

ASPEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

School User Guide 2017-2018

Founded in 1970, Aspen Community School (ACS) is a public charter school of the Aspen School District located in Woody Creek, Colorado. The mission of the school is to foster lifelong learning. ACS achieves this by offering equal and tuition-free access to the school's low student/teacher ratio, award-winning curriculum, integrated arts program and small school environment.

ACS is one of two schools overseen by the nonprofit educational organization, Compass. ACS's sister school is the Carbondale Community School.

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Fall 2017

Dear Families,

When your son or daughter graduates from the Aspen Community School they will stand in front of the school community and talk about who they are and what they believe. We are proud of the common thread in our graduates' remarks: a strong desire to learn and to engage in self-discovery, and a belief that the world can be a better place with hard work and a positive attitude. We begin this work in Kindergarten and design these values to last a lifetime.

Our mission is simple: to foster lifelong learning. We achieve this goal by focusing on three, mutually inclusive domains: academic excellence, building strong relationships and engaging students in relevant curriculum, all of which are achieved in a small school setting.

Academic Excellence — In order for students to be successful learners they need to master academic skills. Our primary foci are literacy, mathematics, wellness and the arts. ACS students receive 60-90 minutes of literacy and mathematics instruction five days a week. Staff carefully monitor student progress and provide targeted instruction to ensure that all students excel. Visual and Performing Arts are an important part of our academic program. The arts support creative thinking, problem solving, innovation and collaboration. Students take arts classes up to four times each week and participate in all-school, cross-curricular arts projects, such as the Spring Musical. In addition to regular arts instruction, the arts are frequently integrated into all academic classes. Social Studies and Science are woven into the curriculum in both thematic units and specific classes. 7th and 8th graders take Spanish class four times a week. ACS classes are in-depth and our curriculum is focused. Our goal is to engage students and even though test scores are not part of our mission, the fact that our students earn some of the highest reading, writing and math scores in the State is no accident.

Relationship building is how we form a strong, authentic connection between teachers and students. Community is woven into the fabric of everything we do at ACS. Our expectation is that everyone in our community acts with mutual respect and cooperation. Each week the entire school comes together at All-School Meeting. The purpose is to share student work, solve group challenges and build strong relationships. Parents are always welcome.

Relevance — All learning is inter-related. We strive to engage students in learning that is meaningful to them and their community. Students are frequently asked to make connections between subjects and participate in group projects. Our annual Spring Musical and Experiential Education trips are examples of this type of curricula.

Small Class Size — Our school is small by design. Combining small groups of students with highly trained, passionate teachers, we strive to make a difference academically and socially in the lives of every ACS student.

Sincerely,

Jim Gilchrist, Principal

INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

Experiential Education

ACS was founded as an alternative to conventional public schooling, in which outdoor education, exploration and respect for the natural world were among the school's pillars.

Today, Outdoor Ed is known as Experiential Ed, as it includes the occasional urban trips to complement the backcountry journeys. The "Ex Ed" program provides an environment for developing leadership skills, teamwork, and other important life skills. Taking a student out of a familiar environment and into the out-of-doors (or, as the case may be, the out-of-comfort zones) builds self-confidence and reliance, communication skills and extends the classroom curriculum into an applied environment. The school conducts weeklong Ex Ed trips for grades 3-8, as well as a 1- to 2-night trip for the K-1-2. Participation is mandatory. The Ex Ed program is funded in part by trip fees, which are specific to each trip (and therefore not included in the annual school fees) and must be paid before departure.

Field Trips

ACS teachers frequently design field trips that relate directly to the curriculum. Field trips and other experiential activities are essential to our program because they provide invaluable hands-on learning experiences. Participation is mandatory.

Community Service

Taking care of the community is a daily practice at ACS. Each student is personally involved in the successful functioning of the community, including chores. The school has several service-learning projects that provide students with opportunities to demonstrate responsibility for their community:

- At the end of each class and before leaving school, students clean and maintain their classrooms and campus. For example, the 5-8 Job Crew contributed a collective 11 hours per day, or 2,028 hours per year, to their school last year.
- The school has also adopted the Tin Cup Trail in Lenado. Twice a year, students donate a day of work, maintaining this local trail.
- Each December, the Kindergarten class invites students to bring in donations of soap, stuffed animals, and books, which are in turn distributed to local families in need through the Family Visitor Program. Participation is optional.

Arts Choices

The Arts Choices program is an essential component of the 5-8 arts curriculum, in which students of the upper grades have the opportunity to work intensively with a local artist. The six-week immersive program takes place once a year. Students may choose from a handful of options, which vary from year to year. These opportunities have taken the form of visual arts (such as ceramics, stained glass and wood working), performing arts (rock band and bluegrass band) and less traditional "arts" such as cooking and fly-casting.

The Spring Musical

The Spring Musical has been a Community School tradition since 1983. Each year ACS produces an original musical adaptation including script, costumes, lyrics, sets and music developed from scratch by the entire student body, staff and volunteers over the course of three weeks in April. The musical is performed by all of the school's students (who are the production's actors, singers, dancers, set crew and lighting/sound techs) and accompanied by a live band in the Wheeler Opera House in Aspen. The event is held on a Thursday and Friday night near the beginning of May. During the final week, known as Wheeler Week, rehearsals are held at the opera house and the classroom and bus schedule are different than usual; these changes are announced in April.

8th Grade Trip

Every May our graduating class embarks on a two-week trip to culminate their experience at the Community School. The purpose of the educational trip is to learn about diverse cultures in an immersive experience that includes service to the community. Eighth graders, with the support of their parents, undertake extensive fundraising efforts to make the trip possible. Recent trips have been to San Francisco, where students have traveled by train to California, stayed in a hostel, worked at the soup kitchen and community center of Glide Memorial Church and taken part in activities, such as museum visits, cultural explorations and sailing on SF Bay. The trip is a highlight of the 8th grade.

SCHOOL-WIDE TRADITIONS

Back-to-School Nights

ACS hosts two BTS Nights in September, one for K-4 families and the other for families with students in the 5-8. On these evenings parents can expect updates from the principal as well as an overview from the teachers on curriculum, assessment, outdoor education, how the classroom(s) will be structured, what students can expect, and much more.

Fall Potluck & BBQ

Each September, the Parent Reps organize an all-school social gathering to get the community back together, welcome new families and celebrate the new school year. The school provides the protein (burgers and hot dogs); parent volunteers provide set-up, cleanup and grilling; and families provide potluck side dishes and desserts. Traditionally, the families of the 7th and 8th grade students lead the cleanup efforts for this event. Everyone is invited to bring their own picnic and dining gear along with their potluck dish to help keep this event “green.”

El Tioga

This long-time school tradition, which is (to the surprise of many) a made-up name, is a classroom fundraiser born out of necessity. Back in the day, someone noticed that teachers needed extra funds during the school year to pay for special projects; students needed a hot lunch every once in awhile; and parents needed a break from packing lunches. The win-win-win solution was to have classroom families (led by Parent Reps) organize a potluck hot lunch, which they sold to students and staff for a modest price (\$5-\$8) on select days throughout the year. The proceeds were turned back into the teachers of that classroom for their projects. Watch for news of these hot lunch events in your email inbox. We ask that all families participate generously by providing hot food items for their classroom; serving on set-up and cleanup; and buying lunch on El Tioga days to support the fundraiser. Parents are invited to attend.

All-School Meetings

A weekly tradition at ACS, All-School Meetings are a celebration of student success and an opportunity to learn skills and address challenges that the school faces. With experiences ranging from a musical performance by a visiting string quartet to a group of 1-2s showing their Explorer’s Club journals to a playful demo about the proper way to wash your hands, All-School Meetings are a vital way for the entire school to come together. Parents are welcome to attend. Ask Cindy about the schedule, which varies.

All-Parent Meetings

These gatherings, which take place twice a year (once per semester), echo the long-standing tradition of All-School Meetings for students. The agenda may include items such as a discussion of how a certain school process works, a performance by students, an update on State education news or brief commentary from a speaker. They are lively, timely, and fun.

Principal Office Hours

Jim’s door is “open” every Wednesday from 8:15-9am for any question, concern, or compliment you may have. You are invited to stop by.

Square One Art

This is an annual fundraiser for the art department at ACS. Participation is encouraged, but optional. With each order placed of your child's artwork, Square One Art gives back 30% of the order revenue to the school. It is a great way to plan for gifts, encourage your child by supporting his or her artwork and fund ACS art all in one step. Details go home in late October or early November on how to order your child's artwork, which is reproduced on keepsake items such as water bottles, mugs, tote bags, etc. Traditionally, the school's Square One art has also been featured at a solo show at the Woody Creek Community Center in November.

Halloween

Halloween has always been a big celebration at ACS. More than any other school we've experienced, students (and even some staff and parents) construct costumes that are long on ingenuity, creativity and personal expression. There is a carnival, an El Tioga lunch and a parade of costumes, with "best of" prizes that are awarded by the 8th grade class. Parents are welcome to attend.

Coffee Houses

These open mic nights, held in the evening once or twice a year, give students and parents the opportunity to perform and share what they've been working on. All are invited; attendance is optional. There is a suggested donation, which goes to support music program mainstays such as instrument purchase, visiting artist fees and Arts Choices.

Winter Festival

This December concert, celebrating the winter season, features K-4 students performing what they've been working on in music class during the first half of the year. Audiences will experience students singing and playing guitar and Orff instruments. Free and open to all.

Empty Bowls

Empty Bowls is a community-wide fundraising event in support of Lift Up. ACS kids lead the way by making hundreds of ceramic soup bowls under the direction of art teacher Hilary Forsyth, one of the event's co-founders. During Empty Bowls, which is usually held the first Wednesday in March at Bumps Restaurant at Buttermilk, participants can enjoy hot soup, stews, bread and desserts, along with live music, for a modest ticket fee that goes to support the food pantry.

Graduation

In order to graduate, 8th graders are expected to present their work to a panel of teachers, friends and parents. They are also required to address the community at the graduation ceremony, talking about what they have learned about themselves through their experiences here. All are welcome.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Campus Rules

No smoking by any individual is permissible in the school or on school grounds, by state law.

Dogs are not permitted on campus or on field trips. We request that all dogs be kept at home while you are at school. If you do have to bring your dog with you, it must be kept in the car at all times.

Items not allowed on school property include: dangerous materials, such as weapons of any kind (including knives and martial art tools); fire-making items; alcohol and other drugs; drug paraphernalia and tobacco products.

First Week of School

During the first week of school, there is no formal instruction on campus. Rather, students in grades K-6 attend pre-arranged assessment appointments. Students in 7-8 participate in Experiential Education.

School Hours

School is in session from 8:00am to 3:00pm (1:45pm release on Wednesdays). Students should consistently arrive on time, be dropped off at 7:50am, and be in class and ready to work by 8:00am. Students should be picked up by 3:15pm. No supervision is provided before 7:45am or after 3:15pm.

Staying Informed

As part of its environmental ethos, ACS endeavors to use digital communication whenever possible. You will receive regular electronic updates from the school in the form of:

- emails from staff and Parent Reps
- bulletins from Cindy with event information and enrichment opportunities
- prompts and reminders from the discover compass web page
- the ACS Facebook page.

Your email will automatically be added to the school email lists. To receive Facebook news, we invite you to like the ACS page: facebook.com/celebratingfortyrs.aspencommunityschool

Additionally, the school has a website for your reference:

- DiscoverCompass.org (click on Aspen Community School) is the clearinghouse for school news and information, including the latest classroom beta.

Contacting the school

You may reach the school secretary, Cindy Sichel, at 923.4080 ext. 101 with questions. All messages and after school destination changes need to be phoned in prior to 2:15pm. Parent messages will be delivered to students at the end of the day. Social and afterschool activities should be arranged at home, not at school.

The best way to communicate with teachers is to call their voicemail extension or send an email. Your message will be answered within 24 hours. In case of an emergency, please call Cindy.

Reaching the bus drivers while they are en route is difficult at best. You may try the following methods, but sometimes the best way to get a message through is to call another parent who you know will be at a bus stop awaiting the bus. You may try to reach the upvalley bus driver by calling Cindy at 923.4080 ext. 101. For the downvalley bus driver, you may try the contact for the parent-run board: Christine Batcher 970-401-0301 The bus drivers cannot take calls or texts while driving. Their cell phones are for emergencies only.

Attendance Policy

Tardiness

The first greetings and sharings of the day have positive emotional and psychological value that should not be underplayed. Some of the most important communication and instructions are given during the first few minutes of school. Students who come late miss this and work at a disadvantage.

Sick Policy

Don't send your child to school if they've had fever or vomiting within the past 24 hours (without medication). Your child must be fever-free and vomit-free with no medication for 24 hours in order to return to school. For example, if your child is sent home from school on Monday with a fever, they may not return to school until Wednesday at the earliest (later if the fever or vomiting persists). See "Daily Absences" below for reporting your child's sick day to the school.

Leaving during the day

Any student who leaves during the day must first check with his/her learning center and with an administrator.

Daily Absences

All absences must be reported to the school secretary each day between 8-9am with the reason for the absence. Excessive absences interfere with the continuity of student's work.

Extended Absences

Extended absences are those that are longer than one week, or absences that recur on a scheduled basis.

Absences in excess of 14 days require a meeting with the student, parent(s) and teachers. Absences of 21 days or more necessitate a plan for the student to demonstrate commitment to successfully complete the course of study. Parents are encouraged to use fall, winter and spring breaks for vacations. Pre-arranged absences should be discussed with the teachers to assure some continuity.

If, at the outset, you are aware of an extended absence that will be scheduled for your student, it must be communicated to the teacher within two weeks of the trip so that the teachers can plan to send work with your student. Teachers need at least two weeks notice prior to the absence if the teacher is to be expected to compile work for the student to take with them. Emergency situations will be the exception.

Colorado State Law compels us to discuss the reasons for a student's absences after 10 days and, after 14 days, we are required to meet as a team to discuss if the student's academic progress has been impeded. While we comply with this law, we are also concerned with the student's social progress, as well as the development of our community, of which each student is a valued member.

We will continue to be flexible in reviewing extended absences on a case-by-case basis. We will also consider the disadvantages to the student and the community that must be considered in making a recommendation.

Snow Days

If either Aspen or Re-1 School Districts cancels school because of snow, there is no school at ACS because our students come from both districts. It is your personal responsibility to inform yourself if there is a snow day. You may call the following recorded snow hotlines:

Aspen School District	970.925.3760
Re-1 School District	970.384.6075

Local radio news programs, such as KAJX, KDNK and KSPN, also regularly announce snow closures.

Visitor Policy

Visitors are welcome at ACS as long as their presence does not conflict with daily learning. For security reasons, all visitors are requested to enter through the front door (only) and to sign in with the school secretary upon arrival.

Driver Etiquette

Safety is our #1 priority. As you drive to campus, please remember:

- Consider leaving the car at home: carpool or use the bus whenever possible.
- Watch for pedestrians.
- Observe the speed limit of 15mph, maximum.
- Yield to school buses on the road, at all times.
- Stay on the correct side of the driveway, rather than driving in the middle.
- Share the road with courtesy; be mindful of our narrow driveway and pull over to let others pass.
- Uphill traffic has the right of way.

Bus Transportation

There are two buses that provide morning and afternoon service to/from school. The upvalley bus is operated by ACS and runs back and forth between Aspen and school. The downvalley bus

is operated by a parent-run board that provides independent service for downvalley students. Public bus service is not a part of the school's charter with Aspen School District; both buses are operated on a fee-basis. See the School Fees section for details.

Homework

Students are expected to complete homework when it is assigned. Homework expectations vary by learning center and are higher for grades 3-8 than for lower grades. A quiet place to study without interruption and with encouragement, when needed, are the best help parents can provide. Homework loads may be adjusted to meet individual and family needs. Concerns about homework should be directed to the relevant teacher.

Non-Discrimination

At ACS all children have equal educational opportunities, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Learning Disabilities

If you know or suspect your student has a learning disability, you may contact a learning center teacher or a resource teacher with your concern. The school then begins an internal process, detailed below, to determine how to best serve the student.

**Aspen Community School
Student Support System**

The Learning Center Team has identified a student as
needing targeted intervention

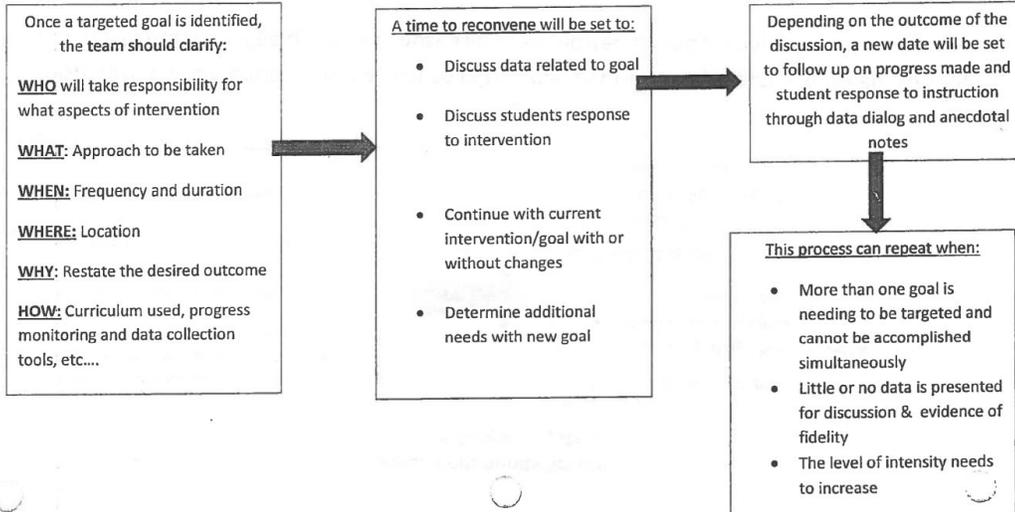
Implement and document within
Learning Center

and/or

Request a Concern Conference for
additional support

When a Concern Conference is requested, the team will meet on a
SCHEDULED TUESDAY to assist in the problem solving process

Documented efforts to involve parents should be included in the student file with each phase of intervention



Bringing Items To School

Clothing / Appropriate Dress

School is a work environment. Clothing appropriate for working undistracted by fashion needs to be worn at all times. The Community School does not allow students to wear clothing that advertises alcohol or other drugs, or that is sexually revealing in nature. The hem of skirts and shorts must be mid-thigh. Hats and hoods are not allowed. Individual learning centers may have more age-specific policies.

Medications

Students should not independently bring medicines to school. If they require medication during the day, they must first have a doctor-registered action plan filed with Cindy at the front office. Call Cindy to learn more.

Lunch / Snacks

ACS does not have a cafeteria or lunch program. Nor is there a kitchen or microwave that students can access for their personal meals. All students are asked to bring a lunch and possibly a mid-morning snack (it varies by learning center) to school. Nutritious and balanced meals are strongly recommended. Do not send candy or soda/energy drinks. Teachers will periodically monitor lunches for a nutrition and low-sugar content. Required utensils should be packed with lunch.

Money and Valuables

Students need to carefully consider what they bring to school. We expect honesty and respect for others' property, but it is an unnecessary risk to bring expensive items such as jewelry, sunglasses, watches, and toys, or large amounts of money. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Lost and Found

Personal belongings should be permanently labeled for identification. All items turned in to Lost and Found will be kept in the large bin by the school entry. Items not claimed after announced periods will be taken to a second-hand store whose proceeds partially benefit the school. Please check regularly for missing possessions.

Technology

Students are only allowed to use electronic devices for approved school activities. This includes computers, tablets, calculators, cameras, etc.

Students may bring cell phones to school in their backpacks but are not allowed to use them during school. They may use the school phone at Cindy's desk in case of emergency and are permitted to check messages on their cell phones after school.

Computer/Internet/Cell Phone Policy

ACS has a Rules and Code of Ethics for Community School Computer Users and a Social Media Policy. Each family (parent and student) is required to review, sign and abide by the compact. The policies in full can be found on the school website under the For Parents tab.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Our number one priority at the Aspen Community School is to ensure that all students are safe, welcome and included. Each learning center will conduct regular social/emotional meetings to ensure that students understand the types of mistreatment, the roles students play in mistreatment, as well as specific strategies that can be employed to keep our school safe.

Unfortunately, student mistreatment is a reality at all schools. Therefore, it is imperative that community members understand what student mistreatment is and how it will be addressed at ACS.

Types of Mistreatment

- **Exclusion: denying others access to any school activity**
- **Put Downs: verbal attacks designed to make others feel bad**
- **Bullying: repeated intimidation of any kind**
- **Physical Mistreatment: unwanted physical contact**
- **Acts against Campus: vandalism of school property**

Consequences

Students identified as engaging in mistreatment will:

- 1. Meet with the school principal and develop a specific written plan to end the mistreatment. Parents will be notified and included in the plan of action.**
- 2. If mistreatment continues, the following options will be considered:**
 - a. In-school suspension**
 - b. Out-of-school suspension**
 - c. Individual and group counseling, or**
 - d. Expulsion.**

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our school will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Likewise, if you suspect a child of being abused or neglected please contact:

Department of Human Services

If you have an allegation of abuse pertaining to Child Protection/Adult Protection and it is during business hours, 1-844-CO-4-Kids (1-844-264-5437)

EMERGENCIES

Crisis Plan / Meeting Place

ACS has a crisis plan developed in cooperation with the Pitkin County Sheriff and local Fire Department. A copy is on file at the front desk. School safety drills are practiced and reviewed with students on a regular basis. In case of a school-wide emergency, check the “alert page” on the discovercompass.org website.

Release Forms

All parents are emailed release forms in the back-to-school packets. Please print, complete, sign and return these before school begins. Our first Experiential Ed trips are during the first weeks of school. Students cannot attend these trips without the release forms on file. Likewise, students cannot be treated in accordance with existing conditions and to the best of families’ wishes if we don’t know what they are.

Accidents / Emergency Authorization

Every precaution is taken to insure the safety of students at the school and on field trips. All faculty members have First Aid and CPR training. Immediate first aid will be given and parents or the family doctor (as noted in the Emergency Authorization form each family files with the school) will be promptly notified should an accident occur. If we are unable to reach the family or doctor, the student will be transported and treated at the nearest emergency hospital and the steps listed on the Emergency Authorization form will be followed as applicable.

Asbestos & Radon

The school is in full compliance with all requirements from the Department of Health regarding asbestos and radon. There is no asbestos or radon present in the school or on the campus. Documentation is available for review upon request.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are important members of the ASC community. The success of the school was borne of and continues to depend upon active parent volunteers. We invite you to get involved in your children's education! If you have a special talent, skill or passion you would like to contribute, the Parent Reps would like to connect you with the daily, weekly, monthly and annual opportunities to participate. Please contact your Parent Rep below.

Volunteer Policy

Compass requires that all volunteers undergo a background check if they volunteer during any school year, or if they participate in overnight activities with students. If parents are driving students for a school-sanctioned event, they must first take a written driver's test with Cindy or Jim, supply proof of insurance and complete some forms for a driving record.

Volunteer Opportunities

Parent Reps(Representatives) are a group of parents who serve as liaisons between the classrooms and the parent community. One of the key roles of the Parent Reps is to provide the parent community with opportunities to participate in the school. Meetings are held monthly and all are welcome to attend.

School Accountability Committee

Please see the Parent-School Communication Plan section to learn more about the SAC, which is currently co-chaired by Tim Foster and Serene Washburn. Meetings are held the first Thursday of the month from 4-5pm at ACS.

To become member of the SAC, simply signal your intention by attending the next meeting and committing to a two-year volunteer term. There is no formal application process. The school will post the SAC meeting schedule on the ACS website.

Committees

Committees are used on an as-needed basis at ACS to empower teachers, parents and other community members to share the responsibility of participating in collective decisions that impact the entire organization. Active participation in committees allows for the open flow of ideas across the organization and creates a forum for critical reflection and analysis of ideas, problems and policies. Parents participate in such short-term committees as Hiring, Design Advisory Group, and the I Believe Campus Campaign Steering Committee. Depending on the nature of the project at hand, some committees are by appointment and others are open to the entire community. Opportunities for parents to participate will be announced via email blasts.

Experiential Education Trips

Depending on the goals of the trips and the learning center of your student, you may be asked to accompany your child's group or to help with a trip for another learning center. Volunteers can also help in meaningful ways with food preparation, gear check, loading and unloading.

Learning Center Volunteers

Each learning center relies on parent volunteers to provide assistance in a variety of ways, whether in the classroom, with El Tiogas or on Ex Ed. Parent Reps will work with teachers to determine volunteer projects and communicate them as they become available.

Fundraising Events

These events raise critical capital that enables the school to meet its annual operating expenses, offset expenses for the 8th grade trip and improve the overall program environment. In the past, events have included the Garage Sale and the Spring Ka-Ching Raffle. Parent volunteers are essential to making these events a success.

Annual Fund

In order to ensure our students receive the highest quality of education, ACS supplements the State's allocated funding by *\$3000 for each student*. This fiscal year, the Aspen School District is scheduled to provide ACS with \$9,300 per student, revenue we use to pay the salaries of our outstanding teachers. It actually costs ACS more than \$12,300 to educate each one of our students, so ACS must annually fundraise to offset the discrepancy. The monies we raise through this annual fund help pay for our excellent arts and literacy programs, teacher development, facility maintenance and other operational costs. We turn to a variety of sources for support — including private foundations, corporations, and community leaders — *and we ask all ACS families to participate at a level that makes sense for your family budget*. Donations are tax-deductible.

El Tioga

Please see page 9 for information on this school-wide tradition and the volunteer roles associated with it.

The Spring Musical

This all-school production, detailed on page 8, happens every April-May. This is an 100% all-community effort. There are myriad ways to pitch in, from sewing costumes and painting sets to helping a scene group and selling ads for the program. We also ask that each family purchase as many tickets as possible, encourage all friends and family to come and consider placing an ad in the program. Proceeds from the Spring Musical are used to offset its production costs.

PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION PLAN

At ACS, we strive to create healthy exchanges between parents and the school, promoting a vibrant, engaged school community. The foundation of this relationship is for families — like students — to feel “safe, welcome and included.”

This plan, which was collaboratively developed by a group of parents, staff, and board members, is organized around five key areas:

- 1. Communication Opportunities**

2. Participation
3. Expectations
4. Addressing Concerns
5. Accountability

Communication Methods

Ideally, parents should use direct communication with the relevant staff member (one-on-one conversations, phone calls, and meetings) as their first means of communicating with the school.

Secondary input methods are: office hours with the principal (Wednesdays, 8:15-9am) and conversations with members of the School Accountability Committee (SAC). Additionally, school leadership regularly gathers feedback through alumni surveys, parent surveys, and exit interviews with families who elect to leave the school before graduation.

Participation

We encourage families to stay informed and engaged with the school by participating in educational opportunities that ACS offers each year:

- All-Parent Meetings
- Back-to-School Nights
- User Guide and Learning Center Guides
- School Websites
- Emails
-

Expectations

For all in the school community:

1. Go directly to the source.
2. Seek to understand.
3. Communicate openly, honestly, and authentically.
4. Avoid/discourage gossip as a means of gathering information.
5. When emotions are running high, minimize technology as a communication method. (See Expectation #1.) Use of email is appropriate for scheduling a time when staff and parents can speak in person or by phone.

For parents:

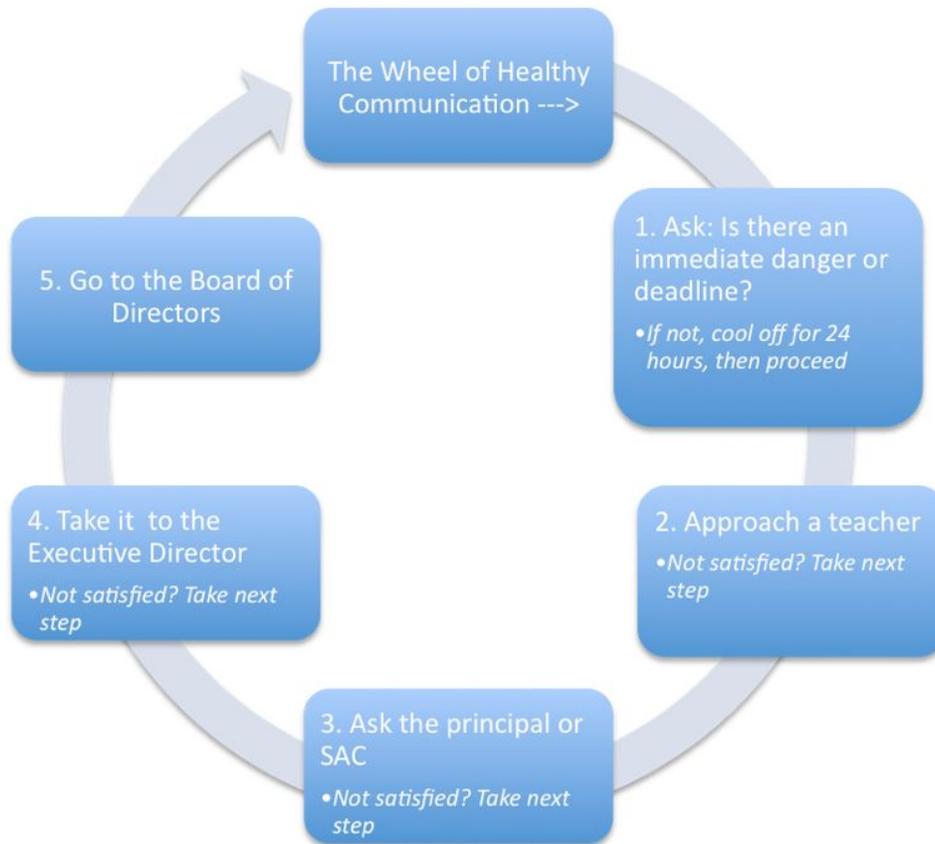
1. Get involved in your children's education and the school community.
2. Connect with the Parent Representatives assigned to your child's/children's class to learn about participation opportunities.
3. Stay informed: carefully and promptly read information that is emailed home.
4. Be a role model for your child/ren through thoughtful, healthy communication.

For school staff:

1. Respond to parent inquiries within 24 hours (if on a weekend, by the next school day).
2. Be a role model for students and families through thoughtful, healthy communication.

Addressing Concerns

Aspen Community School welcomes your constructive input. When issues arise that need attention, please follow this wheel of communication:



1. Ask yourself if this involves someone being in immediate danger or is otherwise time-sensitive. If not, take 24 hours for reflection and cooling off before taking up the issue.
2. Approach the teacher (or teaching team) involved.
3. If the issue is not resolved at that level, speak to the principal or to a member of the SAC. The SAC will communicate the issue to the principal, who may arrange a time to speak to you. If still not resolved to your satisfaction, contact the Executive Director of Compass.
4. Finally, if still unresolved, bring this to the attention of the Compass Board of Directors during one of their monthly public meetings (schedule posted on school website) by:
 - a) Speaking during the public comment period, which occurs at the beginning of the meeting. Be aware that during the public comment period, board members may listen to all comments but may not (by law) discuss nor vote on any issues that are not already on the agenda or

b) Requesting an item be added to the agenda by contacting the Executive Director or Board President. Agendas are released one week prior to each board meeting. Depending upon the length of time required to discuss the item and the list of items already scheduled, the item will be added to the next possible agenda.

Through improved education and communication, partnerships between parents and the school can be enhanced, culminating in an engaged ACS community that supports our students, our families, and our school.

Accountability

ACS is accountable first and foremost to its school community — students, staff, parents, alumni, neighbors, grandparents, and more. These relationships are the heart and soul of our school.

As a public charter school and a project of a nonprofit organization, ACS is legally accountable to the Colorado Department of Education, the Aspen School District and the COMPASS Board of Directors. Two examples of this responsibility and oversight are the annual financial audit that ACS participates in, as well as an annual report the school creates, the results of which are reviewed by all three of these organizations.

Another facet of school accountability is the Educational Accountability Act of Colorado, which defines and measures “quality in education” by evaluating “the educational programs offered by public schools” and “reporting to students, parents, boards of education, educators, and the general public on the educational performance of the schools.” This statute provides for a School Accountability Committee (SAC) made up of staff, parents, and community members who meet at least quarterly to assess school progress.

While complying with this statute, the SAC of the Community School also has a less formal (but no less important) mission of providing opportunities for parents to bring up issues for discussion, research solutions, make recommendations to school leadership, and have an informed give-and-take with administrators about how to cooperatively address issues at the school.

This plan will be reviewed annually to see if it remains the best process for our school.

SCHOOL FEES

One of the main reasons the Aspen Community School is so successful is our small student-teacher ratio. The corresponding cost to educate your children is therefore higher than the per-pupil cost at other public schools. Your family's financial involvement — through the payment of fees and voluntary annual fund contributions — is an essential part of maintaining our unique, high-quality programs.

Explanation of Fees

- **Bus Fee** – Provides morning and afternoon bus service for students within the Aspen School District. *A parent-run board operates an independent bus service for downvalley students. If you are interested in this service please contact Christine Batchler 970-401-0301*
- **Field Trip Transportation Fee** – Provides field trips for all students.
- **School Supplies Fee** – Provides educational classroom supplies.
- **Activities Fee** – Provides spring musical and other special activities during the school year.

2017 –2018 School Fees

Up Valley Bus Riders

\$850 Bus Fee

\$175 Transportation Fee

\$175 School Supplies Fee

\$175 Activities Fee

Total to ACS \$ 1375.00

All Other ACS Students

\$N/A Bus Fee

\$175 Transportation Fee

\$175 School Supplies Fee

\$175 Activities Fee

Total to ACS \$ 525.00

All fees are due by September 8, 2017. Forms of payment include check, MasterCard, Visa or monthly drafts. Contact Cindy to make a payment and/or arrange a monthly plan.

Not Included

Please note: some fees are specific to learning center and are not included in this all-school fee schedule. The following fees will be billed separately:

- **Experiential Education Fees**
- **Kindergarten Tuition**
- **8th Grade Trip**

FUNDING THE SCHOOL

Annual Fund = Daily operating expenses

Annual gifts make up the difference between what tax dollars cover and the actual cost of running the school. These are daily operating expenses, like keeping the lights on and providing continuing education for staff, which support our students to reach their highest level of achievement.

Campus Campaign = Long-term improvements

Capital giving represents gifts to meet major building needs outside of an annual operating budget. These are long-term improvements, like rebuilding our campus, which will help our facilities to be as innovative as our philosophies.

GLOSSARY

1-2	The 1 st and 2 nd grade learning center.
3-4	The 3 rd and 4 th grade learning center.
5-8	The middle school grades: 5 th through 8 th .
All-Parent Meeting	A biannual gathering for parents, modeled after the All-School Meeting for students and staff.
All-School Meeting	A weekly gathering of all students and staff of the school, providing the opportunity to celebrate successes and discuss challenges.
Assessments	Both standardized tests and teacher-designed tests, including portfolios, used to gauge what students know and are able to do.
Coffee House	Open mic nights for students and families.
El Tioga	Hot lunch events that raise funds for individual classrooms.
K, or The Ks	Kindergarten, or the kindergartners.
Learning Center	Multi-grade level classrooms, such as the 1-2, 3-4 and 5-8.
Ex Ed	Experiential Education, sometimes called Outdoor Education. These are extended, out-of-school trips, often to the backcountry and sometimes to cities.
Parent Reps	A group of parents who serve as liaisons between the learning centers and parents.
Portfolio	A collection of student work intended to show process, product and reflection.
Panel Presentations	Culminating, student-led presentations that 8 th graders make to their community of teachers, students, family and friends to demonstrate their arc of learning at ACS.
SAC	School Accountability Committee
Tryouts	A one-day marathon of auditions for the Spring Musical. (To respect the safety of the students, auditions are closed to the community, including parents.)
Wheeler Week	The final week of rehearsals for the Spring Musical, which is held on site at the Wheeler Opera House. During these five weekdays, the bus schedule and formal classroom times are different from usual.

STAFF CONTACT LIST

ACS Staff / Tel: 970.923.4080

Michelle Bassi	Reading Resource	ext. 107
Hilary Forsyth	Visual Arts	ext. 108
Jim Gilchrist	Principal	ext. 104
Ron Goth	5-8 Learning Center	ext. 110
Darcy Kyle	5-8 Learning Center	ext. 109
Veronica Hudak	Music/Performing Arts	ext. 123
Hilary Gross	5-8 Learning Center	ext. 113
Christina LaCroix	5-6 Learning Center	ext. 111
Satya Leidner	7-8 Spanish Teacher	ext.111
Ric Morrison	Wood Shop	ext. 121
Allison Oeding	3-4 Learning Center	ext. 116
Garry Pfaffmann	5-8 Learning Center	ext. 112
Nicole Riess	Resource Teacher	ext. 106
Margaret Roush	1-2 Learning Center	ext. 118
Cindy Sichel	Secretary	ext. 101
Anne Teague	Kindergarten	ext. 120
Margaret Romero	Kindergarten	ext. 120
Kristina Weller	1-2 Learning Center	ext. 118
Casey White	1-2 Learning Center	ext. 118
Allison Oeding	3-4 Learning Center	ext. 115
Jen Berkowitz	3-4 Learning Center	ext. 116

Compass Staff / Tel: 970.923.4646

Jim Hanrahan	Buildings & Grounds	ext. 122
Adrian Bradley	Administrative Asst.	ext. 129
Michael Hayes	Executive Director	ext. 130

Aspen School District / Tel. 970.925.3760

Heather Abraham	Dir. of Special Education	
Katie Diemer	Speech/Language Ther.	ext. 1120
Meghan Hegberg	School Psychologist	ext. 3216
Dr. John Maloy	Superintendent	
	Assistant Superintendent	
Genny Cook	Occupational Therapist	

Snow Closure Hotlines

Aspen School District	970.925.3760
Re-1 School District	970.384.6075

Aspen Community School 2017-2018 CALENDAR

Key

School Hours 8:00am – 3:00pm
 Early Release Wednesday 8:00 – 1:45pm
 V No School
 TW Teacher Workday - No School
 *All School Event
 +First or Last Day of School
 PD Prof Dev Day

JULY 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

22-25 Teacher Workdays

28 First Day for 7-8 O.E.

28 – 31 K-6 Assessment Days

AUGUST 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	T	T	T	T	26
27	+	29	30	31		

1 Teacher Workday

4 Labor Day

5 First Day for K-6

13 Back to School Night K-4

20 Back to School Night 5-8

^ 22 Religious Observance

29 No School Teacher Workday

29, 30 Religious Observance

SEPTEMBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					T	2
3	V	+	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	T	30

6 Back To School Bar-B-Que

26, 27 Fall Break

OCTOBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	V	V	28
29	30	31				

1 Teacher Workday

2,3 Parent Teacher Conferences No Classes

10 Veterans Day Celebration at School

11 Veterans Day

20-24 No School Thanksgiving Break

23 Thanksgiving Day

NOVEMBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			TW	PT	PT	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	V	V	V	V	V	25
26	27	28	29	30		

13 Winter Festival
21 through January 2
 Winter Break

25 Christmas Day

DECEMBER 2017						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	+	V	V	23
24	V	V	V	V	V	30
31						

JANUARY 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	V	V	T	+	5	6
			W			
7	8	9	10	11	A	13
				D		
14	V	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1,2 Winter Break
3 Teacher Workday
4 First Day Back

12 K-4 Only No School Assessment Day

15 M.L. King Day No School

18 Report Cards Due

FEBRUARY 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	PD	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	V	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

2 Professional Development Day for Teachers No School

19 Presidents' Day No School

MARCH 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	+	PT	PT	24
				C	C	
25	V	V	V	V	V	31

22, 23 Parent Teacher Conferences No Classes

26-30 Spring Break

APRIL 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	T	+	4	5	^	7
	W					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2 Teacher Workday
3 First Day Back

6 Try Outs

30 – May 4 Week at the Wheeler

MAY 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	*	*	5
6	V	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	V	29	30	31		

April 30- May 4 Week at The Wheeler

3,4 Spring Musical
7 Rest Day after the Play- No School

15-18 3-4 O.E.

23-25 K,1,2 O.E.

28 Memorial Day-No School

JUNE 2018						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					*	2
3	4	5	T	T	8	9
			W	W		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

1 Last Day for K-6

5 Last Day for 7-8
5 Graduation
6,7 Teacher Workdays

www.calendarlabs.com

UPVALLEY BUS SCHEDULE

ACS provides morning and afternoon bus service for students within the Aspen School District. This is the schedule of the UPVALLEY bus.

A.M.	These are DEPARTURE times. Please be early!		P.M.	Route (and arrival times) may vary. Allow for tardiness!	
				M, Tu, Th, F	Wed
Mountain Valley		7:05	Woody Creek, at WC ³	3:05	1:50
Park Circle, at Brown		7:09	W/J	3:08	1:53
Main, btwn 4 th & 5 th		7:13	Cozy Point	3:10	1:55
8 th St RFTA		7:14	Brush Creek Intercept Lot	3:14	1:59
Aspen Middle School		7:18	AABC / North 40	3:20	2:05
Truscott RFTA		7:21	Buttermilk RFTA	3:24	2:09
Buttermilk RFTA		7:23	Truscott RFTA	3:26	2:11
North 40		7:25	Aspen Recreation Center	3:30	2:15
Brush Creek Intercept		7:34	Middle School RFTA	3:32	2:17
W/J		7:38	Cemetery Ln, <u>Snowbunny</u>	3:35	2:20
Woody Creek, at WC ³		7:42	Hopkins, at 7 th and at 5 th	3:38	2:23
			Ice Garden	3:40	2:25
			Red Brick	3:43	2:28
			Rio Grande field / Taster's	3:44	2:29
			Paradise Bakery (Galena, at Cooper)	3:46	2:31
			Mountain Valley	3:55	2:40
			Park Circle, at Brown	3:59	2:44
			Temporary Library	4:01	2:46

Aspen Community School
Bus Schedule
 2016 September *Revised*

School Hours:
 8:00 – 3:00pm M T Th F
 8:00 – 1:45pm W

A parent-run board operates an independent bus service for DOWNVALLEY students. If you are interested in this service, please contact Christine Batchner chrismik@comcast.net

Handbook Consent Form

I have read the Aspen Community School User Guide and I understand all of the information stated in it. I agree to follow all policies stated in the User Guide and understand my responsibilities as a Aspen Community School parent/guardian.

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/ Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

This form must be signed, dated and returned to ACS office no later than September 15, 2017.