



Dear Academy Families:

Welcome to the exciting educational journey that is the Academy at the Lakes experience. Our school offers each child and each family so many meaningful opportunities to learn and grow in an atmosphere characterized by our Core Values: Balance, Courage, Distinction, Inclusion, Integrity, and Stewardship.

Included in this handbook you will find much important information about our school's policies and procedures. Please read it carefully and feel free to consult it frequently as the year progresses.

We are so pleased to be your partners as we move into a very exciting period of our school's history while helping all of our students learn, grow, and thrive. Thank you very much for your participation and support – they are absolutely essential to our success.

Have a great year!

Sincerely,

Mark Heller
Head of School

This Handbook establishes Academy at the Lakes' codes and guidelines. This Handbook cannot cover every possible circumstance that a student, faculty member or the school may encounter in the course of a school year. Many decisions, policies and situations are left to the good judgment of the faculty and/or the school administration.

Academy at the Lakes

Middle Division Family Handbook

Wendlek Campus

PK3-4th Grades
(813) 948-7600

McCormick Campus

5th -12th Grades
(813) 948-7600

www.academyatthelakes.org

Academy at the Lakes admits students of any race, color, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship or loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. It is the policy of Academy at the Lakes to ensure that all services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations are offered to and are accessible in a meaningful manner for qualified persons with disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and state law.



Board of Trustees
Officers, Trustees, & Executive Staff
2023 - 2024

Officers & Executive Committee

John Faith, Chair
Paul Tuten, Vice Chair
Skip Miller, Treasurer
Cynthia Martin, Secretary

Trustees

Robin Blinder
Piers Curry
Tommy Giglio '05
Santosh Govindaraju
Mark Heller, *Ex-officio*
Roger Joyce
Doug Kugley
Kaukeb Malik
Roshan Mahtani
Mary McCormick, *Ex-officio, Emerita*
Keith O'Malley
Michael Riley
Ralph Sevelius
Brent Smith
Maggie LaPunzina Wells

Executive Staff

Mark Heller, Head of School
Pat Pesch, Chief Financial Officer
Jessica Fugate, Director of Development
Karen Sooklal, Secretary to the Board

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION – THE ACADEMY AT THE LAKES	
Mission Statement	6
Core Values	6
Philosophy and History	7
Board of Trustees	7
Parents and the Board of Trustees	7
Parents and the Faculty and Administration	8
Parent Association	8
Accreditation and Affiliation	9
Development Office	9
Statement on Diversity	9
SECTION II: GENERAL POLICIES AND RELATED INFORMATION	
The School Day	11
Drop-Off and Dismissal	11
Attendance	14
Sickness Policy	15
Punctuality/Tardy Policy	16
Celebrations	16
Cell Phones and Telephone Messages	16
Class Placement	17
Closed Campus	17
Communications (including Using <i>FACTS Family Portal</i>)	18
Conferences	19
Cumulative Records	19
Distribution of Materials	19
Dress Code	20
Electronic Devices	22
Emergency Procedures	23
Enrollment Agreement	25
Field Trips, Retreats, and Extended Trips	26
Food and Drink	27
House System	27
Lockers	28
Lost and Found	28
Lunch	29
Medical Information/Medications	29
Pets and Animals	30
Solicitors	30
Sports	30
Summer Camp	30
Summer School	31
Textbooks	31
Visitors	31

SECTION III: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION	
Academic Policy	32
Grades	32
Homework	33
Extra Help	34
Retakes	35
Final Exams	35
National Junior Honor Society	35
Resolving Classroom Concerns	36
SECTION IV: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	
Academic Support	37
Accommodations	38
Advisory Program	38
Counseling Services	38
SECTION V: THE CODE OF HONOR AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES	
The Code of Honor	38
Bullying and Harassment	40
Hazing	41
Sexual Harassment	41
Technology	42
Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, & Vaping	42
Discipline Policies	42
Probation	44
Administrative Authority	44
SECTION VI: WHO TO CONTACT	46
ADDENDA:	
Handbook Agreement	

I. INTRODUCTION: THE ACADEMY AT THE LAKES

Mission Statement

Academy at the Lakes is a learning community of shared values dedicated to the success of each individual at school, in the community, and in the world. We celebrate the love of learning and the joy in the journey.

Core Values

- Balance** We embrace the joy in the journey, which consists of experiences that balance academics, fine arts, athletics, and co-curricular activities.
- Courage** We foster personal responsibility, empathy, and resilience.
- Distinction** We apply high standards of quality, relevance, and accountability to all we do.
- Inclusion** We are a caring and compassionate community composed of many different beliefs and traditions seeking points of unity in common experiences.
- Integrity** We believe in the power *of heads to know the good, hearts to love the good, and hands to do the good.*
- Stewardship** We care for each other and our school, serve our communities, and responsibly engage with the world – today and tomorrow.

Philosophy and History

Academy at the Lakes is a non-denominational, coeducational, PK3—12th Grade, independent day school. The school was founded in 1992. The school's programs are designed to build a sense of responsibility and cooperation in students. Our overall goal is to provide a stimulating, nurturing school experience in which students are exposed to relevant information and experiences; are motivated to become seekers and users of information; are inspired to meet the challenges of the future; and are encouraged to become effective problem solvers.

Academy at the Lakes is committed to academic excellence. To be successful, every independent school needs and expects the cooperation of its parents, who must understand and enhance the School's mission, share its core values, and fully support its curriculum, faculty, and staff. When joined by a common set of beliefs and purposes, the independent school and its parents form a powerful team with far-reaching positive effects on children and the entire community.

Working together, parents and school professionals exert a strong influence on children to become better educated; they also help them to mature by modeling adult working relationships based upon civility, honesty and respect. In practice, the greatest impediment to effective teamwork between independent schools and parents grows out of misunderstandings about school decision-making processes. Independent schools must communicate their procedures to parents who, in turn, share the important responsibility to become informed members of the school community.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees and officers of the Board serve as the corporate representatives of Academy at the Lakes, a not for profit corporation formed under the authority of the laws of Florida and the United States. The Board of Trustees is a group of volunteers acting under the authority of the corporation to govern the school's mission and provide the resources necessary for the mission to thrive. The Board employs a single employee – the Head of School – who is charged with the implementation of all facets of the school's operations. The Board operates in trust, and thereby governs the business operations of the school. The Board approves all budgets and fundraising activities. The trustees are stewards of the school's mission and work to provide the resources necessary for the mission to be actualized. Committees of the Board further serve to regulate and establish policies and to manage the school's finances and governance. All actions relating to the Board's governance of the school must be approved by a vote of the Board as specified in the corporate by-laws.

Parents and the Board of Trustees

In most independent schools, decision-making authority at the highest level resides with a volunteer Board of Trustees whose membership often includes parents. The Board of Trustees does not intervene in the daily affairs of the school, such as curriculum development and the hiring, evaluating, and firing of faculty and staff. Instead the Board focuses on three areas critical to the success of any independent school: it selects, evaluates, and supports the Head of School; it develops broad institutional policies that guide the Head in running the school; and it is accountable for the financial well-being of

the school. In the conduct of its official business, the Board acts only as a whole; individual trustees, including the Board Chair, have no authority to act unless specifically authorized to do so by the Board acting as a whole.

The Academy encourages parents who are interested in high-level decision-making to stay informed about the work of the Board of Trustees by reading school publications, talking to the Head of School, and attending appropriate meetings. Parents with concerns about the school or with decisions made by the administration or faculty are encouraged to inquire about and follow the school's review process, but they should not expect the Board of Trustees to act as an appeals board.

Parents and the Faculty and Administration

Parents play an essential and positive role in the life of an independent school. Not only are parents advocates for their children, they also support both faculty and administration through extensive volunteer activities and events. The school formally governs the relationship between parents and the faculty and administration through the written enrollment agreement and handbooks, in which procedures are spelled out. When parents choose to enroll their children in an independent school, they agree to subscribe to its mission, follow its rules, and abide by its decisions. Most teachers and administrators would, however, agree that trust and mutual respect are the most essential underpinnings of effective working relationships with parents. The Academy encourages parents to work productively with teachers and administrators by staying informed about their child and important events in the life of the school. The school welcomes thoughtful questions and suggestions. It is incumbent upon the school to provide parents with timely and pertinent information.

Parents support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. Efforts by parents to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive and non-supportive. While parents may not agree with every decision made by the school, in most cases, the parent and school will find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship. In the extreme case, however, an impasse may be so severe that the parent cannot remain a constructive member of the community. In such cases, both the parents and school should consider whether another school would be a better match for the family.

Parent Association

The Parent Association in an independent school provides a vital and much-appreciated service to school leadership and the entire school community. The activities sponsored by the Parent Association are designed to build community spirit and advance the mission of the school. The Parent Association supports the policies and decisions of the administration. The parents neither participate in policy-making by the school nor function as a lobbying group.

Cooperation and teamwork between the administration and the officers of the Parent Association are crucial to the health of the school community.

Academy at the Lakes welcomes volunteers! Volunteers are required to sign in and out at

the respective Division Front Office and to wear the identification badge provided by the Administrative Assistant. Classroom volunteers must be approved ahead of time by the Division Director.

Accreditation and Affiliation

Academy at the Lakes is accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) and Cognia (formerly known as SACS). The school is a full member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the Bay Area Association of Independent Schools (BAAIS).

Development Office

The Development Office exists to further the mission of the school by securing the necessary resources. The Office is responsible for approving and monitoring a variety of activities, fundraisers, and special events. The Office coordinates all such activities and trains volunteers in order to better meet school goals.

Statement on Diversity

At Academy at the Lakes, diversity is seen as a positive aspect of our lives and an essential aspect of education. The children, staff, Board members, and friends of the school recognize and respect the fact that diversity exists in the languages we speak, the colors of our skin, the traditions we observe, the structure of our families, the financial and educational resources our families possess, and the special needs we may have. We believe that our separate heritages, beliefs, and choices of expression help to define us as individuals and that our commitment to learning about one another and the larger world unites us as a community. Differences of all kinds are acknowledged and explored with enthusiasm, respect, and acceptance.

Academy at the Lakes assumes an ongoing responsibility to act as part of the larger community. In our recruitment practices for both families and staff, we strive to create a community whose members reflect the diversity inherent in the Tampa Bay area, as well as in the world. In our curriculum, such topics as race, ethnicity, family structure, gender, religion, physical attributes, sexual orientation, and economic differences are introduced and studied in ways that are developmentally appropriate. In our assemblies, special events, guest lectures, and other extracurricular activities, we work to further our commitment to diversity.

We view the family as the primary source of traditions, celebrations, and values for children. The role of the school is to affirm that each individual has a distinct identity and to help children and others appreciate their own identity as well as those of others. We believe that the experience of an education will enable children to value themselves while preparing them to participate with pride and confidence in a rich, complex society. We recognize that working to provide such an experience requires dedication and an ongoing commitment of time, energy, and resources.

Founded on the principle of respect, Academy at the Lakes is a place where children can listen, question, challenge, probe, and thereby make sense of their world. When children

graduate from Academy, it is our hope and vision that they will carry with them a strong sense of their identity, a willingness to see the common threads that run through our lives, and a high regard for the breadth and value of differences.

II. GENERAL POLICIES AND RELATED INFORMATION

The School Day

WENDLEK CAMPUS SCHOOL HOURS

PK3-SK	8:00am-3:00pm
1 st -4 th Grade	8:00am-3:15pm
Extended Care PK3-4 th Grade	7:30-8:00am and 3:15-6:00pm

MCCORMICK CAMPUS SCHOOL HOURS

5 th -12 th Grade	8:00am-3:15pm
Extended Care 5 th -8 th Grade	3:15-6:00pm

Drop-Off and Dismissal

DROP-OFF INFORMATION: Supervised drop-off begins at 7:30am at the front of the school. On arriving, students should move directly to their locker areas to prepare for the school day. We strongly recommended that students arrive no later than 7:50am so as to give them time to greet each other and to organize materials for their first classes. The first class begins promptly at 8:00am. **PLEASE NOTE: *Supervision is not available earlier than 7:30am. To ensure their safety and well-being, please do not drop students off before that time.***

All students who arrive after 8:00am must check in at the Office to receive an admit slip before attending class.

PLEASE NOTE: For the safety of our students, the roadway between the loop and McCormick Hall is designated a **pedestrian zone between the hours of 7:30am and 4:00pm**. Access will be blocked to prevent entry. Please do not attempt to drop off or pick up students in front of McCormick Hall or the 5th/6th Grade Suite between these hours.

DROP-OFF PROCEDURE: Please consult the Dismissal Map on our website and carefully follow these procedures to ensure a safe and efficient morning drop-off with a minimum of traffic delays:

1. Enter the campus at the access road entrance – reached by turning onto Preakness Blvd. at the light. **PLEASE NOTE: For the safety of our students, the campus speed limit is 10mph.**
 - a. During morning drop-off, vehicles **southbound** on Collier Parkway may turn right *at the cut-off past the school entrance* and then turn right onto the one-way path around the loop. **There can be no turns onto the loop from the school entry on Collier Parkway entrance.**
 - b. Vehicles **northbound** on Collier Parkway may **not** turn left across the southbound lane to enter at the Collier Parkway entrance.
2. Carefully follow the one-way path around the two-lane loop toward the front of the

Upper Division Building.

- a. The **right lane** is for **drop-offs and pick-ups**.
 - b. The **left lane** is a **through lane**.
3. Pull as far forward as possible, up to the white line in the road past the Upper Division.
 4. Please follow the instructions of school personnel who are supervising the drop-off.
 5. Students must exit their vehicles from the curb-side only.
 6. Carefully pull away after your child has reached the sidewalk with all of his or her materials, moving into the through lane when there is a safe opening.
 7. Please exit the campus only via the access road, **not** Collier Parkway.
 8. All children must be accompanied through the parking lot at both drop-off and dismissal. If you choose to walk your child to the front doors or to pick your child up by walking to the front of the school, please park your car.
 9. Please do not leave your car unattended in the line for any reason.
 10. **PLEASE NOTE:** We ask that you **refrain from using cell phones** while in the car line because it creates an unsafe environment for students during such a busy time.

DISMISSAL INFORMATION: At 3:15pm, students are dismissed for pick-up from the front of the Upper Division Building. Please inform the Office in writing of any regular car pools *and* of any changes to your car pool any time they occur. Students will only be released to individuals listed on the registration forms, listed on the emergency information records, or otherwise specifically identified to the school in writing or by telephone. Such individuals may be required to present a photo identification card.

Middle Division students are released for dismissal directly from their dismissal areas as their names are called when their parents arrive in the McCormick Campus Loop.

By 3:30pm each day, all Middle Division students must be in a supervised school activity, in afternoon extended care, or have been picked up. Students are responsible for notifying their parents of their whereabouts when they are involved in any after-school activity. Middle Division students who have not been picked up by 3:30pm must move directly to the supervision of the afternoon extended care program, for which parents will be billed at the drop-in rate.

PLEASE NOTE: For the safety of our students, the roadway between the loop and McCormick Hall is designated a **pedestrian zone between the hours of 7:30am and 4:00pm**. The gate will be closed to prevent entry. Please do not attempt to drop off or pick up students in front of McCormick Hall or the 5th/6th Grade Suite between these hours.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURE: Please consult the Dismissal Map on our website and carefully follow these procedures to ensure a safe and efficient afternoon dismissal with a minimum of traffic delays:

1. Enter the campus at the access road *only* – reached by turning onto Collier Commons at the light – *not* the Collier Parkway entrance. (The Collier Parkway entrance will be blocked off with cones.) **PLEASE NOTE: For the safety of our students, the campus speed limit is 10 mph.**

2. **Please ensure that the name card issued by the school is prominently displayed on your dashboard.**
3. As you pass the businesses approaching the school grounds, please be sure to keep to the right of the cones that separate the entrance lane and the exit lane. For the safety of students and out of respect for our neighbors, **please do not park at one of these businesses and ask your child to walk to you.**
4. Past the entrance on to campus, *both* of the lanes fronting Collier Parkway will be used to stack cars for pick-up.
 - a. A member of our faculty/staff will be at the entrance to guide incoming vehicles as they alternate into these two lanes.
 - b. Another member of our faculty/staff will be at the end of the straightaway to help vehicles alternate back into the single-file, rightmost pick-up lane.
 - c. Once back in the rightmost lane and past the curve, please carefully follow the one-way path around the two-lane loop toward the front of the Upper Division Building.
 - a. The **right lane** is for **drop-offs and pick-ups**.
 - b. The **left lane** is a **through lane**.
5. Pull as far forward as possible, up to the white line in the road past the Upper Division.
6. A member of the faculty or administration will then direct your child to you.
7. Should your child not have arrived at his or her dismissal waiting area in a timely manner, you may be asked to go around the loop again or may be asked to park until he or she arrives.
8. Carefully pull away after your child is safely inside your vehicle and wearing his or her seatbelt, moving into the through lane when there is a safe opening.
9. Please exit the campus only via the access road, to the right of the cones, *not* Collier Parkway. As you exit campus at this entrance/exit point, **please bear as far to the right as possible** so as to maintain two full lanes, one in each direction.
10. All children must be accompanied through the parking lot at both drop-off and dismissal. If you choose to walk your child to the front doors or pick your child up by walking to the front of the school, please park your car.
11. Please do not leave your car unattended in the line for any reason.
12. **PLEASE NOTE:** We ask that you **refrain from using cell phones** while in the car line because it creates an unsafe environment for students during such a busy time.

Please ensure that anyone who will be dropping off or picking up your child has a copy of these procedures, including the map and name card, and is thoroughly acquainted with them before they arrive on campus.

Attendance

ABSENCE: Regular attendance is, of course, expected and vital to a student's academic success. Because missed classroom instruction cannot really ever be made up, though missed assignments must be, the Academy strongly discourages absences undertaken merely for convenience, for outside social activities, or for extended vacation time.

- Please make every effort to schedule appointments with doctors, dentists, or other such professionals before or after school hours.
- School holidays are scheduled throughout the year and are published before the beginning of the school year. Because missing school jeopardizes academic progress for the student and places an additional burden on the faculty, families are urged to plan family vacations to match the school holidays. Please communicate early with the Division Director with regard to any such planned absences.

NOTIFYING THE SCHOOL: Whenever a student is unable to attend school, will arrive late, will leave early, or will be picked up by someone not in his or her usual car pool, please notify the school by email or call the Middle Division Administrative Assistant.

Please notify the Division Director and your child's teachers of any planned absences – for religious observances, medical procedures, important family events, etc. – as far in advance as possible so as to enable them to make arrangements with you and your child for any work that may be missed. For any planned absences of three or more days, the student must complete an "Extended Absence Notification" form. This form is available both on our website and from the front office.

MISSED WORK: Students are responsible for identifying and making up all work they miss during an absence. Students will have one day to make up missed work upon their return for each day of absence. (For example, a student whose absence lasted three days will have three days *after* their return to complete the work, turning it in on the fourth day.) Students who miss a quiz or test during an absence should meet with their teacher on the day of their return to schedule a make-up.

Students who miss part of a day must hand in homework for missed classes on that day and must take any quiz or test scheduled for that day, or make arrangements to make up that assessment with the teacher before leaving campus.

PARTICIPATION IN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES: A student must be present for a minimum of more than half the school day in order to participate in practices, games, or performances for any extracurricular activities on that day. Exceptions may be made with the prior approval of the Division Director. If a student is excused from participating in P.E. for physical/medical reasons, he or she may not participate in after-school sports practices or games.

LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY: All students who need to leave school early must be released through and signed out in the front office by a parent/guardian. Requests for a student to leave early must be communicated by a parent/guardian to the office as far in advance as possible. Teachers will not release students directly from the classrooms. The period of time just before regular dismissal (3:00–3:15 pm) is a very busy time in both the classrooms and office; kindly reserve your requests for early dismissal to extraordinary situations. Work due on a given day must be turned in before a student leaves early, even for classes that take place after the student's early departure. Please note that the same rules that apply to work missed because of absences also apply to early dismissals.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCES: Excessive absences will be brought to the Division Director's attention and may result in a parent meeting. At the discretion of the Division Director, a student with excessive absences may be exempt from academic consequences resulting from extended illness, valid religious reasons, or other reasons deemed to be in the best interest of the student. **It is considered excessive if a student is absent 8 or more times from one or more classes in a semester.** After **5 absences** from one or more classes, parents will be contacted to discuss the student's attendance. After **10 absences** from one or more classes, a meeting will be held to address attendance concerns and develop an action plan. Parents of the student will be involved in the development and execution of this plan. Excessive absences may ultimately result in a student not being ready for promotion to the next grade level.

SICKNESS POLICY

Prior to Arriving to School: Please check your child daily for these symptoms:

- Temperature of 100.0 or greater
- Sore throat
- Vomiting, Diarrhea, Abdominal Pain
- New loss of taste or smell
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline).
- New onset of severe headache

If your child has any one of these symptoms, please keep them home and contact your student's Division Administrative Assistant and Getta O'Neill, School RN at nurse@academyatthelakes.org for further guidance.

Sick at Home: Students who stay home because of illness for five or more consecutive days must be seen by a physician and must present a return-to-school note with a diagnosis from that physician upon return to school.

Sick at School: Children who have temperatures above 100.0 degrees F, who vomit, or appear otherwise ill, will have parents contacted for pick up. First Aid procedures will be utilized in treating illness and injury. Children must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Returning to School: Please follow the guidelines below in determining when it is *not* safe to allow a child to attend school:

- *A temperature of 100 degrees or higher.* Children must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol, aspirin, ibuprofen, or any other drug used to depress fever.
- *Diarrhea or vomiting.* A child who has had diarrhea or vomiting may not return to school for 24 hours.
- *Contagious condition.* A child with any potentially contagious condition, such as a rash, strep throat, flu or conjunctivitis, may not return to school until he or she has

been examined by a doctor, has taken required prescription medications for at least 24 hours, and has been cleared by a doctor to return to school.

- *Contagious illness.* In the case of any more serious contagious illness such as COVID, chickenpox, measles, mumps, MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) etc., please inform the school immediately and keep your child at home until such time as his or her doctor clears the child to return to school.

Punctuality/Tardy Policies

In order for students to reach their highest potential and to develop the highly valued and valuable life-long habit of punctuality, students are expected to be on time to all classes and school activities. Students who are habitually tardy miss much, placing themselves in a position of having to catch up, disrupting the learning environment of their classmates, and placing an undue burden on their teachers.

All students who arrive after 8:00am are considered tardy to their first class and must check in at the office to receive an admit slip before attending class. After 8:10am, a parent or other authorized adult must be present to sign the student in.

The Middle Division Registrar, working with the teachers, will keep track of all tardies. At five tardies to a class in one semester, the Administrative Assistant will contact the parent to work out a plan of action for the student to avoid further tardies. After six tardies to a class in a semester, students will thereafter be assigned break detention each day that they are tardy to school.

Ultimately, a further accumulation of tardies may result in additional academic and/or other disciplinary consequences, such as afternoon detentions and a family conference with the Division Director.

Any student who is more than ten minutes tardy to a class may be considered to be skipping class, for which more serious consequences may result.

If a student is delayed by a member of the faculty or administration for any reason, the student is entitled to, and should request, a tardy pass from that person.

Celebrations

Celebrations occur to enhance classroom learning, to acknowledge achievement of curricular goals, or to highlight a special day or season. Parents should consult with faculty members or the Division Director concerning in-school celebrations, such as for birthdays. As a prerequisite, such celebrations must include an entire class or grade and may not occur if they interfere with scheduled classes or other school activities. Invitations to parties outside of school may only be distributed in school if an entire class or grade is invited.

Cell Phones and Telephone Messages

5th and 6th graders may bring cell phones to school but they are not permitted to use them until 3:15pm each day. Phones must be turned off (*not* placed on silent or vibrate) and stored in the student's locker throughout the school day.

7th and 8th graders may bring cell phones to school but, until 3:15pm, their use is limited to school-related purposes (including as a planning/calendaring tool), at specific times, and as directed by a member of the faculty. Students may not use their cell phones between classes, during break, or during lunch; exceptions may occasionally be made but only for school-related purposes and only with the express permission of a member of the faculty. It is our goal to guide our students in learning how to use these valuable devices in the workplace in a productive and responsible manner.

If cell phones “make an appearance” – i.e., they’re seen or heard – outside of approved times, a faculty or staff member will confiscate them and turn them in to the front office or Division Director. The student or a parent must then collect the phone at the end of the school day. Any student who repeatedly violates this policy may face an extended confiscation period or may lose the privilege of bringing a cell phone to school. Any student who uses a cell phone for an inappropriate purpose – including but not limited to using a cell phone during a quiz, test, or exam – will face more serious disciplinary measures.

Students have access to telephones at the office, should they need to reach parents during the school day. Students may use these phones before school, during break, during lunch, and after school but calls should be limited to those that cannot wait until the end of the school day. Should parents need to reach their child during the school day, they should call the office, *not* their child’s cell phone. Urgent messages will be passed on to the child immediately; messages of lesser importance will be passed on as soon as practicable.

Class Placement

Toward the end of the school year, the faculty, student support team, and Division Director meet to discuss the class placement of students for the following school year. Class placement is at the Division Director’s discretion. All placements are carefully considered and are based upon academic and social issues, as well as considerations that relate to a child as an individual.

Security and Closed Campus

Academy operates a closed campus. Once Middle Division students arrive on the campus, they are not permitted to leave unless signed out by a parent/guardian, authorized adult on student’s pick-up list, or accompanied by a faculty member. Students must sign out when they leave and sign back in when they return.

For the safety of our community, all buildings are locked. Students (7th grade and up), faculty, and staff are provided with an individualized key card that will allow them access to the appropriate buildings throughout the school day. Students are required to carry their key cards daily. In the event a student loses his/her key card, s/he must order a replacement by the end of the day. Replacement card fees will be billed through FACTS. Failure to have a key card may result in disciplinary action.

Communications

Please make certain that the school always has current and accurate home, cell, and business phone numbers; current and accurate e-mail addresses; as well as information on whom to contact in an emergency, should you be unavailable.

The secured parent section of the school's web site (www.academyatthelakes.org) is a particularly rich and useful source of school information, providing access to a regularly updated newsletter, calendar, important forms, etc. To access this section, please click on "**Parents**" in the upper right-hand corner and enter the password AATL. The website also includes a *FACTS Family Portal* link, through which parents have access to weekly assignment sheets for their children, grades, email links to teachers, attendance records, and community service records. (See "Using *FACTS Family Portal*" below.)

Much communication between home and school is done by email. Each Friday, the school will e-mail home the "Weekly eCalendar," listing upcoming school events and deadlines of note. Teachers often communicate directly with parents about the progress of students in their classroom. The following types of communications will also be e-mailed home: special announcements, permission and order forms, and academic and behavioral updates. Progress reports will be e-mailed at mid-semester, and report cards will be emailed home shortly after the conclusion of each semester.

If a parent needs to contact a teacher during the school day, he/she should call the school at (813) 948-7600 to leave a message for the teacher or follow the automated directions to leave a message in the teacher's voice mailbox. The teacher will return the call within one business day. Email is a very effective way to communicate with teachers. You can access teachers' email addresses on *FACTS Family Portal* under School Information. The addresses most often follow a simple formula: first initial and last name followed by "@academyatthelakes.org." Please note, however, that there are a few exceptions to this formula.

When parents deem it more appropriate, they are welcome to meet with members of the faculty or administration. Faculty members will usually be available for scheduled appointments before and after school hours and, occasionally, during school hours. Please call and make an appointment with the faculty member to be sure that he or she will be available to meet with you. Teachers have, of course, been asked not to conference with parents between classes, while on duty, or in the car line so as not to interrupt teaching or supervisory responsibilities.

NOTE: For a quick reference as to whom to contact when you have specific questions, please refer to the "Whom to Contact" section at the end of this Handbook.

USING THE *FACTS FAMILY PORTAL*: Through *FACTS*, part of our online school management system, parents are able to view their child's assignments and grades, e-mail teachers, monitor their child's attendance and community service records, and find school directory information. To connect to the *Family Portal*, go to www.factsmgt.com, then click on "Parent Login." From the drop-down list, select "*FACTS Family Portal*." This will take you to the parent/student login page. The login instructions are:

For First-Time Users:

District Code: AL-FL.

E-mail: type in the e-mail address you have listed with the school.

Click “Parent” or “Student,” as appropriate.

Click “Create New Family Portal Account.”

When you have done this, *FACTS* will respond with a notice telling you that a password will be e-mailed to you. When you receive your password, return to the *FACTS Family Portal* as above, then:

Enter the District Code: AL-FL.

Enter your e-mail address and your password.

Click on the “Parent” or “Student” tab.

Click on “Log In.”

You will then have an opportunity to change your password; follow the link and instructions, if you wish to do so.

Conferences

In late October, parents will participate in **student-led conferences** where students will present their reflections of their academic and social progress over the first eleven weeks of the school year. At this time, parents will partner with their student and advisor to set goals for the remainder of the year.

Parents may schedule conferences with one or more of their child’s teachers at any time during the school year simply by contacting the school. Parents are strongly encouraged to do so any time that it is in their child’s best interest to share pertinent information about their child’s progress, health, or well-being with the faculty and administration. Teachers are required to maintain open and timely communications with parents on an ongoing basis; grades are available “live” throughout each semester. Progress reports are emailed home at mid-semester, and report cards are e-mailed home following the completion of each semester.

Cumulative Records

The school maintains cumulative educational records for each enrolled student. The records are updated at the conclusion of each school year. Parents/legal guardians may review the contents of the cumulative record by making an appointment with the Division Director. The school does request educational records and/or transcripts from a student’s former schools and will forward a student’s educational records and/or transcripts to other schools when provided with written parental authorization to do so.

Distribution of Materials

Any student distributing unauthorized written materials or images on school grounds or via school email will be subject to disciplinary action.

Dress Code

UNIFORM POLICY: Academy at the Lakes requires Middle Division students to wear a school uniform and to meet a specific Dress Code from the time of their arrival at school through the time they are picked up. This policy is designed to promote a high standard of appearance for our students, to minimize clothing competition, to develop pride in our school community, and to develop in our students the experience of dressing appropriately for work and, in the case of the Dress Uniform, dressing up for special occasions. The school requests and requires the support of parents in helping students to meet this uniform and Dress Code policy.

Please be sure to order uniform items early enough to receive them before the beginning of the school year and thereafter as needed to maintain an adequate supply of items that fit your growing adolescent child.

In order to prevent items from being lost, the school requires that all clothing be clearly labeled with the student's first and last names using either a permanent marker or name tag.

DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS: A student who does not comply with the Dress Code may not be permitted to attend classes. Parents may be called and asked to bring appropriate clothing to school. Students may be required to remain in the Division office until appropriate clothing is made available. Students will be given a warning after the first infraction and parents will be notified in FACTS and via email by the MD administrative assistant. Subsequent infractions may require a conference with parents and the student being held from classes until they are dressed correctly. Your assistance in ensuring that students are properly dressed for school each day is greatly appreciated.

When there is any doubt, the Division Director will make the final determination as to the appropriateness of a student's dress or appearance. Should you have any questions about the school's uniform or Dress Code, please do not hesitate to call the school.

PURCHASING THE UNIFORM: *Lands' End* is the school's exclusive vendor for all uniform items. "Look-alike" items may not be purchased from other vendors as they will obviously then not meet the "uniformity" requirement.

To order, please log in to Lands' End at www.landsend.com/school, using the preferred school and logo numbers below:

Logo Number: 0255148K

Preferred School Number: 90007689 4

Refer to the current Academy at the Lakes *Lands' End* Ordering Guide when selecting uniform items. Students do have a number of choices within the required uniform so as to allow them to express a degree of individuality in their dress.

DAILY UNIFORM: Please refer to the Academy at the Lakes Ordering Guide for a list of required Daily Uniform items. Students are to wear the Daily Uniform each school day unless notified otherwise.

On Fridays, unless it is a Dress Uniform day, students may wear an Academy at the Lakes "spirit shirt" instead of the uniform shirt. Spirit shirts include shirts sold through the Spirit Shop, a student's House t-shirt, and any Academy t-shirt the school gives to students involved in school productions, activities, or sports.

DRESS UNIFORM: Please refer to the Academy at the Lakes Ordering Guide for a list of required Dress Uniform items. The Academy school tie is a required part of the Dress Uniform for boys and an optional item for girls. The Dress Uniform is generally worn for special events, performances, and field trips.

OUTERWEAR: Students are welcome to wear sweatshirts, sweaters, or jackets when needed. Sweaters and sweatshirts must be from among those listed in the school's *Lands' End* Ordering Guide, from the Spirit Shop, or solid white, navy, or gray without any messages, designs, or images and with a discrete logo no larger than two inches in size. 8th graders are permitted to wear college sweatshirts. They must be worn over a school uniform top. Students may wear a jacket of their choosing but must remove it when entering any building.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS: Please take note of the following additional Dress Code requirements.

- *Belts*, brown or black leather, are required for Dress Uniform for all shorts, pants, and skirts with belt loops.
- *Shoes* must enclose the toes and cover the heel. Students may not wear sandals of any type, any clogs without back straps, or Crocs. Students must wear solid-colored, black or brown leather shoes with the Dress Uniform. "High heels" – of no more than two inches – may be worn with the Dress Uniform only – unless instructed otherwise because of the nature of the event.
- *Socks* must be worn with all Daily Uniform shoes.
- Students are welcome to choose socks of any color or design with the Daily Uniform. Socks worn with the Dress Uniform must be solid white, blue, tan, or black.
- *Undergarments* must be tucked in and out of sight at all times. Undershirts and camisoles may only be solid white, gray, or navy and may not be visible below shirt sleeves or shirt bottoms. (Students are *not* required to tuck in their Daily Uniform shirts.)
- *Hats* may be worn only during P.E. when outdoors. Students will be asked to remove hats worn at other times.
- *Hair* must be neat, clean, and not distracting. Extreme colors or styles are not permitted. Boys must be clean-shaven.
- *Jewelry*, modest in type and amount, is allowed. Visible body piercings, however, other than modest earrings, may *not* be worn.
- *Makeup*: facial makeup, including lipstick, is not permitted at school for 5th/6th graders. (They are, however, welcome to wear lip balm or lip gloss.) 7th/8th graders may wear facial makeup, as long as it's light in application, natural looking, and not distracting.

- Visible tattoos are not permitted.
- All clothing must be neat, clean, and in good condition (no tears, holes, frays, etc.).
- All clothing must fit properly and with modesty. Clothing may not be too baggy, fit too tightly, or be too revealing.
- Shorts and skirts must be modest, work-appropriate in length – not shorter than three inches from the top of the kneecap. Students are not permitted to roll skirts to adjust the length.

All determinations about the propriety of student clothing or compliance with the Dress Code will be made by the faculty and administration, with the Division Director making the final determination. Should you have any questions about the Dress Code, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

No Uniforms Today (NUT Day) Dress Code:

Periodically students will have the opportunity to participate in non-uniform days. While this is a break from the daily uniform, guidelines still apply for student dress. Students may wear home clothes that are free from rips or tears and are of appropriate fit, length, and style. Messaging on t-shirts should not include wording that would be inappropriate for school. Students may not wear athletic clothes including leggings, athletic shorts, or tank tops on NUT Days.

Electronic Devices

Students are welcome to bring laptops, tablet computers, e-book readers or other such devices but only for school-related work. All 7th and 8th Grade students are required to bring a laptop or tablet computer to school for classroom use. For specifications, please refer to the “Laptop Requirements” communication on our website.

The use of any electronic devices while on school property, while in attendance at school-sponsored events, and in any case where doing so disturbs the educational process and/or constitutes harassing, disrespectful, or unacceptable behavior is bound by the Academy’s procedures, rules, [Technology Acceptable Use Agreement](#), and Code of Honor. They may not be used during the school day for personal email, social networking, surfing the web, or playing games without the clear and expressed permission of a supervising member of the faculty. The Academy reserves the right to inspect and/or monitor any personal electronic device brought onto school property or to a school-sponsored event. Any student who uses an electronic device for an unapproved or inappropriate purpose – *including but not limited to* making, posting, or sharing audio, photo, or video recordings of others without their prior knowledge and expressed prior permission to do so – will be subject to immediate confiscation of the device and additional, more serious disciplinary measures. Use of imaging devices – such as still cameras, video cameras, or camera phones – is strictly prohibited in school locker rooms and restrooms.

Emergency Procedures

A. Injuries and Health Conditions

In the event of a minor injury or illness on campus, the School Nurse will notify the parents or guardian through *FACTS*. In the event of a more serious injury or illness, a school employee will dial 911, explain the nature of the emergency, then promptly contact a parent or guardian. A school employee will remain with the student until a parent or guardian is able to get to the medical facility where the student is being treated. If the school is not able to reach a parent or guardian, the School Nurse will take the action necessary in the best interest of the student.

B. Emergency Drills

Drills and evacuations are conducted routinely as a measure of preparedness in the event of fire, severe weather, and other potential threats to community safety.

C. Communications with Parents

In the event of an emergency, the school will communicate important information through our automated emergency alert system (text message).

D. First Aid/CPR/AED Trained Personnel

The school requires designated employees to be trained and certified in First Aid/CPR/AED by the American Red Cross.

E. Chain of Command

In an emergency situation the chain of command is as follows: Head of School, Division Directors and other members of the Administrative Team, Administrative Assistants, Chairs and Team Leaders.

F. Release of Students

Students are released only to those individuals identified by parents/guardians. Each occasion of such a release requires parents to notify the school in writing, and requires the individual making such a pickup to identify themselves with a valid driver's license. Such individuals will sign students out of school.

G. Severe Weather/School Closing

During a severe weather alert the following activities will occur:

1. Administrative Assistants and the Controller will monitor the emergency broadcast system and news/weather web sites.
2. During periods of a severe weather "warning," all outside activities will cease and all teachers will follow the procedures laid out in the school's Emergency Procedures Guidelines document.
3. Parents will be notified of school closings due to weather or other emergencies through our Parent Alert system. The Parent Alert system will send a text message to the cell phone(s) listed in *FACTS*. Messages will also be posted on our website. There are times when Hillsborough or Pasco County will close due to weather related problems in the aftermath of severe weather. Academy at the Lakes will not close at these times unless the school is unable to accommodate student

attendance. The Head of School will determine whether or not school will be in session and will activate the Parent Alert system accordingly.

4. The campus must be secured during severe weather to avoid damage from strong winds. All objects capable of being carried by the force of strong wind will be secured. To prevent danger of electrical fires, all lighting and computers and other electronic devices will be disconnected. All sources of electricity will be turned off. In the event that the phone systems are incapable of use, school cell phones will be utilized to communicate with parents and community authorities.

5. In the event of a utility service interruption (electric service, water service) the Head of School will decide whether school will remain in session.

H. Child Abuse Reporting

This policy complies with Florida Statute 827.07, Abuse of Children:

Reports of Abuse Required: Any person, including but not limited to any physician, nurse, teacher, social worker or employee of a public or private facility serving children, who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse shall report or cause reports to be made to the Department of Child and Family Services.

Immunity: Anyone participating in the making of a report to the Department of Child and Family Services pursuant to this act or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from prima facie involvement, shall be presumed to be acting in good faith and in so doing shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that otherwise might be incurred or imposed.

I. Criminal Activity

It is illegal to carry a gun, gun look-a-like or any other weapon onto a school campus. Administrators will follow the guidelines as established by law in all such cases.

Students found in possession of illicit substances and/or their paraphernalia will be subject to applicable laws and school policies concerning such items. The relevant school policies are detailed in the “Code of Honor and Discipline Policies” section of this handbook.

Bomb threats require the immediate intervention of law enforcement officials. During such a threat, facilities must be evacuated immediately. The Head of School will direct activities.

J. Search

The School reserves the right to search students’ desks, lockers, backpacks and other personal possessions. Only administrators may conduct such searches.

K. Safety on Campus

All visitors must report to the office to state their business. Parents, volunteers, guests, alumni, friends from other schools, and others authorized to be on campus will sign in and wear either a visitor or volunteer badge and will be escorted to the location of their service. Visiting friends must have prior permission from the Middle Division Director to be on campus and a letter from their parents acknowledging that their child is on our campus for that day or time.

Upon leaving campus such individuals will sign out and make their exit known in the office.

Uninvited solicitors are not welcome on campus. Staff spotting of unknown and/or suspicious individuals must be reported to the office immediately. Persons with no business at the school are considered trespassers. Administrators will attempt to track such individuals to determine their reason for being on campus. If necessary, law enforcement officials will become involved.

Only authorized persons may enter classrooms. A member of the faculty or staff must escort such persons to classroom areas. Any unescorted individuals may not enter classrooms or common areas.

Signage at the school clearly directs visitors as to the procedures to be followed for visiting our campus.

L. Supervision

For their own safety and well-being, Middle Division students must be under the supervision of a faculty or staff member at all times, including break and lunch. Students may only leave campus under the direct supervision of a member of the faculty or staff, a parent, or another adult specifically authorized to do so by the parent after written notice to the school. Middle Division students may not leave campus at any time without such supervision. Avoiding or evading these supervision requirements will be considered a serious breach of discipline and will be treated accordingly.

Enrollment Agreement

Academy at the Lakes is an independent school. All parents are required to enter into a contractual agreement with the School in order for a student to attend the Academy. The contractual agreement (Continuous Enrollment Agreement) is issued to all families upon acceptance to the school. The contract and annual Enrollment Agreement Supplement fully outline the financial obligation of the adult(s) responsible for the financial commitment which signing the contract represents.

The school bases expenditures for teachers and other personnel, as well as overall operations, upon contracted students. Tuition and fees are due and payable according to the contract. Withdrawal does not relinquish responsibility for full payment of fees due. Persons financially responsible for tuition enter into the contract with the school for a full academic year, and consequently, withdrawal from the school does not eliminate financial responsibility. Students may not receive their report cards when their tuition account is not current.

The Tuition Refund Plan is required of all families who pay in more than one installment, and the fee will be collected by the school. The Tuition Refund Plan provides both families and the school protection in the event of student withdrawal for a variety of reasons. Plan information is available to parents at the time of registration and during the enrollment process. The contractual agreement between a family and the school explains the Refund Plan requirement. Parents who pay the tuition in full are not required to participate in the Refund Plan; however, it is recommended.

- Fees must be paid by the stated due date or the student(s) will not be allowed to attend classes, participate in school activities and/or receive transcripts.
- Tuition does not include the Tuition Refund Plan Fee, and other miscellaneous expenses which may arise. The costs of the annual Extended Trips are also not

included in tuition.

- The Parent(s) accept(s) the policies, procedures, rules, regulations and academic achievement standards adopted by the school.

Summer school or summer tutorial work may be required in cases where a student did not pass a course. Re-enrollment decisions are usually made each January by the administration. A decision to offer continued re-enrollment to a student is based upon a student's academic record, effort, attitude, and behavior, and upon the willingness of the parents to accept their responsibility in the partnership of education. On occasion, re-enrollment decisions are held until a time (usually April or May) when an appropriate decision about placement can be made.

Parents should also understand that the school reserves the right not to offer re-enrollment to a child if the parents have been uncooperative or if their actions have in any way undermined the effectiveness of our teachers. In some cases, it may be determined that it is not in the child's best interest to continue at the school. This difficult conclusion is only reached after extremely careful consideration.

In order for admitted students to be fully registered and begin attending classes, the following documents must be *on file*:

1. School Entry Health Exam (Florida Department of Health Form 3040);
2. Florida Certification of Immunization (Florida Department of Health Form 680);
and
3. Birth certificate copy (verifies birth date).

International students must be eligible for I-20 status from SEVIS, according to Federal law. Tuition charges for international students must be paid according to Plan I.

Field Trips, Retreats, and Extended Trips

The Academy's field trips, Division retreats, and extended trips serve as important extensions of the school's mission.

FIELD TRIPS: Faculty members and the administration plan a number of field trips during the course of the school year. A blanket permission for such trips is part of the annual Enrollment Agreement. The school will make every effort to notify parents of field trips well in advance. This is not always possible when unexpected opportunities arise. Members of the faculty generally chaperone all field trips. On occasion, a limited number of parents may be asked to help chaperone field trips when needed.

MIDDLE DIVISION RETREATS: At the end of the second or third week of school, all Middle Division students attend a student retreat. 7th and 8th graders travel to a nearby retreat center – chaperoned by members of the faculty and administration. 5th and 6th graders remain on campus. All 5th-8th Grade students are expected to attend, absent special circumstances and the prior approval of the Division Director. The dates for the retreats are published in the school calendar. Detailed information will be provided to parents at the beginning of the school year.

EXTENDED TRIPS: Each year, Middle Division students go on separate overnight trips chaperoned by members of the faculty and administration. During these trips, school is “in

session” at the various trip locations. Each trip is carefully tied to the curriculum; students will do some work in class ahead of time in preparation for the trip and will gather information during the trip to complete assignments on their return. These trips give students the experience of traveling away from home, help them build bonds with their classmates and teachers, create lifelong memories, and extend the Academy’s curriculum beyond the classroom walls.

In the fall, 8th graders attend an outdoor adventure program in the Appalachian foothills of Virginia. In the fall, 7th graders study marine biology at SeaCamp in the Florida Keys. 5th and 6th graders travel together in the spring each year, generally alternating between a Florida space-themed trip and a Florida environmental science-themed trip.

All 5th-8th Grade students are expected to attend these trips, absent special circumstances and the prior approval of the Division Director. The dates for these trips are published in the school calendar. Detailed information, including the cost to parents, will be provided well in advance of each trip.

Food and Drink

FOOD AND DRINK: In order to maintain a clean and pest-free environment, food and drink may only be brought into school buildings, including classrooms, with the specific permission of a member of the faculty or administration. Students are, of course, responsible for cleaning up after themselves whenever and wherever they are permitted to eat and drink.

GUM: Students may not chew gum on campus at any time. Gum can cause damage to school property. Any student found to be chewing gum may serve a break detention. Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary measures, including after-school detention.

WATER: Because of the proven health and learning benefits of staying well hydrated, students are welcome to bring plain water (*not* sports drinks or other flavored drinks) into school buildings, including classrooms. Bottles must have closeable tops. There are a number of filtered water bottle refill stations on campus.

House System

The House system is designed to further opportunities for the development of relationships through traditions designed to encourage the development of cross-age relationships through healthy competitions and planned community gatherings. The school organizes events such as intramural sports and academic competitions, an energy-filled House Day, and spirit days each year. In order for the goal of the development of relationships to embed itself in the efforts of the House System, students, faculty members, and families are sorted into one of four houses. Competitions and other events are all based upon House membership.

Students and faculty members are organized into one of four Houses, each with its own color:

Kestrel	Green
Nighthawk	Yellow

Osprey

Blue

Peregrine

Red

During House events, students and faculty are required to wear their House shirt. The school issues House shirts to new students at the beginning of the school year and all students every other school year.

Lockers

7th and 8th Grade students are assigned lockers with combination locks. They must use only their assigned locker and may not move to unassigned lockers. Students are expected to secure their books, materials, and other possessions inside their locked locker at all times and to keep their locker combination to themselves. 5th and 6th Grade students are assigned lockers without combination locks in the 5th/6th Grade Suite. Lockers must be free of obstructions, clutter, and litter. All bags and backpacks must be placed safely inside or on top of a student's locker. Rolling backpacks are not permitted unless there is a medical need.

Students are encouraged to bring a combination lock for use in the Gym locker room during their P.E. class. Students must place all of their uniform and other belongings inside one of the available gym lockers during P.E. Locks and belongings must be taken with the students after each P.E. class.

Students are encouraged to use their lockers to keep their possessions safe. If students choose not to use their lockers, they are responsible for keeping their textbooks and technology in good, usable condition. Students may be charged for textbooks that are ruined during the school year.

Lockers are school property on loan to students. Damage to lockers will result in parents being charged for repairs. The school will require periodic locker cleanouts, including at the end of each semester. Lockers are subject to search by school administrators.

The school is not responsible for the contents of a student's locker. Because many lockers are located in exterior spaces, there is a risk of theft or damage by trespassers, especially at night, over the weekend, and during school holidays. Students should not keep valuables – including electronic devices, jewelry, or cash – in their lockers at any time. Such items are best left at home.

Lost and Found

“Lost and Found” bins are located in various places on campus. The bins will be emptied at the end of each quarter; unidentified contents will be given to the uniform recycling program, donated to charity, or otherwise disposed of. Please make sure to label your child's uniform and other belongings so as to facilitate their being returned. Found valuables – such as jewelry, calculators, cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc. – will be turned in to the Division office.

Lunch

An “order out” lunch program is available each school day and must be ordered in advance. (Details of the program are shared with families separately.) Credit cannot be given due to absence; parents are responsible for checking the online school calendar for field trips, service days, extended trip dates, or any days that lunch would not be needed for their students. Students may also, of course, choose to bring in their own lunches. Any lunch that needs to be heated in a microwave should take no longer than 30 seconds. (Students should not bring in frozen meals.) Please do not order lunches from other outside vendors separately and individually as our office cannot take responsibility for accepting deliveries and because such deliveries are frequently late, causing student and classroom disruptions. Students must remain in their designated lunch location for the duration of lunch, where they are under the supervision of faculty members. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves and for helping to keep their lunch location clean.

Medical Information/Medications

Parents should make the school aware of any health problem(s), including medical conditions or allergies, that their child(ren) may have by entering the information in *FACTS Family Portal*. Over-the-counter medications may be administered to students on campus only if parents have:

1. Completed the “Authorization to Dispense Medication” Formstack found on the school website; and
2. Provided said medication – labeled with the student’s name – to the School Nurse.

Prescription medications must be brought to school by the parent or guardian in the original prescription container labeled as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Student’s Name | d. Physician’s Name |
| b. Name of Medication | e. Date of Prescription |
| c. Dosage Prescribed | f. Special Instruction |

Medication will be counted by the School Nurse and recorded on the “Authorization to Dispense Medication” form.

Students will be allowed to carry medication/equipment for life-threatening emergencies, such as inhalers and Epi-Pens, with a completed Academy at the Lakes “Authorization to Carry and Self-Administer Asthma Inhaler and/or Epi-Pen” form on file.

All students must have a completed Florida Certification of Immunization (Florida Department of Health Form 680) with either proof of immunization or exemption.

Physicians may obtain the Florida Certification of Immunization Form from their local county health department. The following information must be recorded on form DH 680 in order for the form to be valid:

- a. The child’s complete name, date of birth, and name of parent or guardian.
- b. All vaccine dates with the month/day/year. If the child has received more than the required number of doses of a vaccine, the last space to the right of the vaccine should indicate the date of the last dose given.

- c. The child's social security number is optional.
- d. The state immunization identification number (ID#) will appear on a computer-generated DH 680 and is an identification number issued by the Florida State Health Online System (Florida SHOTS).
- e. Part A-1, A-2 or Part B must be completed with the name of the physician or clinic; physician or clinic address; signature or signature stamp of the physician, public health nurse, physician's authorized designee, or the County Health Department stamp with the date the form was signed and issued.

The school requires designated employees to be trained and certified in First Aid/CPR/AED by the American Red Cross.

Students with communicable diseases may not attend school, according to the guidelines set forth by the local health department and the Centers for Disease Control.

Pets and Animals

Academy at the Lakes recognizes that pets can be an important part of our lives and are often included in daily family activities, such as bringing children to and from school. We also understand, however, that bringing pets to school may pose a health and safety risk to our students, as some children are allergic or fearful; even the most well-behaved animals may behave unpredictably when confronted by many people, especially children (who also behave unpredictably). As a result, family pets are not allowed on the school campus during the school day or at school-related events without the express permission of the Head of School. Domesticated animals will only be allowed on campus under the following conditions: if they are a certified service or guide dog, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines; or to support a school program or curriculum.

Solicitors

Solicitors are permitted at the school only by the invitation of school officials.

Sports

Academy at the Lakes encourages all students to participate in its interscholastic sports programs. Please refer to the [Athletic Handbook](#) or contact the Athletic Director for detailed information.

Summer Camp

Summer at the Lakes Day Camp is the official summer camp program of the Academy at the Lakes. Our camp is conducted on the McCormick and Wendlek Campuses from early June to the end of July. It follows the model of a traditional day camp. Students are grouped by age and a mix of individual activities. Enrollment for the camp begins in February of each year. More detailed information will be distributed before then. In order to ensure availability of your chosen dates and programs, we recommend early enrollment.

Summer School

Summer at the Lakes Summer School is the official summer school program of the Academy at the Lakes. We offer both for-credit high school classes as well as noncredit, enrichment classes for students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade. High school classes are taught online. Students meet with teachers on campus during the first week of the course for set-up instructions and during the last week of the course for final review and assessments. Students have access to teachers via phone, e-mail, and Zoom throughout the course. Elementary and middle school courses are conducted on the McCormick and Wendlek Campuses from early June to the end of July. Enrollment for the summer program begins in February of each year. More detailed information will be distributed before then. In order to be assured of chosen dates and programs, we recommend early enrollment.

Textbooks

Students are responsible for the care of all textbooks and materials issued to them by the school. Textbooks are the property of the Academy and must be returned at the end of the semester or school year. Should a student lose or damage a textbook, his or her parents will be billed for the replacement cost.

Visitors

STUDENT VISITORS: Other than prospective student visits arranged through the Admissions Office, students must make arrangements for visitors with the Division Director at least 48 hours before the visit. On the day of the visit, the student visitor must bring a note from his/her parents indicating that the parent is aware of the visit. The note must be presented to the administrative assistant for a pass to be issued. Visitors must sign in and out at the office and wear a Visitor's Badge while on campus. Host students are required to introduce the visitor to each teacher. All visiting students must be appropriately dressed for a day at Academy at the Lakes.

ADULT VISITORS: All visiting adults must sign in at the office and wear a Visitor badge, including Academy alumni.

III. ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Academic Policy

A student must pass all core academic courses for the year in order to be promoted to the next grade level. In the event that a student fails a core academic class, the school may, at its discretion, require summer work, the retaking of a class, or the repeating of a grade. The Division Director coordinates all such academic matters.

Intellectual, social, emotional, and/or physical growth may be such that the child will benefit most from having another year in the current grade before moving to the next level. It is the school's policy that decisions of this nature will only be made after meeting with the family, teachers, and administrators who are professionally involved with the child.

If, after a period of time, it becomes apparent that Academy at the Lakes is not an appropriate school for a student, then the school advises the parents as early as possible and counsels them concerning other school options.

	<u>Grades</u>		
GRADING SCALE:	90-100	A	4.0
	80-89	B	3.0
	70-79	C	2.0
	60-69	D	1.0
	59 and below	F	0.0

ACADEMIC HONORS: 7th and 8th grade students who achieve a 4.0 grade point average at the end of the first semester earn *Head of School's Honor Roll* for that semester. Students who achieve a grade point average of 3.5-3.99 (with no "C"s) earn *Honor Roll*. Students who achieve a grade point average of 3.0-3.49 (with no "C"s) earn *Commendation*. Honors following the second semester are based on a student's year-end final grades. 5th and 6th graders undergo what can be a significant transition in the level of academic expectation and how grades are tied to those expectations in the Middle Division. Accordingly, we do not believe it to be developmentally appropriate to include 5th and 6th graders in the academic honors program because of the significant potential for undue pressure and anxiety on these students (and their families) as they learn to rise to the level of expectation.

SEMESTER GRADES for each subject area are calculated as follows:

Semester Grade:	80%
Semester Exam:	<u>20%</u>
	100%

The Grade for classes without semester exams – including all 5th and 6th Grade classes – is simply the Semester Grade.

YEARLY GRADES are calculated by averaging the two Semester Grades. (Courses taken for only one semester will receive a Semester and Yearly Grade that is the same grade.)

GRADES IN PERFORMING ARTS COURSES: Students taking performance arts courses (such as Chorus, Strings, Band, and Theater) must attend all rehearsals planned prior to performances and the performances unless previously excused by the instructor. In such classes, performances stand as assessments and make up a significant part of each student's grade.

Homework

HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS IN THE MIDDLE DIVISION: Homework is a regular experience for students in the Middle Division. Faculty members give assignments to supplement the ideas, concepts, skills, and content covered in class. Faculty members also assign longer term projects and papers with the goal that the student will develop the ability to budget his or her time and plan accordingly. Homework is also designed to establish a disciplined approach toward academics and study skills. Middle Division students are responsible for recording their assignments in the paper planners *or* by using an electronic planning tool, such as Microsoft Outlook. (The school will provide students access to this particular tool.) Parents can reinforce a student's use of his or her planner by reviewing it with the student at the end of each day. Students and parents are also encouraged to regularly refer to the weekly assignments page and student grades page through the *FACTS Family Portal* link on the school website:
www.academyatthelakes.org.

The following time frames are guidelines for the homework load at each grade level. The actual time required will vary for each individual, based on their motivation, energy level, work habits, pace, comfort with the content, etc. Working on longer term projects or preparing for tests may require some additional time. What matters most is the quality of the homework assigned and how well it meets students' learning needs, not the amount of time spent on it. If a student takes an amount of time significantly longer than the suggested guideline, please contact the faculty member who assigned the work as soon as possible. Quality homework is valuable but cannot be allowed to become an overwhelming burden for a student.

HOMEWORK AND HOLIDAYS: Homework may be assigned over weekends but not over Thanksgiving Break, Spring Break, or major religious holidays. Families may always request an extension on homework assigned over any other religious holiday observed by that family. Please note that the time frame for some long-term projects may encompass these holidays. Long term projects or papers may not, however, be due during the first day back from the Thanksgiving Break or Spring Break and no tests may be given on the day of return from Thanksgiving Break, Spring Break, or a major religious holiday.

LATE AND MISSING HOMEWORK: Homework is expected to be completed and turned in on the date it is due. Faculty members will communicate with parents whenever a student begins to develop a pattern of turning homework in late. When a student reaches three missing assignments in a class, that faculty member will contact the parents and require that the student attend after-school Extra Help until the missing work is made up.

HOMEWORK TIPS: It is difficult for the school to offer universal guidelines for parents about homework because what applies for one student may not be appropriate advice for another child. We can, however, offer the following broadly applicable tips:

- Be sure that your child is recording all homework assignments in his or her planner.

- Set a time for homework to be started. Some children may wish to start their work the moment they arrive home. Others may need time to unwind. Allow your child to make this decision with you. Once the starting time has been established, try to stick with it each night during the school week.
- Guide your child to work at the same place every night. If questions are frequent, perhaps locate him or her near where you are available - at the dining room or kitchen table. Others may prefer the isolation of their own room. In any case, the work area should be away from the distractions of television or younger siblings and it should be consistent.
- Teach younger siblings to respect their brother's or sister's need to be left undisturbed at this time. They will learn from this and it will facilitate their transition into homework when it is their turn.
- Encourage your child to complete the most difficult assignments first. Don't save those math word problems for last! Fatigue will set in and the fuse will be shorter.
- Some children benefit from taking short breaks between assignments.
- Help them with the process but avoid doing the work for them. You want to guide them toward becoming independent learners.
- Try not to offer "screen time" (TV, smart phone, tablet, laptop, game systems, etc.) as a reward for completing homework (or at least attempt to avoid the connection). The lure of screen time only causes the pedal to be pressed harder to the floor! Quality of work is then, often, compromised.
- Most of all, try to be patient, understanding, and encouraging. Your reaction to your children when they are doing their homework, especially when they are having difficulty with that work, has much to do with future attitudes and habits. It need not be a battle. In fact, it can be a pleasant time for sharing and interaction.

Extra Help

Extra Help is available multiple school day from 3:30-4:15 p.m. according to the following schedule:

Mondays and Wednesdays	Math and World Languages
Tuesdays and Thursdays	Humanities and Science
Fridays	By appointment

If, however, a student needs help in a subject area that is not being offered on a given afternoon, he or she may make an appointment with that teacher for help at another time.

Students are welcome to attend these Extra Help sessions whenever they or their parents see the need to do so. Out of courtesy to the teacher and to allow him or her to best prepare for the Extra Help session, please be sure to communicate with the teacher ahead of time, by note or email, that the student will attend Extra Help on a particular day and the student's specific goal for the session. Please note that Extra Help is not a substitute for After Care.

On occasion, based on academic need, teachers may require a student to attend. Out of courtesy to the teacher and students already at work, students may not arrive more than

five minutes late. It is the student's responsibility to inform his/her/their parents that he/she/they will be attending Extra Help and the time at which he/she/they can be picked up.

If students finish their work early, they will remain with the supervising teacher until picked up or moved to After Care. (They will not be released from the Extra Help location early.) Students in Extra Help must be picked up by 4:15pm or by such other time as arranged with the supervising teacher. Please park and pick up your child directly from the Extra Help location. At the conclusion of an Extra Help session, students who have not been picked up will be moved to After Care, for which parents will be billed at the drop-in rate.

Retakes

Retakes are at the discretion of the teacher; however, it is the school's policy that in order for a student to be granted a retake, the student must attend one extra help session with the teacher before the retake occurs.

Final Exams

During the last week of each semester, students in 7th and 8th Grades sit for cumulative exams in any high school level courses in which they are enrolled. To best prepare students for these exams, faculty members conduct exam reviews during the week leading up to exams. Students must sit for their exams on the scheduled dates unless parents obtain prior approval from the Division Director. Please make such requests as early as possible and only in the event of a genuine family emergency.

National Junior Honor Society

The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) Chapter of the Academy at the Lakes is a duly chartered and affiliated chapter of this prestigious national organization. Membership is open to those students who meet the required standards in all five areas of evaluation: Scholarship, Leadership, Service, Citizenship, and Character. Standards for selection are established by the national office of NJHS and have been revised to meet our local Chapter needs.

Students are selected to be members by a five-member Faculty Council, appointed by the Division Director, which bestows this honor upon qualified students on behalf of the faculty of our school each spring. Students are eligible for membership in the second semester of 7th Grade.

Scholarship: a student must first have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or better (on a 4.0 scale) in order to be a candidate for membership in NJHS. Those students who meet this criterion are then invited to complete a Student Activity Information Form that provides the Faculty Council information about the candidate with regard to the other four required areas of evaluation.

Leadership: a candidate must demonstrate leadership skills and experiences in the classroom, in school activities, or in the community.

Service: a candidate must demonstrate a commitment to, and record of, community service at school or in the broader community that is undertaken in a positive, enthusiastic, and voluntary manner.

Citizenship: a candidate must demonstrate active and positive engagement in the life of his/her school or the broader community through activities, organizations, clubs, etc.

Character: a candidate must demonstrate high standards of integrity, respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring in the classroom, in school activities, and in the broader community. (The Faculty Council will consult each candidate's school disciplinary record, if any, in their deliberations.)

The Faculty Council will also solicit Middle Division faculty members for their confidential, professional input regarding each candidate's leadership, service, citizenship, and character. All of this information, including the completed Student Activity Information Forms, is carefully reviewed by the Faculty Council to determine membership. A majority vote of the Council is required for selection. The Chapter Advisor notifies candidates regarding selection or non-selection according to a predetermined schedule.

Following notification, the school will hold a formal induction ceremony to recognize all the newly selected members. Once inducted, new members are required to maintain the same level of performance (or better) in all five criteria that led to their selection. This obligation includes regular attendance at chapter meetings held during the school year and participation in the chapter's service projects. Students or parents who have questions regarding the selection process or membership obligations are welcome to contact the Chapter Advisor.

Resolving Classroom Concerns

When in need of help or when faced with a classroom concern, students should first and promptly communicate directly with their teacher so that they can work together to address that need or concern. Parents are then, of course, welcome to follow-up with the teacher to clarify the need, concern, and/or resolution.

IV. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Purpose:

The mission of Academy at the Lakes is to be a learning community of shared values dedicated to the success of each individual at school, in the community, and in the world. We celebrate the love of learning and the joy in the journey. The Student Support Services Team (SSST) seeks to meet this mission by creating an environment focused on the “success of each individual” with the lens of understanding that success may be different for each student. We celebrate these differences and provide the necessary support to help each individual develop into a lifelong learner to the best of their ability.

Student Support Services Team:

Most students adjust to the school’s expectations responsibly and successfully. However, the school stands ready in several ways to help any student experiencing difficulty. The Administrative Team and the Student Support Services Team are available to work with students and families as needed. At AATL we are committed to the success of each individual and seek to provide appropriate support when needed so that all students will attain this goal. The McCormick Campus Student Support Services Team includes the Director of Student Support, the School Psychologist, the School Counselors, the School Nurse, the School Reading Specialist, and Upper Division Math Support. This Team supports students, parents, and faculty in areas of academic, social, and emotional skills and development.

Supporting Learners:

Academic Support

In addition to after school extra help regularly available to all Middle Division students, Academic Support is available for students who are experiencing a short or long-term challenge meeting the academic demands of AATL. Academic Support may include reading and math intervention, additional instructional time, organizational support, and instruction in effective study skills.

Accommodations

If a student has been identified with a qualifying diagnosis, they may be eligible for specific accommodations. The Student Support Team will work with the family to determine appropriate accommodations that will best serve the student while also meeting the expectations of the AATL academic program. AATL will not make modifications to the academic expectations. In some cases, the Academy may not be the best match for a student and the family will have to make other school arrangements.

Social/Emotional Support:

Advisory

All Middle Division students are assigned to a faculty advisor who meets regularly with their advisory group throughout the school year. One goal of advisory is to build supportive communities and relationships within a small group setting. Advisors also act as advocates for their advisees by assisting them on their Middle Division journey.

Counseling Services

The mission of the Academy at the Lakes counseling department is to empower all students to reach their potential in academic, personal, and social/emotional development. The counseling department aims to help students develop healthy coping skills, make positive lifestyle choices, and develop skills that will enable them to make effective personal, social, and educational decisions. The counselors will consult and collaborate with faculty, staff, and families to help students navigate through their middle school years. Counseling services will also include prevention and/or intervention activities to meet students' needs through individual or group counseling in areas including academic, social and emotional learning (e.g., anger, stress, and time management, decision making, problem solving, and social skills, etc.) The school counselors are available on a drop-in basis, or by referral from student, parent, teacher, or administrator. Confidentiality is an essential part of building trusting relationships with students. The counselors will keep student interactions confidential unless professional judgment warrants otherwise. School counselors may need to break confidentiality when a student threatens to harm themselves or others, the student has been harmed by others, and/or when others report concerns about the student's safety.

Physical Well-Being:

At AATL we are dedicated to the success of each individual and focus on the well-being of the whole child including physical and social/emotional wellness. The School Nurse collaborates with the Division Directors and serves as a member of the Student Support Services Team to monitor the physical well-being of students.

V. THE CODE OF HONOR AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The Code of Honor

It is understood that genuine academic and personal achievements presuppose academic and personal integrity. No matter the pressure felt to achieve, the appearance of academic and personal achievements, without their realities, is a betrayal to the self and others; it is a blow to one's integrity. Major violations of the Code of Honor include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, stealing, bullying, harassment, behavior that is inconsistent with our Statement on Diversity (pg. 9), and being disrespectful to others or their property. The truth must not be misrepresented in order to obtain special privilege or consideration. In that light, students pledge to uphold – and are held accountable to – the following Academy at the Lakes Code of Honor:

As a member of the Academy at the Lakes community, I pledge that I will uphold the highest values of academic and personal honesty and integrity. On my honor, I pledge that the work I submit is my own and that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on my assignments. I will show respect and kindness to my classmates, teachers, colleagues and administration at all times.

Students pledge to uphold the following provisions of the Code of Honor for all homework, assessments, papers, and projects:

- I will neither give help to nor accept help from another student during a test or graded assignment—unless express permission is given by my teacher.
- I will neither accept information in advance of a test or graded assignment from someone who has already taken it, nor will I disseminate information to someone who has not yet taken it.
- I will not use notes or other sources of information during a test or graded assignment unless allowed to do so by the teacher.
- I will not plagiarize or use artificial intelligence (AI) sources to represent my authentic thinking skill. I will cite outside sources properly and not represent them as my own ideas.
- If I receive help from someone else, including parent(s), tutor, another adult, or a peer, in doing any out-of-class, graded assignment, I will make sure the assignment represents my work and my ideas and not those of the person who helped me—*unless the ideas are properly cited in an appropriate format.*
- I will not treat others with contempt or cruelty. I will be civil to other people and take them seriously.
- I will never misrepresent the truth in order to obtain special consideration or privilege.
- I will use technology in an appropriate and legal manner and will not abuse that privilege.

Expectations of Student Behavior

Students have the responsibility to:

1. Participate in the school program to the best of their ability.
2. Respect others. Verbal, electronic, or physical bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation; the infliction of bodily harm; or blatant disrespect are entirely unacceptable behaviors in this community.
3. Conduct themselves both in school and out in a manner that supports safety, integrity, and care for the school, its people, its property and its reputation.

4. Refrain from the use of profane language of all sorts.

Bullying and Harassment

Academy at the Lakes will not tolerate bullying or harassment; conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined below, is prohibited.

Bullying, which includes *cyber bullying*, means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on a student by one or more students with a power imbalance over that student. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

1. Teasing
2. Social Exclusion
3. Threat
4. Intimidation
5. Stalking
6. Physical violence
7. Theft
8. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
9. Public or private humiliation
10. Destruction of property

Cyber bullying means bullying by any electronic communication through the use of any electronic device, including but not limited to email, text message, social media post, or direct message. Cyber bullying includes the creation of a webpage, blog, or social media account in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, image, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student that:

1. Places a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property or reputation;
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits;
3. Causes a student substantial emotional distress and serves no legitimate purpose; or
4. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Cyber harassment: The use of e-mail, direct messages, chat rooms, social networking sites (such as Zoom, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, iMessage, and YouTube) or the cell phone to send inappropriate, offensive or harassing messages or images – from whatever location they are sent – will be considered a serious violation of the school’s Code of Honor and dealt with accordingly.

Any student or parent with a concern about bullying or harassment should immediately bring that concern to the attention of a teacher or administrator. Any student, teacher, or member of the staff who witnesses or otherwise has knowledge of an occurrence of bullying or harassment should immediately report the matter to an administrator. There will be no negative consequences for anyone, student or otherwise, who makes a sincere report of bullying or harassment in good faith. The school will promptly investigate any such reported occurrences of bullying or harassment. Any form of retaliation against a student for making a good faith report – or for assisting the school in its investigation of the report – will be considered a serious breach of the Code of Honor.

Bullying and harassment are considered to be very serious breaches of the Academy’s Honor Code, with potential long-term impactful consequences for the student. Students who engage in such unacceptable behavior will be subject to serious consequences, up to and including separation or dismissal from the school.

Hazing

The Academy prohibits all forms of hazing, whether it occurs on or off campus and regardless of a student’s consent to participate. Hazing is considered a serious violation of the Academy’s Code of Honor. A student violates this policy whenever he or she engages or assists in the planning or committing of any act of hazing, whether on or off campus. Each student is also responsible for immediately reporting any planned or actual hazing activity to a member of the faculty, coaching staff, or administration; failure to do so is also a violation of this policy. Any student found by the administration to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including separation from the school. No adverse action will be taken against any person who makes a good faith report of hazing activity.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following instances: verbal sexual abuse; disseminating sexually explicit or obscene material (in any form) or having such material in one’s possession at school or off-campus at school sponsored activities; obscene or sexually explicit graffiti anywhere in the school or on school property; continuing any unwanted written or oral communication of a sexual nature directed at another; spreading sexual rumors/innuendoes; obscene or sexually explicit gestures; and any physical touch or other inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature that demeans or offends the recipient.

Allegations of sexual harassment are to be brought to a teacher or administrator without delay. The parents of both the offender and the victim will be informed of the allegations. If the allegations are found to have merit, severe disciplinary action will be taken, up to

and including separation from the school.

Technology

To help guide their safe and appropriate use of technology, all students will be required to review and sign the school's [Technology Acceptable Use Agreement](#) before being allowed access to any of the school's technology resources.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Vaping

The use of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other inhaled substances (hereinafter "illicit substances") is a health, safety, and environmental hazard for students, faculty, and staff. The use of such substances by students harms both individuals and their community. It adversely affects the individual's physical, mental, and emotional development. It also violates federal, state, and local laws.

Accordingly, the use or possession of illicit substances – including the full range of vaping and electronic cigarette devices, whatever the vaporized liquid – *or their paraphernalia* are strictly prohibited from campus and from all school-related field trips or events off campus. Student use or possession of any such substances – on or off campus – is considered a major offense warranting a serious disciplinary response, from the required completion of a drug/alcohol prevention program, suspension, and up to possible separation from school. Any student found to have engaged in the selling or distribution of illicit substances may be separated from school. Any student adjudicated or involved with the criminal or juvenile justice system in connection with the possession, use, or distribution of such substances – whether on or off campus – also faces possible separation from school. The Academy at the Lakes community will not tolerate the presence of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other inhaled substances in our community.

Discipline Policies

When it is suspected by a faculty or staff member that a student has violated the Code of Honor, the faculty or staff member is expected to meet with the student privately and then, if necessary, report the violation to the Division Director. The Division Director may remove the student from classes while the alleged violation is investigated. If the investigation finds that the allegation has merit, then the student's parents will be notified promptly and the violation will be dealt with as a major disciplinary offense. The Division Director will follow a course of disciplinary action based upon his or her investigation.

When a student recognizes that he or she has violated the Code of Honor, wittingly or unwittingly, it is expected that the violation will be admitted to a faculty member, advisor, or administrator. In such cases, the voluntary admission may mitigate the penalty and the violation may be treated as a lesser offense. The student's parents will be promptly notified and the school disciplinary procedures for such an offense will be followed.

When a student discovers that *another student* has violated the Code of Honor, it is expected that the student will choose from the following responsible actions: (a) confront the violator and encourage him or her to admit the violation to a member of the faculty or administration; (b) not confront the violator but report the violation to a member of the

faculty or administration – with or without revealing the name of the offending student. If a student does nothing upon discovering a violation, that student has condoned the violation.

In all cases where a violation of the Code of Honor is suspected, care will be taken to avoid an erroneous accusation in recognition of the damaging effect a false accusation can have on a student's reputation.

Interventions and consequences for inappropriate behavior include the following:

1. A student who behaves inappropriately will receive counseling from teachers and/or administrators.
2. Parents are expected to support the school in correcting any disciplinary issues.
3. Students whose behavior is disruptive to the educational process or threatens the well-being of others in the community may be subject to removal from the classroom or activity, in-school or after-school detention, early dismissal from school, in-school or out-of-school suspension, or separation from the school.
4. Parents may be contacted to immediately remove a student from school under certain circumstances.
5. Students assigned out-of-school suspension may not enter the campus or participate in any school-sponsored after-school activities for the duration of the suspension. All assigned work must be completed before the student returns to the classroom.
6. In the case of any suspension, parents may be required to attend a conference with school administrators before a student is allowed to attend classes.
7. Students whose behavior continues to be contrary to the school's mission or Code of Honor may be placed on probation, suspended, or separated from the school.
8. Academic fraud – cheating on an assignment or assessment, plagiarism, etc. – is considered to be a grave breach of the Academy's Code of Honor, with potential long-term serious consequences for the student. Students are expected to perform on all assignments and assessments with honesty and integrity. Sharing information about exams or other assessments with other students is a form of academic fraud and will be handled accordingly. Students who commit academic fraud will earn a grade of zero on that piece of work and may be required to redo the assignment or retake the assessment. Students who commit academic fraud on more than one occasion will be subject to more serious consequences, up to and including failing a course and dismissal from the school.
9. It is our philosophy that the Dress Code should not be punitive. If, however, a student repeatedly violates the Dress Code, consequences will apply. These include Break Detention, Lunch Detention, and Afterschool Detention. Parents may be called and asked to bring appropriate clothing to school. Students may be required to remain in the Division office until appropriate clothing is made available.
10. In the event that a student damages or defaces school property or the property of others in our school community (including textbooks), the student and parents will be held responsible for all costs associated with repairs and/or replacement of

said property. A student may be required to undertake repair work. In response to acts of defacement or vandalism, the Division Director may apply additional disciplinary measures – including detention, suspension, and separation.

11. Bullying and harassment are considered to be very serious breaches of the Academy's Code of Honor, with potential long-term impactful consequences for the student. Students who engage in such unacceptable behavior will be subject to serious consequences, up to and including separation or dismissal from the school.
12. Florida law prohibits weapons or weapon look-a-likes to be brought to or possessed on any school campus. In addition to reporting all such cases to the appropriate law enforcement agency, students who bring such items to school, or possess them on campus, may face immediate suspension and possible separation.
13. A student adjudicated by or otherwise involved with the Adult or Juvenile Justice System may be separated from school. It is incumbent upon the parents and student to make the administration aware of the details of that adjudication or involvement at the time of the action or the enrollment of the student.

Probation

The school will make every effort to provide students with the support needed for a successful school experience. The school may, however, place students who fail to meet the school's expectations on academic and/or behavioral probation. Students placed on probation will be expected to meet certain specified conditions – that are communicated to parents – before being removed from such status. If these conditions are not met, or the underlying problems are not remedied, the student may face further consequences, including but not limited to suspension or separation.

Administrative Authority

The administration is the final authority regarding interpretations of all aspects of the Code of Honor – as well as of all academic and behavioral rules and policies – and the consequences assessed for violating those provisions. The Academy reserves the right to modify and/or amend the contents of this Family Handbook at any time during the school year. Though the school will endeavor to communicate any such changes to families in a timely manner, students and parents should check the Academy's website periodically to ensure that they are aware of the most current version of the school's Code of Honor, policies, and procedures.

VI. WHO TO CONTACT

- For **general school information or events**:
 - First, check the Handbook, the password-protected portal on the website, *FACTS Family Portal*, the Weekly eCalendar, and/or specific e-mail messages.
 - Second, contact the Middle Division Administrative Assistant, Mrs. MacQuarrie:
 - lmacquarrie@aatl.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x300
- If your question deals with a particular **class, teacher, or curriculum**:
 - First, contact that teacher:
 - E-mail address as listed in *FACTS Family Portal*
 - (813) 948-7600 (Please note: during the school day you may have to leave a voicemail message.)
 - Second, contact the Middle Division Director, Mrs. McCormick for any follow-up:
 - cmccormick@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x306
- If your question deals with **PE or athletics**:
 - For athletic schedules, consult the school website.
 - Otherwise, first contact the PE teacher or coach:
 - E-mail address as listed in *FACTS Family Portal*
 - (813) 948-7600 (Please note: during the school day you may have to leave a voicemail message.)
 - Contact information for coaches who are not members of the faculty will be provided at the beginning of each sport's season.
 - Second, contact our Athletic Director, Mr. Haslam, for any follow-up:
 - thaslam@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x331
- If your question deals with **billing or payments**:
 - Contact our Business Office Assistant, Mrs. Benson:
 - pbenson@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x217
 - Or contact our Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Pesch:
 - ppesch@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x314
- If your question deals with **admissions**:
 - Contact our Director of Admissions, Mrs. Gunther
 - sgunther@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 909-7919 or (813) 948-7600 x931
- If your question deals with **financial support of the school**:

- Contact our Director of Development, Dr. Fugate:
 - jfugate@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x310
- If your question deals with **counseling** for your student:
 - Contact one of our School Counselors, Ms. Zwijacz or Ms. Matthews:
 - Ms. Zwijacz: azwijacz@academyatthelakes.org
(813) 948-7600
 - Ms. Matthews: amatthews@academyatthelakes.org
(813) 308-9408 Google Voice (for text or voice messages)
(813) 948-7600 x350
- If your question deals with **educational support or academic accommodations** for your student:
 - Contact Director of Student Support, Judy Kent:
 - jkent@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x400
 - Or contact our School Psychologist, Deeba Arifuddin:
 - darifuddin@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x205
 -
- If your question deals with **college counseling** for your student:
 - Contact our Upper Division Assistant Director and Director of College Counseling, Mrs. Pitcairn:
 - dspitcairn@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x328
- If your question deals with **health or medical matters** for your student:
 - Contact our School Nurse, Ms. O'Neill, RN:
 - nurse@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x377
- If your question deals with **FACTS Family Portal access, or student schedules** for your student:
- **Lower Division:**
 - Lower Division Administrative Assistant, Mrs. Warnock:
 - awarnock@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x201
 - Lower Division Director, Ms. Jewell:
 - rjewell@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x311
- **Middle Division:**
 - Middle Division Registrar and Student Life Coordinator, Mrs. Jeter:
 - sjeter@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600
 - Middle Division Director, Mrs. McCormick

- cmccormick@academyatthelakes.org
- (813)948-7600

- **Upper Division:**
 - Upper Division Administrative Assistant, Ms. Bernardino:
 - mbernardino@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x301
 - Upper Division Director, Ms. Sciortino:
 - jsciortino@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x307

- **Head of School:**
 - Assistant to the Head of School, Mrs. Sooklal:
 - ksooklal@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x316
 - Head of School, Mr. Heller:
 - mheller@academyatthelakes.org
 - (813) 948-7600 x305