



AMERICAN ACADEMY

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AMERICAN ACADEMY

Employee Handbook

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SECTION 1: SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

American Academy Mission

American Academy will achieve academic excellence through a challenging, sequenced curriculum that emphasizes science, technology, engineering, arts, and math to provide our children with the tools to become the leaders of tomorrow. Together, our students, Staff, parents, and community will cultivate character, civic responsibility, and intellectual development.

THE FIVE COMPONENTS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY MISSION

- Academic excellence
- A science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) emphasis
- Consistent character development
- A school culture of respect and responsibility
- A challenge for every student

American Academy Organization Structure

Visit the American Academy website to view the [American Academy Organization Chart](#).

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors (BOD) oversees the Executive Director of Schools, and is responsible for upholding the mission, vision, and policies of the school as well as oversight of financial matters. If you are interested in learning about the composition, regulations and limitations that govern the BOD, please download the [American Academy By-Laws](#).

[BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS](#)

Please visit the American Academy website for the [current list of directors](#).

[BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS](#)

The BOD holds regular meetings on each month at 7:30 pm at the school. Specific dates and agendas are posted on the [BOD Meetings](#) page of the school website at the beginning of each school year. Anyone is welcome to attend.

In order to get on the agenda for a Board meeting, a [Submission for Agenda Consideration Form](#) needs to be completed and [emailed to the BOD](#) (board@aa8.org) with all the appropriate attachments no later than 10:00 am the Monday before a BOD meeting. You will be notified within 24 hours if the agenda item is accepted. Please carefully consider the [American Academy Parent Communication Policy](#) before submitting a request for an agenda item.

If you would like to be personally notified about all regular and special board meetings, please email the [BOD](#) (board@aa8.org) to be added to our distribution list. For more specific information about the requirements and limitations of the Board, please review the [American Academy By-Laws](#).

[STAFF DIRECTORY](#)

SECTION 2: EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Equal Employment Opportunity

American Academy is committed to compliance with all applicable equal employment opportunity laws, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or age. This applies to all employment practices, including hiring, promotions, training, disciplinary action, termination, and benefits.

American Academy expects all employees to show respect and sensitivity toward all other employees and to demonstrate a commitment to the school's equal opportunity objectives. If you observe a violation of this policy, you should report it immediately to the Executive Director of Schools (EDS) or the President of the Board of Directors (BOD).

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

Staff Member Employment Agreement

Staff employed by American Academy will be required to sign an employment agreement annually, defining specific terms and conditions of their employment, so long as they remain employed, in the ensuing year. This agreement then becomes a commitment made between American Academy and the Staff member.

Employment at-will is incorporated in all employment agreements, for all staff. Therefore, employees under such written agreements have no property interest in continued employment.

Fingerprint/Background Checks

Upon hire, all American Academy employees must submit to a fingerprint check that will be submitted to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Information obtained through this check or subsequent checks may be cause for termination of employment.

SECTION 3: EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Group Insurance Plans

Employees of American Academy may be entitled to group insurance plans as defined by the [Employee Leave and Benefits Policy](#).

Employee Leave

Employees of American Academy may be entitled to leave as defined by the [Employee Leave and Benefits Policy](#). Employees must follow the policy when using personal days, when using personal days.

Public Employees Retirement Account

American Academy is affiliated with [PERA, the Public Employees Retirement Association](#), as per Colorado Statutes 24-51-101 - 24-51-1511. All employees shall become members as a condition of employment with American Academy; PERA membership is a substitute for Social Security. More information on this plan may be requested from [PERA](#).

SECTION 4: JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Job Descriptions

Employees are given a job description which summarizes the employee's duties and responsibilities and gives important information about the position. Please read and study the job description carefully and discuss it with your supervisor if there are any questions.

[American Academy Job Descriptions](#)

American Academy reserves the right to revise and update job descriptions from time to time, as it deems necessary and appropriate.

Employee Evaluations

Employees will be assessed in accordance with the [Employee Evaluations Policy](#).

Employee Conduct

Employees will conduct themselves in accordance with the [Employee Code of Conduct Agreement](#) signed by each employee annually.

Harassment

American Academy is committed to providing a work environment that is free of unlawful discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, American Academy maintains a strict policy prohibiting unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. It is important for you to understand that jokes, stories, cartoons, nicknames and comments about appearance may be offensive to others and may constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment of employees by supervisors, co-workers, or vendors is prohibited under the law. Unlawful sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to the Code of Conduct is made a condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee; or
- the harassment has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

If you believe that you are being (or have been) harassed in any way, please report the incident or incidents to your supervisor or the EDS or the President of the BOD immediately, without fear of reprisal. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes unlawful harassment, the totality of the circumstances (such as the nature of the conduct and the context in which the alleged behavior occurred) will be investigated and considered. If it is appropriate, corrective action will be taken.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

Employee Grievances

When an employee has an issue, concern, or grievance, the employee must communicate in accordance with the [Employee Communication Policy](#).

SECTION 5: GENERAL PERSONNEL POLICIES

Access to American Academy Property

It is important that the BOD, EDS and staff have access at all times to space, storage areas, containers or any other property, as well as other records, documents, and files. As a result, American Academy reserves the right to access staff member classrooms, work stations, filing cabinets, desks, and any other property on school grounds at its complete discretion, with or without advance notice or consent. Therefore, American Academy employees have no expectation of privacy on school grounds.

Staff members may only allow *front office-screened and -supervised* visitor access into the building during school hours. Staff members may not allow any visitor access into the building, *supervised or unsupervised*, after school hours or on weekends.

Acquisition and disposal of assets valued at more than \$1,000.00 require approval of the BOD, per the [Property Disposal Policy](#).

A misplaced or lost building key badge or room key must be reported immediately. A replacement badge or room key will cost the employee \$40. If the lost badge or room key is found later and turned in undamaged, then the \$40 fee may be refunded.

Alcohol, Drugs and Controlled Substances

The use, sale, transfer, possession, or being "under the influence" of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances when on duty, on American Academy property, or in school vehicles is prohibited. In addition, off-duty conduct that may adversely affect the learning environment and/or affect the reputation or interests of the school is prohibited. For this policy, "under the influence" is defined as follows:

- being unable to perform work in a safe or productive manner; and/or
- being in a physical or mental condition that creates a risk to the safety and wellbeing of a student(s), the affected employee, other co-workers, the public, or school property due to alcohol, drugs, and/or controlled substances.

American Academy follows all applicable DCSD policies and requires all employees to agree to these terms upon hire through completion of the [Drug Free Workplace Agreement](#) signed by each employee when joining American Academy.

Violations will result in disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

Attendance, Punctuality, and Absences

If an employee is unable to report for work for any reason, the employee must use the link provided in the employee payroll system to request supervisor approval of your time-off dates and initiate the [Substitute](#)

[Procedure](#), if necessary. Personal time-off must be requested according to the rules in the [Employee Leave and Benefits Policy](#).

Business Expense Reporting

Employees will be reimbursed for all preauthorized (as defined in the [American Academy By-Laws](#), the [Fiscal Accounting and Reporting Policy](#) and the [Expenditures Procedures](#)) and approved business-related expenses, upon submission of accurate receipted expense to Business Services Coordinator. Employees must submit these reports within 30 calendar days to ensure proper accounting and prompt reimbursement.

Classroom Budgets

Classroom and specials faculties may be allocated a modest classroom budget determined each year to be used specifically for curriculum support or other preauthorized items. It is the responsibility of the Staff member to keep records of expenditures and reimbursements. The office maintains master records and staff members are encouraged to compare balances frequently. **Items purchased with classroom budgets or any other school monies are the property of American Academy.** Items categorized as classroom budget purchases do not require a purchase order or advance approval.

Computer Usage

American Academy supplies the software needed for the student and staff computers. Software owned or used by American Academy may not be duplicated (without the written permission of American Academy's IT Department) and may not be given to any third parties.

American Academy reserves the right to monitor employee computer use and internet communications, including emails, at its sole discretion, and employees have no expectations of privacy in such matters. An employee's personal use of the Internet is permissible during breaks, so long as such use is non-disruptive and not during instruction and/or planning time and does not involve access to or transmittal of pornographic or obscene material. Further, no one may transmit any communication or material where the material or meaning of the communication would violate any applicable law or would be offensive to any recipient.

Employees must have a signed [Computer Use Agreement](#) on file with the school, acknowledging computer and internet acceptable uses at American Academy. The agreement shall be signed at the beginning of employment.

DCSD uses an "opt-out" policy for student media releases. In other words, American Academy can publish student images and information electronically or otherwise *unless* a DCSD media waiver has been completed for that student during online registration in the fall. Teachers are responsible for checking the student summary page on [Infinite Campus](#) to look for student media limitations prior to publishing any student information (names, work) or images anywhere outside of classroom use (bulletin boards in the hallway are ok for all students). Symbols (flags) appearing next to a student's name will indicate the specific media limitations in place for that student for that school year.

Staff members are responsible for monitoring student internet activity at school. Though American Academy has a web filter, some sites have been unblocked for educational use. These areas can pose a risk if use is not monitored closely by a staff member. If a staff member identifies a website needing to be blocked or unblocked at school, the staff member should report that site to the IT department.

Student Data Privacy

Staff members are responsible for reading and following the [Privacy and Protection of Confidential Student Information Policy](#) when using online or web-based teaching tools.

To request approval of online software or subscription service, free or paid, intended for use in the classroom to which student must log in, staff must use the [Request on Online Software/Subscription Approval Form](#). Additionally, it is recommended that staff watch and review the [Student Data Privacy Act Staff Presentation](#).

Weapons

Staff members may not bring guns or other weapons to school for any reason, even with a permit.

Information Updates for Employees

The primary source for staff information and updates is the Staff Portal page on the American Academy website. Each employee is responsible for reviewing information on a regular basis.

Normal Reporting Hours

Exempt employees are expected to perform the duties as outlined in the job description. Below are the normal reporting hours for most American Academy employees. However, exempt employees can expect that job responsibilities may extend past normal reporting hours.

K-8 Staff: 7:30 am - 4:15 pm

Office: 7:30 am - 4:15 pm

Parking for Employees

Though parking space directly in front of each of the school buildings. However, these spaces are shared among employees and parents and as a result there can be no guarantee of employee parking space on any given day. Parking spots may not be reserved.

Employees park at their own risk while on school property. American Academy will not be responsible for theft or damage to any vehicles parked on or near American Academy premises. American Academy will not be responsible for personal property left in vehicles that is lost, damaged, stolen, or destroyed.

Payroll

All employees are paid monthly per the [American Academy Payroll Procedure](#).

Personal Appearance

Employee appearance is not only a reflection of the individual, but of American Academy as well. American Academy expects staff members to take pride in their personal appearance and strive to achieve a positive, professional image when representing the school. Employees should use good judgment in accordance with the standards set forth in the [Employee Dress Code Policy](#).

Personnel Records

It is important that American Academy always has current information about its employees. If you have a change in name, address, phone number, or marital status, etc., please complete the [Employee Information Change Form](#) and turn it in to the Human Resources Manager within one month of the change. If for some reason there is a need to change any personal information, the employee will be asked to provide original documentation authorizing the change.

Please keep in mind that some personnel records, such as salary information, are open to the public per law.

Upon request, an employee will be allowed to review his/her personnel file and any of his/her own personnel records that have been used to determine qualifications for employment, promotion, compensation, termination, or other disciplinary action. Please talk to the administration for more information.

American Academy must retain documents per Document Retention Policy. Transfers

Because the [Douglas County Public Schools School District \(DCSD\)](#) was not involved in the interviewing and hiring approval of American Academy personnel, DCSD has no obligation to place, transfer, or promote American Academy employees. To gain employment in another DCSD school, employees must interview with the DCSD personnel office.

School Closures and Delays

If Douglas County School District (DCSD) delays or closes school, American Academy will delay or close.

American Academy reserves the right to delay or close, even if the DCSD remains open. Closures and delays will be posted on the American Academy media and broadcast on local television and radio stations. Should there be an early release due to weather, parents will be notified, and carpool will run as usual.

Staff Kids

Many American Academy employees also have students (“staff kids”) enrolled at American Academy. While the school is supportive of a family-friendly work environment, it is also critical to the professionalism of the work environment that the appropriate boundaries and rules be observed by both the employee and their staff kids.

BEFORE-SCHOOL AND AFTER-SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Staff kids are welcome in employee work spaces before and after school hours *only as long as they are not disruptive or affecting anyone else’s work environment*. Employees may send their staff kids to Morning Activity Club (before school), and/or Homework Club (after school), if available, for FREE as part of their employment benefits – see Human Resources for details. Employees may also ask teachers to keep staff kids upstairs in class until carpool All Call. Staff kids who are capable of quiet work and self-control may stay with the employee. Before or after school hours, the employee is responsible for the supervision of their own staff kids unless those students are enrolled in an extracurricular activity. Staff members who are required to work after school hours (extracurricular activities, conferences) are responsible for securing appropriate staff kid supervision -- students may not be left unsupervised while the employee works.

SCHOOL-DAY SUPERVISION

During school hours, the employee is primarily responsible for doing their job and the student is responsible for going to and staying in class. Once school is in session, the school is responsible for the supervision of students, not the parent. Within reason (and except for emergencies), the primary roles of “parent and child” must change to

“employee and student” with all the related expectations and boundaries. Staff kids should not expect to leave class to visit the employee. During school hours, employees should not expect to take over supervision of their own students unless the school has released them, as in the of illness or appointments, and employees should expect to check their students out with the front office, like all other parents, so that the school can account for the student’s safety and whereabouts.

SICK STAFF KIDS AND MEDICATION

If a staff kid doesn’t feel well or needs medication (KindiePrep - Grade 6), the first stop is the clinic, not the employee parent’s room or office. If a staff kid must take any kind of regular medication, it is critical (and it’s also the law) that the employee give the school nurse the records and the medication to manage. In the case of illness, the clinic will notify the employee if a staff kid is not feeling well (and/or send them back to class if they are ok). Employees are encouraged to take sick staff kids home but must first make certain to notify the supervisor and make any necessary arrangements to cover their work responsibilities.

LUNCH WITH STAFF KIDS

Employees may join their students for lunch in the cafeteria or by checking them out for lunch through the front office and take them off-campus. Students are expected to be with the rest of their grade during throughout the entire school day, including lunch and all recesses.

STUDENT CONCERNS AND TEACHER ACCESS

Employees should not abuse the more casual access to teachers that a school work environment provides by engaging in “drive-by conferences” while at work, at lunch or in the halls. As required of all other American Academy parents, employees with concerns about their own students or wanting to discuss a student’s progress with his/her teachers or other staff should make an appointment to do so and/or plan to attend parent teacher conferences. Employees should not initiate discussions about their student concerns by dropping into a teacher’s room or by bringing it up over lunch in the teachers’ lounge.

EMPLOYEE-ONLY AREAS

Employee restrooms and kitchens are for employees and adult guests of the school ONLY. Employees should not allow staff kids to use employee-only restrooms, kitchens or other employee-only areas. This includes the admin suites, the kitchen areas of the admin suites, the teachers’ lounges and staff restrooms on each floor. Staff kids should not use employee microwaves to heat up lunches, etc.

SECTION 5: CLASSROOM PROCEDURES FOR STAFF

Attendance Reporting

Homeroom teachers are responsible for taking student attendance in Infinite Campus during the morning homeroom period *every day*. Middle School teachers will record attendance and tardies each period. Attendance records are a student safety issue and a school funding issue and will be part of employee evaluations. Students coming in tardy, or later in the day, will be recorded by the front office when the student arrives at school.

Checking In and Out

As a courtesy to the school administration and office, please inform the front office and/or a colleague when you leave the building during school hours and upon your return. If there were an emergency, it is imperative to know if anyone is missing so that rescue workers do not do unnecessary searches.

Classroom Environment

Teachers are responsible for the entire environment in their classrooms. In every respect, rooms must be kept clean, orderly, attractive, and stimulating for a positive learning experience.

At the end of each day, staff and their students will be responsible for generally picking up their room. Please see to it that all trash is picked up and chairs are stacked or placed on desks. Anything that you can do to help our custodial staff save time would be appreciated.

Classroom Management

COURTESY AND RESPECT

Children are expected to behave respectfully to both adults and peers in words and actions. All staff are required to implement American Academy Manners and the American Academy Character programs to support this expectation.

NOISE

Generally, the noise level in the classrooms and the halls should be maintained at a level of respect for the others in the building. Planned activities which require livelier student interaction should be conducted with the same respect.

DISMISSAL

All classes will be dismissed at the final bell.

Student Discipline Guidelines

The [Student Discipline Policy](#) is based on the principle of supporting a positive learning environment for all students. Positive reinforcements and negative consequences are used to teach students good behavior. Since teachers work most closely with students, they carry the bulk of the discipline responsibility, though they are supported by the American Academy Dean of Students at each campus. It is important that teachers work closely with parents in discipline matters and that communications stay open and honest.

All staff members will enforce discipline as outlined in the [Student Discipline Policy](#).

Emergency Procedures

Each Staff member is required to complete the DCSD and AA Emergency Protocol Training at the beginning of each year. Each Staff member is required to have emergency clipboards with updated rosters at all times when with students. Be mindful that student roster changes occur all year long and rosters will need to be reprinted intermittently as students are added to or dropped from your classroom. Additionally, when outside with students, staff are required to have an active walkie-talkie with them at all times. Staff are expected to know the procedures for all emergencies, including **Lockdown, Secure, Shelter, and Evacuation**.

Safety drills will be conducted on a monthly basis.

Field Trips

All teachers are required to follow [Field Trip Procedures](#).

Flag Display and Ritual

The flag of the United States of America will be permanently displayed in each classroom. The Pledge of Allegiance will be said in every classroom each day.

Grading Scale

Please refer to the [Grading Policy](#).

Homework

Homework is a part of the American Academy academic program. Homework fosters good study habits and is vital for development. The use of proper spelling, grammar, penmanship, and general format is expected in all written assignments. Teachers are expected to enter all assigned homework into Infinite Campus to allow parents and students to verify assignments from home.

American Academy has required deadlines for grading and graded work. Please refer to your Elementary OneNote documentation for guidelines.

Identification Badge

You will be issued a photo identification badge from American Academy at the beginning of each school year. You are required to wear your American Academy ID badge at all times when on school grounds or attending school-related activities.

Mail Boxes

Boxes for notes, handouts, student communication, phone messages, etc. are located in the school office. Staff should check these boxes frequently to assure timely communications.

Make-Up Work for Students

Make-up work for absent students should be given per the [Attendance Policy](#).

Meetings

Departmental staff meetings are held regularly and scheduled by corresponding supervisors or administration. Grade level teams are also expected to have regular weekly meetings.

Morning Announcements

On every student contact day, morning announcements will be made. This includes reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. At the discretion of the front office or administration, afternoon announcements may also be made to clarify any last-minute news and information.

Parent Communication

Regular communication is critical in the educational process. Frequent communications will take place to keep families well-informed.

- Employees should check their email and voicemail daily and respond to parent emails or voicemails within 2 business days.
- Student work and parent communication should be sent home regularly at teacher discretion.
- When news and information become available, teachers should post news on their grade-level web pages. To avoid parent and student confusion, homework assignments should ONLY be posted in Infinite Campus, not the school website.
- Because the internet is a powerful communication tool, appearance, warmth, and completeness are extremely important.
- Make sure you are familiar with the [Parent Communication Policy](#), which specifies where parents are to go with questions and concerns. Please help guide the parent to the proper channel.

Uniform Policy

The purpose of the [Student Uniform Policy](#) is to promote learning, encourage modesty, reduce the distraction and cost of fashion, reduce disruptions and disciplinary problems, and promote school pride. Staff members are expected to enforce the Student Uniform Policy and to be an example to the students with their own professional attire.

Visitors and Volunteers in the Classroom

All visitors and volunteers must comply with the [Visitor and Volunteer Policy](#).