



ACORN MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL
CHILDREN FIRST, ALWAYS

Acorn Montessori Charter School Parent/Student Handbook **2023-2024**

Acorn Montessori Charter School Student/Parent Handbook

North Campus Preschool-Pre-K: 8085 E Manley Drive, Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – Phone 928.772.5225

West Campus K – 3rd: 7555 E. Long Look Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 - Phone 928.775.0238; Fax 928.775.2638

Main Campus 4th – 8th: 8556 E. Loos Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 - Phone 928.772.5778; Fax 928.775.8654

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Dear Parents,

This handbook is our way of communicating the general information and expectations of our school. We ask that you take time to read this with your child to enhance their understanding about the school, expectations, procedures, and rules. There may be additional, important information for parents and students not included in this handbook and will be sent home throughout the school year as needed.

Acorn Montessori Schools are governed by the Acorn Montessori Schools Governing Board.

Brief History:

Cynthia Johnson created Acorn Montessori Charter School in 2001. Mrs. Cynthia Johnson's training includes infant, toddler, primary, and elementary. Her foundation began in 1982 at Chapel of the Hills Montessori School in Sunland, California with teacher trainer, Bess Legge. Mrs. Cynthia attended the 6-9 elementary training in 1996 at the National Center of Montessori Education in San Diego, California. Mrs. Cynthia also received training in the "Willie George, Church on the Move" ministry in March of 2000 at The First Assembly of God in Phoenix, Arizona. With over eighteen years of classroom experience and training, it is Mrs. Cynthia's mission to provide quality Montessori infused schooling to the local community. The school depicts professionalism, sensitivity, and attentiveness toward students, parents, and colleagues.

Acorn Montessori Charter School is a Montessori/Traditional blend school that focuses on the strength of each child and meets them where they are academically. Each classroom meets AZ state standards using rigorous curriculum and materials infused with Montessori ideology including hands on manipulatives, small group instruction, lower teacher to student ratio, differentiated instruction, integrated lessons, and project-based learning. Our warm and loving family environment provides each child with the love and joy of learning and allows and encourages each child to realize their fullest potential in all areas of life. Through Montessori principles and standards based curriculum, students will develop their independence as well as their academic, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills.

General Information:

Mission Statement: Acorn Montessori understands and serves the needs of the "whole child." Acorn's approach of linking outstanding educational methods with models for a cooperative respectful way of life is an important element of education. Each classroom represents a structured miniature learning society where the values of harmony, respect, independence, learning and unity are given the opportunity to blossom and grow. The Montessori Method fosters a deep appreciation for knowledge, learning and humanity.

School District Policies:

Acorn Montessori Schools are governed by the policies adopted by the Acorn Montessori Governing Board. Parents and students should be familiar with all Acorn policies pertaining to students and student conduct.

Non-Discrimination:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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Enrollment:

- **Registration:** Students must have a completed enrollment packet, completed emergency cards, current immunization records, birth certificate, and proof of residency in order to be enrolled in kindergarten through 8th grade. *Parents must notify Acorn Montessori School of any changes in their home address, work address, or telephone numbers.
- **Pick up Procedure:**
 - Anyone who is picking up a child other than the child's parents/legal guardians must be designated on the Child's AZ Emergency Information/Immunization Card and must provide photo identification.
 - If a parent/legal guardian wants someone else to pick up their child for a specific day and time, the parent/legal guardian must add the person to their child's emergency sheet.
 - Students will not be released to anyone appearing to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Records & Confidentiality:

- All students' records are kept confidential.
- Children's records are available to parents/legal guardians upon request.
- The staff will have access to the children's records.
- Records are available to agencies assisting the child when informed written consent has been given.
- All records required by the State Department of Health and Family Services are available to the licensing representatives.

Custody Arrangements:

If parents have shared custody, no contact orders, parenting time, etc., a copy of the most current, certified court order must be given to the office to keep in your child's file. Staff will follow the written directions from the court. Acorn Montessori staff will not be involved in any custody disputes and are unable to provide documentation representing the school without a court order. If there is not a court order on file, staff will allow the student to be released to parents/adults on file.

Attendance: Attendance/Absences:

The education of each student is the joint responsibility of the home and school. Only through regular attendance can students be assured of receiving all the benefits of the education system. Class lessons, activities, presentations, and school assembly programs are considered integral parts of the education process. It is impossible to gain the full benefit of any class experience through makeup work. Therefore, we encourage, expect, and require students' regular attendance. Arizona State Law requires students between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend school. Students are expected to be in school except in cases of emergency, illness, or religious observance.

Reporting an Absence:

It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to inform the school of an absence. Please call the attendance secretary (928-458-7955) before 8:00a.m. to report your child's absence. If your child is absent and we have not received notification, our attendance secretary is required to call the child's home and check on the student's whereabouts. Parents must state the reason for the absence. Reasons must be specific: for example, stomachache, respiratory infections, flu, etc. Non-illness reasons must also be specified: for example, vacation, personal, no transportation, etc... Specific reasons are needed as all absences are coded for computer input and reported to state agencies. A written note stating the reason for the child's absence is expected upon the child's return to school from a medical provider when illness is the reason for absence. Students will be marked with an unexcused absence if we do not receive a phone call, are unable to reach the family by telephone, do not receive written notification, or when absence is related to a discipline matter.

Students who are absent because of an illness caused by a communicable disease must report to the office before being readmitted to class. Acorn Montessori Charter School will notify affected students of any communicable diseases.



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If a situation arises that may result in an extended absence, please inform the school office. Parents will be notified of continued and excessive absenteeism of their student. The principal may require a parent conference to discuss and remedy the problems, or may report excessive attendance violations to local law enforcement agencies. According to Arizona State Law, a child must be removed from student rolls after 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences. Please see the attendance information letter attached.

Late Arrivals:

Children arriving late for school must check in at the office with a parent/guardian, or have a note excusing the late arrival time. Students will obtain a tardy slip from the office before being admitted to class. Three unexcused tardies in a 20-day period may result in community service detail or referral if it is determined that the student is being negligent getting to school/class on time. Punctuality in coming to school in the morning and getting back into the classroom after recess is an important part of the educational process for several reasons. Coming late to school is often confusing or embarrassing to children and sets an undesirable tone for the day. Tardiness wastes valuable instructional time and is disruptive to other students, the teachers, and the office staff. In addition, the safety of children who are unaccounted for is a major concern.

Early Dismissal:

Parents/Guardians wishing to pick up their child early from school are required to check in at the office first to sign their child out. Teachers and staff members are not allowed to release students to parents without office notification. To protect and guarantee the safety of students, no child will be allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours with anyone except the person who has legal custody of the child, or a person authorized in writing by the parent of legal guardian. If an adult other than a parent or guardian is picking up a child, a note must accompany that adult giving them permission by the parent. Identification will be required from office staff. No child will be allowed to walk home prior to dismissal time unless accompanied by parent or guardian.

Withdrawal from School:

We ask parents to notify the school office at least two days prior to the student's last day of attendance. All school materials loaned to the students are to be returned at that time. Parents are expected to pay for items that are lost or damaged before the student's last day attended. Records will be forwarded to the new school within ten days of records request.

School Hours:

Students may arrive on school property after 7:30 a.m. At that time, students are to go to their classroom for breakfast, if needed and then complete tasks as assigned by their teachers. Students have until 8:00 a.m. to eat breakfast for students 2nd-8th grade, and until 8:15 for students in K-1. All students are to be in class by the official school starting time, 8:00 a.m. for 2-8th grades, and 8:15 for K-1.

School is dismissed promptly at 2:30 for kindergarten, 2:45 for 1st grade, and 3:00 p.m. for 2nd-8th grade. Students are expected to leave the campus immediately by school van or parent arranged transportation, unless they are attending an organized school function that parents have given permission to participate in. Parents are to make alternative arrangements for younger siblings who are not eligible for participation.

Early Release Days:

Each Friday throughout the school year is an early release day. Early release days are imperative for staff professional development, staff meetings, parent conferences, and other school related events. On early release Fridays, students in K-3 are released at 1:15 p.m. while students in 4-8 are released at 1:30. Please see the attached calendar for other early release dismissal days.



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School Closures:

Acorn Montessori Charter School operates on a 180 day school day schedule. A school calendar of closures, early releases, and holidays is attached. A revised schedule will be sent home in the instance changes need to be made.

- **Snow Delays** – Acorn Montessori Charter School follows the Humboldt Unified School District schedule for snow delays and snow closures. In the event that a snow delay is called, school will open two hours later (10:00). An all call will go out to the main contact number on file in the office. An update and decision will also be posted on Acorn's social media accounts.
- **Snow Closures** - Acorn Montessori Charter School follows the Humboldt Unified School District schedule for snow closures. In the event of a snow day, school will be closed and no services or programs will be provided. An all call will go out to the main contact number on file in the office. Updates will also be posted on Acorn's social media accounts.

Look for an additional letter to be sent home to parents in the fall with additional details regarding emergency school closings and delays.

Phone Use:

Students are not permitted to receive or make personal phone calls from school, except in the case of an emergency. If there should be a family emergency, we will get a message to your child and have them call you as soon as possible. Only in an extreme circumstance will we ask the student to take a call during classroom time. All plans for transportation should be made prior to the start of school to avoid confusion for the child and to reduce office disruptions.

Student Conduct:

- **Positive Reinforcement & Consequences:**
 - The ultimate goal of all classrooms is to revolve around positive feedback and redirection, rather than negative behavior and consequences. We strive to teach students how to control their own behavior and make decisions that reflect their very best selves through accountability.
 - Through room arrangement, classroom space, consistency in scheduling, relationship building, and the teaching of recognizing feelings and self-regulation, students will feel safe to communicate and express their frustrations and how to work through them.
 - As students struggle with self-regulation, they may require additional support such as one on one time with the teacher, removal of a specific activity, moving seats, going for a walk, and solution-based activities.
- Children will not be subjected to the following techniques:
 - Excessive time outs
 - Missing recess as punishment
 - Verbal abuse or negative comments
 - Spanking or hitting
 - Confining
 - Withholding food
 - Forcing food or naps
- **Behavior & Suspension/Expulsion Policy**
 - Acorn Montessori Charter School supports the research that high-quality schools are imperative in preventing suspensions and expulsions in the classroom setting. We are responsible for creating positive learning environments that focus on prevention, encouraging partnerships to support healthy development, and ensuring fairness, equity, and continuous improvement to support children's social, emotional, and behavioral health. At Acorn Montessori Charter School, we focus on fostering social-emotional development and responding to challenging behaviors by incorporating

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positive discipline practices and policies before considering expulsion or suspension from our program.

- Acorn is committed to teaching principals of good citizenship and helping students acquire socially acceptable behavior. The school will provide safe, effective learning environment to meet the needs of its students. Parent involvement and student cooperation are vital.
- Acorn is dedicated to establishing reasonable consequences that will help students identify inappropriate behaviors and work toward more positive person actions. When corrective actions fail and the behavior of a student interferes with the rights of others, parents are contacted, and other disciplinary actions are taken. All faculty and staff enforce the discipline with compassion, fairness, and consideration to grade level of the child.
- Students who willfully inflict harm on another child, destroy property, refuse to follow reasonable requests or bring items to school that threaten the safety and well-being of the school will receive a formal discipline referral and be assigned appropriate consequences. Referrals must be signed and returned the following day; otherwise, an after-school detention may be issued by the principal.
- Acorn Montessori Charter School works cooperatively with all law enforcement agencies to ensure the safe, effective operation of our school.
- Our school discipline program places the responsibility for appropriate behavior by the student on the student. Each class establishes a few reasonable rules that all students are expected to follow at all times. Students receive appropriate consequences for rule infractions. Our special student recognition programs promote and reinforce responsible choices. Teachers and staff rely on parents/guardians to support classroom and school wide rules. The faculty and staff want to work cooperatively with every family to quickly and fairly address any behavior problem that may arise in order to decrease the chances of it occurring again.
- Please see the attached, additional information on our bullying and harassment policies.

Community Service:

Parents will be notified in advance if their child has been assigned to community service for misconduct. The notice will indicate time, date, and the reason the child will serve. Parents are required to sign the detention slip and send it back to school the following day. Failure to return the discipline/detention form will result in more severe consequences. When a child is assigned community service, parents are responsible for providing transportation from the school at 3:30 p.m.

Search and Seizure

Students possess the right of privacy of person, as well as freedom from unreasonable search and seizure of property. This individual right, however, is balanced by the school's responsibility to protect health, safety, and welfare of all students. School administration may conduct or authorize searches when they have reason to suspect students may be in danger. General searches may be conducted at any time when there is reasonable cause for school employees to suspect dangerous or illegal items may be on school property. The search may be conducted without the student being present. Illegal items (firearms, explosive devices, weapons, drugs) or other possessions reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety of others shall be seized by school employees and a report made to proper authorities.

Criminal Offences

In the event a student has in their possession a deadly weapon, illegal substance, or violates local, state or federal law, the school will contact appropriate law enforcement authorities.

General Conduct:

Rules for common areas such as playground and public areas are consistent with classroom expectations. The basic rules reinforce our schoolwide rules of "Be safe, be respectful, and be responsible."

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Due Process

In all cases of discipline, suspension, expulsion or legal action, the student has the right to know why the action is being taken, the right to be heard, and the right to a fair hearing. A copy of the student suspension/expulsion/due process rights policy is available in the attachment.

Dress Code:

Student dress shall be appropriate at all times. Students are encouraged to wear clothing that is appropriate for the day's weather and activity. Closed-toed shoes worn with socks are best for our school environment. Please note that your child is to dress appropriately for physical education classes as scheduled. Any student's dress or personal appearance that detracts from or interferes with the learning process or environment will be considered inappropriate. Please see the attached dress code policy.

Toys and Valuables at School:

To maintain the educational focus each day, we request that students not bring ipods, phones, ear buds, video games, or any electronic equipment to school. Cell phones are not permitted to be used on campus. Each classroom has a plan in place for the collection of cell phones at the start of the day and return at the conclusion of the school day. In addition, other toys and/or trading cards should be kept at home. These items are expensive and have created unnecessary disruptions to the educational environment. The school will not be responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items brought to school by the student.

Food and Nutrition:

For the 2022-2023 school year all breakfasts are free, and lunches are charged at a daily rate, unless students qualify for free or reduced lunch fees. All students must have a lunch application completed and on file.

Breakfast/Lunch Information

Lunch	\$3.35; Reduced - \$0.40
Breakfast	Free

Students will be issued lunch cards. The kitchen staff automatically subtracts the number of lunches a student uses and reports lunches provided.

Your child has the option of bringing a lunch. We suggest that all sack lunches include high protein, and low sugar treats so that our students may perform to the best of their ability all day long. We have a "no soda" policy. Soda will be confiscated by classroom staff and returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Lunch and Recess Procedure:

1. Classroom teachers escort students to the restroom for hand washing.
2. Classroom teachers will supervise students while in line waiting to receive their lunch.
3. Students must wait quietly and courteously, and follow the direction of the staff members on duty.
4. Once seated, students are to remain in their seat. Students will raise their hands when they have a question, need or problem.
5. Students will be expected to use appropriate table manners and inside voices while eating.
6. Students will clean the area around their table and seats before being allowed to leave the classroom for recess.
7. Students may not take food or drink out of the classroom.
8. Students will be escorted to the playground by a staff member.
9. Students will be expected to follow appropriate general conduct guidelines while on the playground.



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Student Breakfast Schedule:

Breakfast will be served from:
7:30 to 8:00/8:15a.m. daily

Student Lunch Schedule

We rotate grades. Your student will be notified of their scheduled lunch period.

Health Records:

The school Office Manager establishes and maintains a health record for each student. The health record contains immunization status, screening results, health history, and other information.

Emergency Information:

It is vital importance to keep student information current. Annual updated emergency medical information forms (EM) are to be completed for each child in the family. The update will ensure the school's ability to facilitate medical interventions should your child ever need care. You are also asked to provide school personnel with current information so that you can be reached in the event of an illness or injury.

The following information must be provided on the emergency form, and should be updated as changes occur:

- Current home address and telephone numbers (including cell phone numbers).
- Place of employment and phone number of both parents/guardians.
- Name, address and phone number of person(s) responsible for the child in the event parents cannot be located immediately if an emergency occurs.

Medical conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, cardiac disease, asthma, and allergies are some of the diseases that should be noted on health records and discussed with the school office.

Administering Medication at School:

If it is necessary for a student to take over the counter or prescription medication during school hours, the office may administer the medication when the following requirements are met:

Prescription Medications:

- The law (A.R.S. 15-344) requires medication to be delivered to the office by a responsible adult and not the student. Medication must be in the original container prepared by the pharmacist.
- The prescription label must bear the student's name, current date, and name of medication, dosage, and time to be given.
- It is recommended that no more than a 30-day supply is maintained at school.
- A form will need to be completed by the parent giving permission for school personnel to administer the medicine to your child.
- Medication brought in by a student will be confiscated until appropriate releases are completed. To aid in the effective administration of your child's medicine, please ask your pharmacist for a separate prescription bottle for school.
- Inhalers should come with container that has the pharmacy label.

Other Medication Information:

On occasion, an over the counter medication/first aid treatment may be needed. The office/classroom staff will check the students' emergency form before administering any to your child.

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Non-Prescription / Over the Counter Drugs:

- The law (A.R.S. 15-344) requires medication to be provided and delivered to the office by a responsible adult and not the student.
- Medication must be in the original container as packaged by the manufacturer and labeled with the student's name.
- A form will need to be completed by the parent giving permission for school personnel to administer the medicine to your child.
- A physician/dentist will need to provide the parent with a written order for the medication or fax the physician's order (just like the information on a prescription) to the school office.
- Dosage must be in keeping with the manufacturer's recommendation, printed on the label. Inhalers may be kept in student's backpack, desk or given to classroom teacher.
- Must be in original container as packaged by the manufacturer and labeled with the student's name.

Immunizations:

- To help protect your child, State Law (A.R.S. 15-872) requires immunizations against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, polio, Hepatitis B, and Varicella to enroll in school.
- All children enrolling need to provide documentation of immunizations received.
- Upon enrollment, the school administrator shall suspend any pupil with undocumented proof of immunizations. (A.R.S. 15-873) An exemption will be granted for medical or personal beliefs.
- The law does not allow parents or guardians to claim exemption simply because a record is lost or incomplete.
- In the event of a disease outbreak, your child will be excluded from attending school.
- Should you have questions regarding immunizations, please contact your doctor, health department, or our school.
- Any updated immunizations your child receives during the school year, or over the summer should be communicated to the school so your child's records can be updated.

Health Policy: (see additional attachment)

Our health policy has been developed with the primary concern focused on the wellbeing of your child, the students and staff in the classrooms, and within the strict requirements of the State of Arizona Department of Health Services. Acorn Montessori realizes a sick child can place a hardship on work schedules. However, parents should have a plan prepared in case of a sick child.

- Over the Counter and/or Prescription medication should not be given to students prior to drop off whose sole purpose is to lower fevers or reduce symptoms of illness.
- Parents are expected to pick up their child immediately upon notification when their child is, or may be, contagious or too ill to be at school. State law requires your child be picked up within one hour of notification.
- Should your child exhibit any of the following symptoms, we ask that they remain home from school for 24 to 72 hours symptom free depending on illness: congested wheeze, excessive nasal congestion or green mucous, rash, conjunctivitis (pink eye - your child cannot return to school until symptoms have subsided or antibiotic drops have been given for at least 24 hours), vomiting, diarrhea, or fever (24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal) and symptoms are gone, chicken pox (your child cannot return to school until the pox sores have completely scabbed over).
- We ask that parents notify us immediately upon learning their child is contagious.
- Allergies and special health needs are noted in enrollment packets and are posted for staff to reference as needed.
- More detailed information on the Health Policy can be found attached at the end of this document.



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Health Screening:

Vision/Hearing screenings will be done on all students in kindergarten, 1st and 4th grades. Screenings will be done on all new students, students repeating a grade, or students in special services. Testing will also be done on any student at parent or teacher request.

Emergency First Aid or Illness:

The teacher or a member of the office staff may administer emergency first aid. If a student is seriously injured and needs medical attention, 911 may be called. The parent will be contacted and advised. When the parent cannot be located, the school will exercise its legal option to act in the place of the parent and secure emergency treatment.

Lost and Found:

Lost and found items are kept in the closet storage area. It is helpful if parents label their child's belongings. Please check for lost items on a regular basis. Clothes not claimed are periodically donated to local charities.

Student Records and Performance:

Student records are maintained according to law and Acorn policy. Student records are the property of the school district. Parents or legal guardians are allowed to examine the records if a school official is present, but they may not be removed from the school without permission of the principal. Copies of the records may be given to authorized persons. With written permission from the parent or guardian, these records may be transferred to another school or agency. Records that will be transferred to other school/agencies will include but not limited to: Birth Certificates, immunization records, and behavior reports, progress reports/report cards, attendance reports, IEP/504 plans and custody/court papers (If applicable).

Curriculum and Instruction:

The Arizona Department of Education has determined the education standards taught at Acorn Montessori Schools. The Acorn Montessori School District has adopted content curriculum goals and objectives at each grade level, which are aligned to the Arizona State Standards.

Regular instruction is given to all students of grades K through 8th in English Language Arts, Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Health/P.E., Fine Arts, and Computer. Various assessments are administered throughout the year to monitor students' progress. Students in 3rd through 8th grade are required to take state standardized tests in April.

Homework Guidelines:

Homework at Acorn Montessori Schools will be utilized for such purposes as:

- completing regular classroom assignments.
- reinforcing the learning of basic skills.
- making up work missed during absences.

The purpose of homework is to reinforce learning. You are your child's first and most important teacher. Your interest in their daily school lessons and activities is vital. Here are some tips for ensuring success in meeting homework expectations.

Make Up Work:

Students will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up schoolwork missed. Check with your child's classroom teacher. If a child is absent for two or more days, please arrange to pick up the child's assignments after school by calling the school office in the morning of the day it is to be picked up. When absences for extended periods of time can be foreseen, parents should notify the school office at least 24 hours in advance so that the teacher will be able to gather materials and assignments that will be needed. Students assigned out-of-school suspension will be required to make up all class assignments.

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Progress Reports/Report Cards:

The school year consists of four 9-week reporting periods. Students will receive mid-term progress reports throughout the year. Report cards are distributed at the end of each reporting period. Parents are urged to contact the teacher regarding their child's progress regularly. Parents are also encouraged to check their family link account regularly to see their child's grades and/or missing assignments.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

Scheduled conference dates are:

October- check calendar

March- check calendar

Grading System:

Kindergarten students are graded using these criteria:

- M- Mastered
- W- Working On
- N- Not Introduced
- I- Improvement Needed

(Grades 1-8) students are graded using these criteria:

- A- Superior Achievement
90%-100%
- B- Above Average Achievement
80%-89%
- C- Satisfactory Achievement
70%-79%
- D- Minimum Achievement
60%-69%
- F- Objectives not achieved
Below 59%

Should you feel additional conferences are needed, we ask that parents contact teachers after school to schedule an appointment or to talk about specific questions or concerns. We appreciate your consideration of teacher and student class time.

Textbooks and Supplies:

Students are provided basic textbook materials without charge. Students are responsible for misuse or abuse of instructional materials provided to them and will be charged a replacement fee for materials or books that have been destroyed or unduly damaged or lost. An initial supply of paper, pencils, crayons, glue, etc. is provided to students. Parents are asked to supply additional items as needed and are encouraged to assist with special requests from the classroom teacher.

Academic Testing:

Each year, our students are required to take specific achievement tests in order to mark your child's learning progress. Early in the school year, our students take an informal reading, spelling and math tests in their classrooms to determine their current performance levels. Your child is expected to show growth in mastery of these basic skills.

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In April, our students take a state mandated tests (AzM2 and AIMS). These tests are taken by students from across the nation. Our students' scores are sometimes compared with other students in our State and Nation. The students' scores are one indicator of the level of our performance as a public-school institution.

Wellness Policy:

Acorn Montessori Charter School has a Wellness Committee that meets and prepares an action plan for promoting the development and maintenance of healthy lifestyles for all children in Acorn schools. These documents provide recommendations and direction for improving the nutrition and fitness of the student population. Breakfast and lunch menu changes will be part of a broad effort to improve student nutrition and health. A second component will address the type and quantity of foods consumed during the school day and at school sponsored events.

Classroom parties/school events during the School Day:

- Birthdays can be celebrated with a special snack from home. Please give notice to the classroom teacher one day in advance to allow planning time.
- Foods prohibited at classroom parties and other school events during the school day include candy, soda, and store-bought items that have sugar listed as the first ingredient.

School events outside of the School Day:

For the school year, there are no prohibited food items for outside- of-school fund-raising activities. Whenever possible, groups are encouraged to avoid the sale of candy, soda, and store-bought items that have sugar listed as the first ingredient.

Fund-Raisers during the School Day:

All food and drink items sold at school stores during the school day must comply with the Arizona State Nutrition Standards. No food or drink items may be sold during breakfast or lunch time.

Fund-raisers after School Hours:

For the school year, there are no prohibited food items for outside-of-school fund-raising activities. Whenever possible, groups are encouraged to avoid the sale of candy, soda, and store-bought items that have sugar listed as the first ingredient.

Library:

Classes are welcome to visit the library on a weekly basis.

Lost or Damaged Library/Media Materials:

Acorn policy states that students are responsible for books or media resources that have been lost or damaged. If these items are not paid for, students will lose the privilege of use of materials from the library/media center.

Book Care:

Keep books in a safe place where animals can't chew them, and younger siblings cannot get them. Keep books away from food and water. Do not write in books or tear the pages. Use a bookmark- don't bend pages. If you check out a book, you are responsible for it. Do not lend it to anyone for any reason.

Special Education Services:

Parents of a child who receives or may need special education services are entitled to certain rights under Federal and State Law. Acorn Montessori Schools have specific responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to identify, evaluate and provide a free, appropriate public education for qualified children with disabilities. Some of these rights include:

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- Any eligible child ages 3 and up shall receive a free, appropriate public education at no expense to the parents.
- The right to educational services based on an evaluation of the child's special needs and whether the disability affects the child's educational performance in school.
- The right to receive specialized instruction or services specifically designed to meet the child's individual educational needs.
- The right of parent or guardians to be included in making decisions about their child's educational needs and to approve the educational plans for their child.
- Programs available for children with special needs at Acorn include: Mentally Handicapped, Physically Handicapped, Multiple Handicapped, Learning Disabilities/Resource, Hearing Handicapped, Visually Handicapped, Speech and Language Handicapped, Preschool/Head Start, Gifted/Talented, Chapter 1 Services, ESL (English as a Second Language), Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy. Please contact the Special Services office at 772-5778 for more information.

Visitors:

We welcome adult visitors to our school. Parents, especially, are encouraged to visit the school and take an active role in the education of their child(ren.) Arrangements to visit a classroom may be made by contacting the teacher to set up a convenient time in advance. To ensure the safety of students, all visitors must sign in at the office and pick up a visitor's badge. Please sign out upon leaving the campus.

Volunteers:

School volunteers provide a tremendous service to our school community, and we encourage volunteer participation in our schools. The varied talents and expertise of community members greatly enhances the education process. Areas where volunteers may be of help include:

- Tutor and assist students
- Provide clerical assistance
- Present Special Programs
- Serve as Art Docents
- Chaperone Field Trips-must obtain a volunteer fingerprint card
- Help as Home Room Parents
- Plan Extracurricular Activities
- Work with Bilingual or Special Needs Students

If you are interested in volunteering, contact the school office at 772-5778. Each year, our volunteers are required to update personal information for emergency purposes. Volunteers are required to submit to a background check.

After-School Activities

Intramural sports are an integral part of our school program. Parents must give written consent and provide evidence of insurance in order for students to participate.

Students who are receiving a failing grade in any subject will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activity, including sports. Students must maintain a "C" average to participate, with no grade of a "D" or "F" in any core subject or no grade of an "F" in any non-core subject. Students will be placed on academic probation for a minimum of 1 week before returning to practice or games after being suspended due to substandard grades.

Students are not permitted to stay after school for any sports or extracurricular activity unless they are participating in the sport. This includes practice times, as well as actual games and/or meets.

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Acorn's Charge for Tax-Credit Money!

This state program is a wonderful way to support your child's school. The monies used are directly towards programs that are above and beyond our everyday curriculum. Currently, we support our tutoring, athletics, after school clubs, extensive field trips, and assembly opportunities via the funds generously donated. The great part about the state's program is that it provides for both the sponsor and school a win-win situation. The money that is pledged to a school is entirely tax deductible. When filing your state taxes, this donation is counted as a credit rather than the normal deduction. Your entire amount will come back to you dollar for dollar on your tax return. If you find that you owe the state money, your amount donated will be applied to your state debt dollar for dollar. In essence, the state is allowing for communities to raise money for schools and offering full reimbursement via tax refund. Think about it like a rebate in a store. You put the money up front to sponsor a program, do your taxes and the money is 100% returned. You have then supported the school through providing additional revenue for extra-curricular events and enrich the lives of hundreds of kids at no cost to you! You can't go wrong! So, support your schools! Come by the finance office to drop off your donation, get your receipt, and know that you went above and beyond in supporting your local school. We appreciate the opportunity to provide a quality education to the valued families in our service area!

Directory Notification:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) law requires that Acorn Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Acorn may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the schools of the contrary in accordance with Acorn procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Acorn to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications.

Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor Roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories- names, addresses, and telephone listings- unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

Acorn Student School Supply List:

Student supply lists are available in their classroom and also are included in our Summer Mailing each year. Each class/grade provides their own individualized list.



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Anti-Harassment Policy:

Acorn Montessori Charter School is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment. Members of the school community are expected to treat each other with respect. Teachers and other staff members are expected to teach and to demonstrate by example that all members of the community are entitled to respect.

Harassment of a student by another student or by a teacher or other staff member is a violation of school policy. This includes (but is not limited to) harassment based on race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or disability. Punishable harassment is conduct, including verbal conduct, (1) that creates (or will certainly create) a hostile environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being; or (2) that is threatening or seriously intimidating.

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment that also violates school policy. Punishable sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance or sexual conduct, including verbal conduct, (1) that is tied to a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or to a student's physical or psychological well-being; (2) that creates (or will certainly create) a hostile environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being; or (3) that is threatening or seriously intimidating.

To prevent harassment in the first instance, staff members should teach: why harassment is wrong and teach that tolerance and respect are essential to a free society. In response to an act of harassment, staff members should intervene immediately to stop the harassment and, if appropriate, should punish the harassment promptly, consistently, and proportionately to the seriousness of the act. But the response should not end there; rather, staff members should deter future harassment with continuing lessons to tolerance and respect.

Note: Schools should develop and publicize rules that explain how harassment can be reported and how reports of harassment will be handled. In some cases, schools are required to do so by federal law. These rules should require staff to report harassment to a designated; and, to the extent possible, should protect the confidentiality of anyone who is involved in a report of harassment. See attached.

Discrimination Policy:

Acorn Montessori Charter School is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff. It is District policy that no one shall be treated differently, separately, or has any action directly affecting his or her taken on the basis of race, religious, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability where a person is otherwise qualified or could be with reasonable accommodation.

The immediate remedy for any act of discrimination shall be to end it, treat the individual equally, and, as much as practically possible, to eradicate any effects of discrimination. Discipline should be imposed where appropriate.



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Policies and Procedures Handbook

Signature Page

Parent Name: _____

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

I have received, read, and understand and agree to abide by the policies and procedures as outlined in Acorn Montessori Schools Policies and Procedures Handbook.

I also understand that if I do not understand any of the policies and procedures outlined in the Policies and Procedures Handbook that it is my responsibility to seek clarification.

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

(if able to sign)

Date: _____



ACORN MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

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Attendance Policy

Arizona Law states that it is unlawful for a child "to fail to attend school during the hours school is in session, unless excused." Excused absences under State Law are:

1. Illness or injury
2. Medical/dental/optometric/counseling or chiropractic appointments
3. Attendance at the funeral of an immediate family member
4. Quarantine imposed by a city or county health official
5. Student service on a jury
6. To obtain required immunizations
7. Appearance in court
8. Observance of a religious holiday or celebration
9. Employment interview or conference
10. Other such reasons as a principal may consider justifiable when requested in advance.

Vacations, birthdays, and lack of transportation are not excused absences under State Law. This also pertains to habitual tardiness. A student is allowed only 3 unexcused absences and 5 tardies during a semester. After the third unexcused absence a 'STOP' letter will be issued to you: However, after the third unexcused absence a 'STOP' letter is issued to parents and copies sent to the Town Attorney, Yavapai Superior Court, and Juvenile Probation. Also, a Parent-Principal conference may be scheduled to address the issue. On the very next incident (fourth unexcused absence or the sixth tardy), the Juvenile Probation Department will issue a citation to the parents in the amount of \$100 and contact DCS to inform them of the attendance problem. Each absence or tardy thereafter will result in another \$100 citation. You must call the Attendance Line (928-458-7955) to inform us of any absences. Voice mail for that line is on 24 hours a day for you to leave messages. When you have received a voice mail from our Attendance Secretary regarding your child's absences, you have three days to call and excuse it. After three days, it is permanently recorded as unexcused.

Regarding tardies, if you call ahead to let us know your child will be late, that tardy will be excused. We all have unforeseen circumstances that arise which leave us limited time to respond to both tardies and absences. Our mission is to reduce the habitual tardies and absences. With your help, together we can provide support to reinforce the importance of education and the magnitude it plays in the future choices of our children's lives.

Early Pick-up: We strongly recommend that appointments be made after school releases. We understand that from time to time students will need to be picked up early. Advance notice must be given. Students will not be released within 15 minutes of their dismissal time without prior notice.

The information in this letter is important to assuring your child's academic success. Although the tone may be forceful and consequential, we, as a community, have the responsibility to provide a high-quality education to every child. This cannot happen if students are either missing or tardy when it comes to their attendance in the classroom. We are all accountable and, therefore, must be on the same page when it comes to attendance. If you have any questions or would simply like to discuss the procedures, please feel free to contact the school at 928-772-5778 or 928-775-0238.

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HEALTH AND ILLNESS POLICY

Acorn staff maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and sanitation. Teachers clean and sanitize materials, eating surfaces, and toileting areas regularly and according to licensing standards. Teachers and children follow proper and frequent hand washing procedures.

Please arrange for a back-up person to care for your child when your child is sick. Staff will conduct a daily health check upon arrival and will not admit a child if symptoms of illness are present.

We ask that families not give fever reducing or pain medication to their child in the morning before bringing them. Generally, the medicine wears off and the child becomes uncomfortable during the day. This also may put other children and staff at risk for getting sick.

Please do not bring your child if he or she has any of the following symptoms. When symptoms appear while your child is in our program, parents must pick up their child within one hour of notification. We may temporarily separate your child from other children to avoid the spread of a contagious illness.

Rash: We will exclude your child with any unexplained rash, especially if there are open sores. A child may return when symptom free or there is a physician's statement that the condition is not contagious.

Eye discharge (or pink eye): Your child may return 24 hours after first antibacterial treatment has begun.

Head lice, scabies or other infestations: Your child may return 24 hours after treatment has begun. A physician's statement may be required to return. In case of head lice, your child must be nitfree before returning.

Strep throat: Your child may return 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.

Chicken pox: Your child may return after being fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication and all sores have dried up and healed over.

Impetigo: Your child may return 24 hours after treatment has begun.

Hand, foot and mouth: Your child may return after being fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication and all sores have dried up and healed over.

COVID-19 Symptoms based on CDC Guidelines:

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19.

- Fever (100.4 or higher) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea (loose or runny stool)



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PROCEDURES FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR A POSITIVE TEST

Parents must notify the front office if a child tests positive for COVID-19. Administration will notify the Yavapai County Health Department if there is a positive test, and a notification will go out to all families. If a person becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms or reports a positive COVID-19 test, these procedures will be followed:

1. Children with a positive test or direct exposure to a person in the home with a positive COVID test will not be allowed to attend school until it has been at least 5 days since symptoms appeared, at least 24 hours without fever or fever-reducing medication, and other symptoms have improved.
2. If a child develops COVID-19 symptoms at school, the child will also be placed in the isolation area and be given a mask to wear until picked up.
3. Students with symptoms (2 or more) of COVID-19 must remain out of school 72 hours, or 24 hours with a negative COVID test and symptoms improved.
4. Teachers will then close off any areas that were used by the symptomatic child for a period of time to clean and disinfect. If feasible, windows and/or outside doors will be open to increase air circulation.
5. Administrative staff will send out notifications of direct exposure. Notification will recommend that exposed individuals monitor their health closely, contact their health care provider, pursue COVID testing, and self-quarantine if any symptoms develop.
6. If a positive case of COVID-19 is reported in a student or staff member at Acorn Montessori School, we will follow the County Health and CDC guidelines for notification as well as disinfecting and cleaning following a positive result.

Because each scenario is different, when COVID-19 related symptoms present, each case will be considered individually. Acorn administration makes the final decision whether or not to exclude a child. We exercise the right to exclude a child despite a physician's statement, if that statement contradicts school policies. Acorn will post any communicable diseases and each classroom affected on the door to the classroom and kept in a binder in the front office.



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School Student Dress Code

A quality education can only be provided in a safe and disciplined learning environment. At Acorn Montessori Charter School, we understand a student's need to express their individuality through their attire. However, students may not do so in a manner that is disruptive, distracting, or potentially dangerous in a classroom environment. Acorn provides opportunities for students to express themselves within the set of parameters listed below. Clothes and shoes should fit appropriately and not restrict movement or modesty.

Students and their parents/guardians have the responsibility to be aware of the school's specific dress code.

On campus, the faculty, staff, and administration have the responsibility to interpret and enforce this policy. The school is not responsible for the storage, inventory, or safekeeping of any confiscated item; this includes hats and electronic devices.

**** ALL RULES APPLY TO BOYS AND GIRLS**

The Acorn Montessori Charter School dress code is as follows:

Hats/Hoodies:

- No hats, caps, or beanies can be worn in the classroom or hallways.
- Hoods must be down at all times in the classrooms and hallways.

Tops:

- Tops that reveal bra straps, bare midriffs, or bare backs will not be allowed.
- Tops may not be see-through.
- No tube or halter tops.
- No strapless tops.
- Straps must be at least 3 fingers wide to be worn.
- Tops must have both shoulder straps.

Pants:

- Pants must be pulled up, with no undergarments exposed.
- May not have holes or rips.
- Leggings/spandex pants must be reasonable and modest and may need to be covered by an over garment

Shorts:

- Must be fitted at the waist and conceal all undergarments.
- Must be at a reasonable and modest length (at least to the end of his/her fingertips with arms fully extended.)

Skirts, Dresses, Jumpers, Shirts, Sports Wear:

- Must be at a reasonable and modest length.
- No strapless dresses.
- All undergarments concealed.

Shoes:

- No bedroom slippers.
- Shoes must be appropriate for day's activities including recess and PE.
- No flip flops.
- No shoes with wheels, cleats, or studs

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Miscellaneous:

- Clothing or accessories that have statements, pictures or symbols that represent prejudice, obscenity, violence, vulgarity, sex, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco will not be tolerated.
- Torn or radically altered clothing is not permitted.
- Gang related symbols or insignias on books, caps, belongings, or apparel are not allowed.
- No wallet chains are allowed.
- No rings/bracelets/collars with spikes or locks are allowed.
- No exceedingly long studded belts.
- Piercings may be of the ears only.
- No visible permanent, temporary tattoos, or drawings on the body
- Hair color may be colored with only one additional color.
- Students may wear modest makeup including lip gloss, eye shadow, eyeliner, and mascara.

The final determination of appropriate school attire resides with the administration. If your child is not dressed in accordance with Acorn Montessori Charter School's dress code, alternative clothing will need to be provided for the school day. Continued dress code violations will result in phone call home and/or parent/guardian meetings.

Electronics Policy

Acorn Montessori Charter School has an open-door electronics policy. Students may bring electronics as needed for after school activities. However, students are not permitted to use any electronic device while on the school grounds. Devices, including phones must be stored in teacher's cell phone storage, or in student's backpack turned off. Use of electronics devices by students may result in confiscation of the device. It will be held until the student's parent/guardian comes to claim it. School personnel are not responsible for items lost or stolen.

NOTICE:

The following items are not permitted on school grounds:

- Laser pointers • Aerosol cans of any kind • Water balloons, water guns • Gum • Obscene or profane material
Cigarettes • Matches or lighters • Tobacco in any form (suspension) • Vapes/Juuls (suspension)
Any weapon of any sort(suspension)
- Any other item deemed inappropriate by the administration.



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Cell Phone Policy

The use of cell phones at school is unacceptable and hinders the educational environment. The purpose of this letter is to provide clarification on how all cell phone use during school hours will be handled moving forward. Please review the following with your student and sign at the bottom to acknowledge your understanding:

- All cell phones must be turned off and placed in the cell phone holder at the beginning of the school day.
- If a student is caught with a cell phone, the phone will be confiscated and held in the front office until the end of the day.
- Every following offense will result in the cell phone being confiscated and a parent will have to come after school to retrieve the cellphone. The phone must be picked up between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Please understand that this policy is put into place for the protection of all students and no exceptions will be made. If a student needs to contact their parent during school hours they will use the school phone. If a parent needs to reach their student with an urgent message please call the front office at 928-772-5778 and your message will be relayed.



ACORN MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

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School-Parent Compact 2023-2024

School's Responsibilities:

- Provide high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet and exceed the Arizona state standards.
- Hold parent-teacher conferences twice a year. The conferences will be held October 25-27, 2023 and March 26-28, 2024.
- Provide parents with frequent reports on their children's progress.
- Provide parents reasonable access to staff. Your child's teacher will be available for consultation with parents.
- Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and to observe classroom activities when scheduled.

Parent's Responsibilities: We, as parents, will support our children's learning in the following ways:

- Monitor my child's attendance.
- Make sure that homework is completed.
- Monitor the amount of screen time my child has.
- Participate in decisions relating to my child's education.
- Stay informed about my child's education and communicate with the school by promptly reading all notices from the school and respond as appropriate.
- Ensure my child is on time daily.

Student's Responsibilities: I, as a student, will share the responsibility to improve my academic achievement and achieve the Arizona state standards. I will:

- Give my best effort in my classroom every day.
- Do my homework every week and ask for help when I need it. Attend homework club if or when my teacher indicates the necessity.
- Read at least 15 minutes each day.
- Ensure my phone is turned into the teacher daily.
- Give my parents all letters and notices sent home by my teacher.

_____ Tear off and return to the school _____

By signing and returning this portion of the School-Parent Compact, we are acknowledging understanding, acceptance, and receipt of our parent, school, and student responsibilities compact.

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Name: _____ Teacher Name/Grade: _____

Teacher Name & Signature: _____ Date: _____