food that arrives late will not be given to the child but sent home.

Ordering Lunch from the Cafeteria:

ACA is blessed to have partnered with a cafeteria operating as a separate business out of the church next door. They and their finances are completely separate from ACA. Each morning, the cafeteria purchases only the amount of food necessary to cook lunch for students who have placed an order.

Lunch Prices	
Kindergarten – 2 nd Grade	RD\$150
3 rd – 6 th Grade	RD\$200
*no exceptions	

- Students are given an opportunity to place an order with the cafeteria each morning in their classrooms. For this reason, it is students' responsibility to know if they are ordering lunch that day. Orders placed after 8:45am will not be accepted.
- When students place an order, they will be charged immediately and receive the food at their designated lunch time. (Should a child go home sick before lunch, this charge will be refunded.)

- Lunches ordered by mistake will still be charged to your child’s account and given to your child. If you are concerned about your child’s ability to remember how he/she is receiving lunch, please call Pastor Alex Almanzar (809) 250 – 7680 before 8:45am. Notes sent to the school office or through ClassDojo may not be seen in time and therefore are not an acceptable mode of communication about lunch.
- A menu for the month will be sent out regularly in ClassDojo and WhatsApp.
- Students should only order lunch if they have the money in hand (or if it has been previously given to the café) to pay for that lunch. It is the responsibility of the parent to check ClassDojo for updates on your child’s lunch balance.
- Parents will be made aware of any unplanned charges or fines through messages on ClassDojo or WhatsApp.
- **All questions or concerns regarding hot lunch should be directed to the lunch coordinator, Pastor Alex Almanzar (809) 250 - 7680.**

LUNCH/ RECESS SCHEDULE	
Grades K-2	11:45-12:30
Grades 3-6	12:15-12:50
<i>*All students will have a 20-minute recess after lunch</i>	

Snack

Snack time will differ for each class. For this reason, each child must arrive in the morning with a healthy snack and water bottle. Please be sure that the child’s name is prominently displayed on both items. Snacks cannot be delivered to the school after 8:00am. Examples of healthy snacks include: fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers, yogurt, and small sandwiches. Unhealthy snacks that are not allowed include: candy, chocolate, deserts and soda. Should families choose, small snacks and drinks will also be available for purchase from the church cafeteria. Students must have pesos to purchase a snack. **Siblings must each bring their own money to purchase a snack as snack times differ between grade levels.**

Snack is optional. Students who do not come to school with a snack, nor with money to purchase one, will not eat a snack that day. Please note: **snack time is not breakfast.** Please be sure that your child has eaten a healthy meal *before* arriving to school.

Water

Students must bring a water bottle to school each day. It is very important that students get enough water to drink throughout the school day. Students may bring their own bottle each day, or they can purchase one first thing in the morning from the church's cafeteria. Students who do not have a water bottle with them at school (or money available to purchase one) will be given the money to buy a water bottle. If the charge of the water bottle (RD\$20) is not paid by 4pm, an additional fine of RD\$30 will be charged to your child's account.

Birthdays

Birthdays are exciting milestones in children's lives and we love to celebrate them! If your child has a birthday on a school day and would like to celebrate with classmates, please follow the steps outlined below:

1. Coordinate with the child's teacher at least three days in advance.
2. Recognize that all birthdays will be celebrated during snack time. This is not a family celebration, but a time to celebrate with classmates. Therefore, no parents or family will be allowed.
3. If your child desires to bring in a special snack for the class for their birthday, it must come to school with the child that morning.
4. The snack must be in individual servings, not a large cake or dessert that needs to be cut.
5. No drinks or other gifts are allowed. No other times will be made available to celebrate birthdays.

On occasion, students may wish to distribute invitations to birthday parties or other celebrations while on campus. In order to prevent possible exclusion and hurt feelings, this may only happen if an entire class is to be invited. Invitations to a select group of students may not be distributed on the school campus.

Field Trips

All grade levels will take field trips for academic reasons which are directly related to curriculum. Parents will have the opportunity to approve their child's participation in such trips. Parents who do not want their child to attend a field trip must contact the teacher at least 3 days in advance. Alternative assignments may be given by the teacher to make up for the learning that is missed when a student does not attend a class field trip. Field trip expenses are covered by the school with the exception of lunch or snack, if needed. ACA teachers, with possible help from parents, chaperone all field trips.

Parent Involvement

We at Arbor Christian Academy believe that providing a high-quality education for our students is a joint effort between the school, family, and church community. Research has shown that children who receive intentional support from each of these groups perform stronger academically, have better social skills and behavior, and are more likely to graduate and go on to higher education.

For this reason, ACA encourages parental involvement in a variety of ways. Our expectation is that a member from each family participates in the classroom each year.

Ways to serve include but are not limited to:

- helping with classroom parties
- chaperoning field trips
- volunteering as a classroom assistant
- working with small groups of students (as designated by the teacher)

Communication

At Arbor Christian Academy, we are a bilingual community. As such, all staff members are regularly studying their second (third, fourth...) language and culture (be it Dominican Spanish, American English, or Haitian Creole) in order to continuously improve communication.

Parent-Teacher Interactions:

Being a part of a multicultural community is a beautiful experience, however, it is not without its challenges. In situations where lead teachers are not yet fluent in Spanish, it is essential that all verbal communication from parents be made to the lead teacher through his or her bilingual assistant. At no time should parents address a bilingual assistant with questions or concerns without the guide teacher present in the conversation. While the assistant is an important authority in the classroom, all final decisions about teaching methods and student instruction are made by the lead teacher. ACA will not tolerate gossip between families and staff members.

All parents will be required to attend a parent-teacher conference at least twice per year. The dates and times of these conferences will be determined and communicated to parents at least two weeks in advance. Should parents wish to schedule an additional conference with an ACA teacher or staff member, please contact the school secretary during school hours.

Natural Disaster Procedures:

In the event that a serious earthquake, hurricane, or other natural disaster occurs during school hours, parents will be notified as soon as possible of the actions the school has taken to protect students as well as the steps to be taken to pick-up their children.

School Website:

The ACA staff regularly updates and maintains our school website. All schedule changes and important information can be found on the home page. Additionally, notifications of school cancellations due to inclement weather or other emergencies will be sent through WhatsApp and Instagram.

Contact Information:

Calle Principal #34

Urb. Los Maestros

San Francisco de Macorís, RD

Phone: (809) 588-7925 WhatsApp: (849) 506-7925

Office Hours: 8am-4pm (Monday-Thursday), 8am-3:15pm (Friday)

School Director: Ellen Kujawski

EKujawski@ArborChristian.org

Assistant School Director: Natalia Feliz

NFeliz@ArborChristian.org

Financial Administrator: Rubanesa Almanzar

RAlmanzar@ArborChristian.org

School Psychologist: Jasmin Herrera

JHerrera@ArborChristian.org

School Cafeteria: Pastor Alex Almanzar

AAlmanzar@ArborChristian.org

Website: www.ArborChristianAcademy.org

Facebook: [Arbor Christian Academy](https://www.facebook.com/ArborChristianAcademy)

Instagram: [@ArborChristianAcademy](https://www.instagram.com/ArborChristianAcademy)

VI. Student Conduct

Policies

At Arbor Christian Academy, we deeply care about the character and spiritual formation of our students, as evidenced by our Core Values. Rather than spell out a list of mandates for every area of school life, we ask students to demonstrate respect for God, their neighbor, and themselves (Matthew 22:37-40). We desire to walk side by side with students as they grow. In order to hold each other accountable, we choose to use the following guidelines in collaboration with our Core Values:

- Respect others. Because each person is created in the image of God and is loved and valued by their Creator, students must treat each other with dignity and respect.
- Respect yourself. The use of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, immodest dancing or clothing, gambling, fraud, etc. are not permitted on campus or at activities related to the school.
- Respect school property and established rules. Accept responsibility for actions and make wise decisions in accordance with Matthew 22:39 and Philippians 4:5,8.
- Respect and honor Biblical Christian principles and our Statement of Faith. While we understand that student behavior off campus is the responsibility of individuals and families, behavior that jeopardizes the testimony of the school will not be ignored.

Classroom Guidelines and Management

Teachers have the responsibility of creating and maintaining a positive environment in their classrooms. For this reason, teachers develop additional classroom guidelines and/or procedures related to their own classroom. When students fail to respect others in the classroom or community, the teacher has the authority to determine an appropriate intervention and consequence. Such consequences may include, but are not limited to, temporary removal from the classroom for recovery, a teacher-student conference, detention, reflection assignment, helping with work in the classroom, and parent contact. More serious infractions of classroom or community guidelines, or a pattern of repeated infractions will result in administrative disciplinary action.

Discipline and Discipleship

We believe that each student is made in the image of God and made for a relationship with God. Therefore, discipline at Arbor Christian Academy is viewed within the context of discipleship. Hebrews 12:10-11 states, “Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

All discipline has the goal of helping students grow in their walk with Jesus and in their relationship with themselves and others. Because each child has been created to uniquely reflect the image of God, discipline and discipleship must be done on an individual level and will often look different from child to child.

Core Beliefs

All students and teachers are created by God, in His image. We are His creation, yet we are sinful by nature and redeemed and transformed by His grace. The following list articulates the foundational beliefs that guide staff/student relationships and interactions and inform the discipline process when problems arise:

- Every attempt should be made to nurture the dignity of both the student and the adult as a unique bearer of God's image.
- Misbehavior should be viewed as an opportunity for individual discipleship, problem solving and development of life skills as opposed to a personal attack on the school or staff.
- Misbehavior should be handled with natural consequences instead of punishments whenever possible.
- Students should have the opportunity to be heard (at an appropriate time) when consequences are necessary.

Dominican Law Regarding Discipline

In assessing a disciplinary situation, ACA staff will consider the offense according to the categories of minor, major and egregious. If a behavior is repeated, it may evolve into a more serious offense.

1. Minor Offenses:

Minor offenses are voluntary actions that negatively influence student work and behavior. Student discipline for minor offenses is generally handled within the classroom or by the student's teacher(s).

These actions are considered minor offenses:

- Disruptive behavior in the classroom or school
- Inappropriate actions and comments towards classmates, staff or other members of the community
- Use of inappropriate language or tone of voice
- Use of unauthorized space before, during, or after the school day
- Littering
- Other

Appropriate response to minor offenses:

- Verbal warnings in accordance with Proverbs 15:31
- Written notifications sent to parents and submitted to administration
- Student/teacher conferences
- Loss of privileges such as an alternative location for lunch and/or recess
- Written reflections or additional work
- In collaboration with the administrator, work to biblically understand the offense and the need for repentance and restoration

2. *Major Offenses:*

Major offenses are voluntary actions that obstruct the instructional process and/or development of our community and/or the wellbeing of our campus. Student discipline for major offenses is generally handled by sending a student to the office with an office referral form.

These actions are considered major offenses:

- Failure to uphold the established norms during tests/exams
- Use of disrespectful language
- Discrimination against members of our community
- Irreverence towards the patriotic symbols
- Inappropriate use of social media or entering ACA restricted websites
- Harming the school campus and/or any of its property
- Leaving the classroom without permission or with the intention of skipping class
- Inappropriate behavior during excursions, trips, sporting events or other extracurricular activities
- Defaming accusations against others
- Copying, cheating, or plagiarism
- Repeated minor offenses
- Other

Appropriate response to major offenses:

- Documented conference with parents/guardians and administrator
- Completion of an altered assignment for any assignment which involved cheating
- Public or private apology (according to the situation)
- Behavior contract
- Written work or reflections
- In collaboration with the administrator, work to biblically understand the offense and the need for repentance and restoration

3. *Egregious Offenses:*

Egregious offenses are voluntary actions that endanger or harm other students, staff, visitors or school property. These also include moral and emotional harm to the above-mentioned parties. Student discipline for egregious offenses is always handled within the office.

Actions below are considered egregious offenses:

- Bullying
- Possessing or consuming prohibited substances
- Theft or complicit theft
- Alteration of educational documents
- Defiance or aggression towards any member of the community
- Possessing or using dangerous objects
- Repeated major offenses

Appropriate response to egregious offenses:

- Documented conference with parents/guardians, lead teacher, student and administrator
- Finding a way to restore that which was harmed, whether through public or private recognition
- Confiscation of prohibited objects
- Service to the community or school with supervision
- Trial period
- Loss of privileges (in the classroom and/or school)
- Written works and reflections in collaboration with staff, working to biblically understand the offense and the need for repentance and restoration

4. *Office Visits:*

Students who are sent to the office will arrive with a referral form completed by the staff member who sent them. The administrator will talk through the incident with the student to better understand his or her actions. The student may complete a written/oral reflection. If necessary, the administrator will contact parents to inform them of the incident. The administrator will also make a copy of the student's reflection, along with the disciplinary steps taken, and send it home for parents to sign. Parents should return the signed copy the following school day.

Suspension

Suspension is a temporary separation of the student from the classroom or the school and all activities for not less than one-half day and not more than three days. Suspension will often be in the form of “in-school” and will normally be the result of specific incidents of repeated improper conduct or for serious disciplinary infractions, except in the case of egregious incidents which may require out of school suspension as addressed in Dominican law. Parents will be notified by phone and in writing of any suspensions. Students who are suspended may be denied reenrollment.

VII. Student Safety

Student Drop Off and Pick Up

All students are expected to be dropped off and picked up on time. Students may arrive at school between 7:40-8:00am. Students who arrive after this time will be marked tardy.

At dismissal, children may be picked up from the patio area by a designated family member, friend or transportation service. These individuals must be noted on the child’s transportation form with a copy of their cédula. Should someone other than a designated member desire to pick up your child, a signed note must be delivered to the office before 2:00pm, or a phone call made to the secretary by the designated family member before dismissal.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Instructions

- If your child is dropped off or picked up in a car or motorcycle, you must pull up on the school side of the Street, facing Ave. Bienvenido Fuertes Duarte with your flashers on if possible. You must not exit your vehicle unless you need to enter the office or enter the building for a meeting. If that is the case, you must park on a side street in order to allow traffic to move through without interruption during drop-off and pick-up times.
- You can never park between the speed bumps during drop-off and pick-up times.
- If you are walking to pick-up or drop-off your child, you will enter from the small side gate closest to the school entrance.
- All vehicles, including motorcycles, must line up to drop-off or pick-up students from the large gate at the church entrance. Should motorcyclists choose to walk to pick up a child, they must park their motorcycles on a side street.
- **All parents and persons authorized to pick-up students must present the identification card provided by the school for easy and quick identification of students.** If someone arrives without the card, they must move outside of the drop-

off/pick-up area until it is confirmed that they are listed on the release form for that child. Any adult arriving without the student identification card needs to provide a cedula or driver's license in order to prove identity.

Student Pick-up After 3:30

Students are dismissed at 3:10pm. Students who are picked up after 3:30pm will be marked late. Each family is given a grace period of three late marks per semester. Should a family exceed three late marks, a fine of \$300RD will be added to their account for each additional time a child remains on campus past 3:20pm.

**If you know that you will be late picking up your child, please call the office before 3:15pm to avoid a late pickup notice. If we are advised ahead of time, no tardy will be given. Should this grace be abused, this policy is subject to change.*

Releasing Student Information

For the purpose of providing accurate information and to protect the privacy of our parents, students and staff, no information will be made available to any party without the written authorization of the parents or guardians requesting the information.

Updating Student Emergency Contact Information

During registration or reenrollment, parents and guardians are required to fill out a Student Information Card. In the event information on the card changes at any time throughout the year, please notify the office immediately, so as to update school records.

Campus Security and Usage

We value a safe and protected campus environment for both staff and students. For this reason, when students are on campus, all entrances will be locked and visitors will only be allowed to enter through the front door. Additionally, while we share our campus with select community organizations, we do so intentionally and ensure that we maintain a secure campus environment. Please respect the campus schedule and maintain appropriate usage of facilities at all times. Students should never be on campus outside of school hours without pre-approved permission and an adult chaperone.

Campus Visitors

All campus visitors should go directly to the office to check in. After signing in and listing the reason for their visit, the secretary will then assist them. If visitors remain on campus, they must wear a visitor's pass. All parents are considered visitors when on campus outside of the scheduled drop off, lunch, and dismissal times and should have a specified reason for their visit.

Injuries and Emergencies

In case of sickness or injury, the school will notify the student's parents or guardians. It is the parents' responsibility, however, to notify the school if the student has any existing medical needs of which we should be aware. ACA will only assist with basic First Aid needs. In cases that require medical attention, the school will transport the student to a clinic or doctor. All possible attempts will be made to communicate with parents before an emergency requiring an ambulance.

ACA provides students with Accident Insurance in the event of injuries that occur on school property or during school activities. In the event of an accident that requires medical treatment, the parent should cover the initial costs and submit the bills to the office to be submitted to the insurance company and reimbursed according to the amount covered by the policy. In the event the amount exceeds the yearly allotment, parents are responsible for covering additional costs.

In the event that the school's medical insurance is to be used, please comply with the following process:

- In the event of an accident, the student will be taken to the office.
- The student will be evaluated and receive First Aid at school. If necessary, he/she will be taken to a medical center to receive additional assistance.
- After treatment, parents must request a receipt with the total value paid and submit it to the school.
- If treatment is needed outside of the city, the parent is responsible for covering the costs, requesting the receipts, and submitting them to the office for reimbursement not to exceed \$10,000RD and not including prescriptions. (The receipt should be identified as "valor fiscal" and have the name Arbor Christian Academy, RNC 131561551, as well as the student's name correctly spelled).

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Arbor Christian Academy admits students regardless of race, color, gender or nationality into all privileges, rights, programs and activities available to students at school. ACA educational policies, administration, admissions policy, financial support, athletics department and other school programs do not discriminate based on race, color, nationality or ethnic origin of students, faculty, and staff.

In accordance with the Bible, we firmly believe that there should be no preferential treatment (Romans 2:11). We are committed to extending our ministry to anyone within reach and carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Bullying

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying will not be tolerated on ACA's campus and will be addressed immediately by the administration. Arbor Christian Academy is committed to creating a safe, joyful, and caring environment for all members of the educational community and allows our students to grow and reach their highest potential. Therefore, we take acts of bullying very seriously.

Parents, if you believe that your child has been bullied at school, you should:

- Immediately report the incident to the teacher or principal depending on the context and seriousness of the incident through the appropriate channels of ClassDojo, calling the school, or WhatsApp.
- Participate in any process initiated by the teacher or principal to resolve the situation.
- Support your child and the school in implementing strategies to prevent future instances of bullying.

Please note, bullying is not:

- Mutual conflict: unless it involves an attempt to cause stress, exclude, or create injustice for others.
- Social rejection: unless it involves an attempt to cause stress, exclude, or create injustice for others.
- Unique episodes of rudeness or physical aggression. If someone is mistreated or beaten once, it's not bullying. However, this behavior should not be ignored and should be handled appropriately.

Under no circumstances may a parent approach the family of the other party involved with the aim of discussing the issue. If this happens, the Administration may adjust the consequences for that student's family and affect their enrollment process for the coming year. All communication should flow through the administration for the safety of all people involved.

Destructive Behavior Policy

ACA prohibits all forms of destructive behavior. Destructive behavior may be defined as, but not limited to, the illegal, underage consumption of alcohol, the use of tobacco products, the consumption of drugs or other mind-altering substances, destruction of property, or physical or emotional harm done to self or others.

Students witnessed in the participation of destructive behavior on-campus or off-campus will be reported directly to the ACA Leadership Team. The ACA Leadership Team will work with fellow ACA staff to provide intervention for the destructive behavior. It is in the best long-term interest to fellow students to report destructive behavior. If destructive behavior is known or suspected, please follow the reporting procedures below:

- Destructive behavior will be reported by a direct conversation, email, or phone call to an ACA Leadership Team member. The Leadership Team member will then inform the Leadership Team. The ACA Leadership Team will then take over all responses to the destructive behavior. No further follow-up by the student reporting the destructive incident is needed. The anonymity of all students reporting destructive behavior will be maintained to highest degree staff is able, depending on the specific situation.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Rationale: Arbor Christian Academy is committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment for everyone. Sexual harassment and sexual violence not only interfere with a safe and positive environment, but also are in direct contradiction to the Christian principles on which Arbor Christian Academy is based.

Arbor Christian Academy prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence. In the event a complaint is made, ACA will follow the procedure below:

- Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It is important to note that not all physical contact is considered sexual or harassing in nature. Some examples would be a teacher/coach consoling or congratulating a child or students demonstrating mutual platonic affection.
- Any person who believes that he/she has been a victim of sexual harassment or sexual violence by a student or employee of Arbor Christian Academy must report the conduct immediately to the Principal, School Director, or other trusted individual on staff. Any information will be treated with as much confidentiality as possible within the limits of reasonable investigation and imposed sanctions.
- Submission of a complaint will not affect that individual's grades, participation in school activities, work assignments, employment or pay. Anyone who retaliates against an individual who reports or participates in the investigation of sexual harassment/violence will be disciplined.
- The complainant may use a student or teacher advocate during the reporting and investigative process.

- The complainant must be willing and prepared to report the following: what happened, when the incident(s) happened, where the incident(s) happened, how he/she felt, what (if anything) was said between the victim and alleged harasser, and names of witnesses (if any).
- All sexual harassment complaints will be carefully investigated by the school's safeguarding team. Every reasonable effort will be made by the team to ensure the safety of the complainant during an investigation. Should the harassment claim prove to be true, appropriate action will be taken against offenders according to school regulations and Dominican law.

Safeguarding Policy

Arbor Christian Academy is a part of the global mission organization, TeachBeyond. As a member school, we abide by and uphold the established TeachBeyond safeguarding policy:

We believe protecting children and vulnerable adults is a God-given responsibility.

TeachBeyond's Safeguarding Program is designed to fulfill its Biblical, ethical, and legal responsibility for the safety and well-being of children in its care, as well as help TeachBeyond to guard the integrity of its workers. Children and vulnerable adults have intrinsic value because they are created by God to bear His image. Therefore, TeachBeyond workers are obligated before God to identify, support, and protect the vulnerable.

The definition of safeguarding we are using is: "A term to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people — especially children and vulnerable adults — to live free from abuse. It is about people and organizations working together to prevent and reduce the risks, occurrences, and impact of harm."

The objectives of TeachBeyond's safeguarding program are to reduce the risk of harm to children that fall under its care and to ensure TeachBeyond workers model healthy adult-child interactions. With this in mind, the TeachBeyond Safeguarding Program rests upon four foundational principles: regard, responsibility, response, and requirement.

- **REGARD**
TeachBeyond will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel valued, safe, secure, and empowered to report any concerns of harm, and are heard. We commit to reduce the risk of harm to all children through preventative and responsive strategies, and a high standard of accountability for workers

- **RESPONSIBILITY**

TeachBeyond respects the rights of children as described in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Children*, recognizing that we all have a Biblical, ethical and legal responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual abuse and neglect of children and to raise safeguarding concerns promptly.

- **RESPONSE**

TeachBeyond will manage the risk of harm to children within its organization and formally respond to all reported concerns, whether past or present, adhering to the policies and procedures outlined by the TeachBeyond Safeguarding Program.

- **REQUIREMENTS**

TeachBeyond workers are required to attend regular safeguarding training, adhere to the TeachBeyond Safeguarding Manual and sign the TeachBeyond Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.

If you have any concerns or questions about our safeguarding program or would like to raise a concern, whether current or historical, please contact our safeguarding team.

**All policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are reviewed yearly and are subject to change at the discretion of school administration.*