

Student/ Parent Handbook

2016-2017



**14825 Zinran Avenue
Savage, MN 55378**

**Phone: 952-226-5940
Fax: 952-226-5949**

Web page: www.aspenacademymn.org

Our Mission is to provide students with a well-rounded Core Knowledge-based education which meets the intellectual, creative, and social needs of each child.

This means our emphasis is on providing a Core Knowledge based education. It is *through* this curriculum that we strive to meet intellectual needs, creative needs, and social needs of our students. This is why we ask our parents to be familiar with our scope and sequence and our curriculum topics. Parent support of our required curriculum is crucial to the success of our school and the success of your student.

Our Vision is to prepare our students for future educational opportunities and life in a global society by creating an academically rigorous, literature-rich environment where class sizes are small, and a strong sense of community is built and valued.

Our Charter with Friends of Education requires us to follow the Core Knowledge Curriculum, Singapore Math, offer Spanish, and Latin starting in 4th grade. We also use Data Driven Instruction to make sure our students meet Minnesota State Standards and out-perform the resident district.

This means every time our charter is up for renewal, we are evaluated on our financial, administrative, and academic performance. For this reason, we don't just assess your child and move on; we take to heart the progress of each and every student. We value parent support toward these goals through classroom volunteering, ensuring your child is in school every day, and the homework support you provide at home.

Our Community includes students, staff and parents. While we stress academic rigor, we also want Aspen to be a place your child enjoys coming for school. Teachers work hard to build community within the classroom and we plan activities that build our larger school community such as assemblies, concerts, field trips, after-school activities through Active Solutions, and other events.

We know parents are an integral part of this community. We hope when you visit us at Aspen you will always feel welcome to assist and be part of our community. Our first priority, however, is teaching students and the work that we prepare for them. If we are not able to chat with you as long as you'd like, it's only because we're working as hard as we can to provide the best educational experience possible for your child. Please feel free to join us in this endeavor!

Equal Opportunity For All Students

Rights:

- Equal opportunity to participate in all school activities and school education programs for which they are eligible within legal limits.

Responsibilities:

- Following the rules and regulations of school sponsored activities they participate in. Children may not discourage the participation of other children.

Administrative Staff Contact Information

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| Director | 952-226-5941 | mike.mcnulty@aspenacademymn.org |
| Office | 952-226-5940 | office@aspenacademymn.org |
| Attendance | 952-226-5945 | attendance@aspenacademymn.org |
| Elementary Principal | 952-226-5943 | janelle.mellgren@aspenacademymn.org |
| Middle School Principal | 952-226-8188 | julie.herman@aspenacademymn.org |
| Business Office | 952-226-5942 | diane.hummel@aspenacademymn.org |
| Curriculum Coordinator | 952-226-5944 | maggie.rowan@aspenacademymn.org |
| Instructional Coach | 952-226-8187 | darby.thomas@aspenacademymn.org |
| School Nurse | 952-226-5940 | aimee.strege@aspenacademymn.org |
| Lunch program | 952-226-5946 | lunchprogram@aspenacademymn.org |

Please see our webpage for contact information for teaching staff.

**email address format – first.last@aspenacademymn.org

Topics are listed alphabetically.....

ANIMALS, PETS

Pets or other animals are not allowed at school without obtaining prior permission from the student's teacher and building administrator. Many students are allergic to animals and we need to be respectful of their health concerns. Animals must be vaccinated as required by local governmental ordinances, appropriately housed, humanely cared for, and properly handled. Animals are not to be transported on school buses.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL

SCHOOL HOURS: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

SCHOOL SUPERVISION is NOT available before 8:00 a.m., unless the student is registered for Eagle's Nest. For safety reasons, students **SHOULD NOT** be at school before this time. Students will not be allowed into the building until 8:00 a.m., unless participating in a before school activity for which they are registered.

If parents are in the building for any reason other than dropping off their child, **SIGNING IN AT THE OFFICE IS REQUIRED**. Thank you for your cooperation as we strive to create a safe and pleasant beginning to the school day.

Parents with students needing supervision before school may wish to contact the Eagle's Nest Program, which operates beginning at 7:00 a.m. For more information, please call 952-226-5942.

DROPPING OFF AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY

Drop off begins at 8:00 a.m. Please form two lines in front of the building for drop off. The staff will allow the students to enter the building in groups. Do not let your child exit your vehicle until you are in the front of the building, and staff have indicated that it is safe to do so. **For the safety of students and staff, please do not use your cell phones during this process.**

PICKING UP AT THE END OF THE DAY

Please do not line up until it is your designated pick up time, as students will not be released until then. Cars should not be blocking any public streets. Officers from the Savage police department often patrol the school in the morning and afternoon and may issue tickets for any traffic violations. **Please do not use your cell phone during this process.** All students must be picked up by the end of the day by 4:15 p.m. otherwise emergency drop in fees for Eagle's Nest will apply. See that section for more detail.

PICKING UP A STUDENT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

If you are picking up your child before the end of the school day, we ask that you email or call the office and classroom teacher/advisor indicating the time you would like him/her picked up. You must come into the building to the office to pick up your child and sign him/her out. Please park in the 10 minute parking area, not the front of the building where our buses line up. Please plan appointments accordingly.

PLEASE NOTE

Students may use the telephone at school for emergencies only. If a parent needs to make a change to the end of the day pick up (i.e. change from bus to carpool, etc.) it should be done prior to 12:00 p.m. each day to allow Aspen staff to communicate this change to your child.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

As a public school, we are required to follow MN mandatory attendance laws. Students are expected to come to school every day and on time. Students are also expected to stay until the end of the school day unless they have an excused absence via Policy 503. If you arrive late, you must come into the building with your child and sign in your student. If you will be picking your child up early, please inform your child's teacher as well as the office. If you will be picking up more than one child before 3:30, please inform all teachers involved. **If you must pick your child up for anything other than a medical/dental reason prior to 3:30, it will be recorded as an unexcused early departure.** A student will be recorded as absent ½ day if the student arrives at school after 10:00 a.m. or leaves school prior to 2:00 p.m. Students are considered tardy if they arrive at school after 8:30 a.m. Students must check in at the office when they arrive late to school.

A doctor's note may be requested for students who miss school for a doctor, dentist, or orthodontic appointment.

If your child will be absent, you may email the school at attendance@aspenacademymn.org or leave a message at 952-226-5940. Please leave your name, your child's name, your child's grade, and your child's teacher's name. If students have been sick, they are expected to stay home until they are symptom-free or have been on antibiotics for 24 hours. Students may be requested to provide a doctor's note if the absence has been for three or more days. You may be contacted by administration if your student has had several unexcused absences, excessive tardies, or if your student regularly leaves early. An attendance plan may need to be put in place as per Aspen School Board Policy 503.

Extended vacations (unexcused absences) may require that we withdraw your child from our school and give your child's spot to the next family on the wait list. If you plan to be absent for a vacation, parents must speak to the Elementary or Middle School Principal about MN attendance laws and the rules governing mandatory withdrawals. If your child is absent for any reason, your child's teacher will provide the make-up work **upon your child's return**. Teachers are **not** expected to provide homework ahead of time for pre-planned absences. We know you will understand that it is the teacher's job to plan lessons for the students who are in attendance, not set aside that responsibility and pre-plan for one student going on vacation. In this instance, you can encourage your child to read and journal, and enjoy the family time.

BAND

Aspen Academy offers a beginning band program as an enrichment opportunity after school for fifth graders. Information is sent to students the spring before fifth grade that explains costs, scheduling, and instrument rental options.

Aspen's middle school band is an intermediate band for students who have either taken fifth grade band at Aspen or have taken one or more years of private lessons on their own. Students who have taken private lessons must consult with the band teacher and/or the middle school principal prior to enrollment.

The middle school band is an elective that meets during the day and students are continually enrolled from one year to the next unless schedule changes are arranged with the middle school principal. Students who do not elect to take band will be placed in an alternate course.

BEHAVIOR PLAN

The staff at Aspen Academy spend time discussing behavior expectations so we can be consistent in conveying our expectations to students. We strive to make Aspen a place where students feel safe and respected. Our discipline system strives to give students the words, strategies, and tools they need to be responsible, respectful, caring individuals. This takes time. Students don't learn their multiplication facts in one sitting and behavior norms are even more complex. It takes practice as students are constantly applying them to new situations. Instead of only assigning consequences (which we do when appropriate), we also believe in taking the time to teach the students how to handle the situation for themselves. We ask that you partner with us in these endeavors, back us in these endeavors, and be patient with your child and others' children through this learning process.

Aspen School Values

Tenacity
High Expectations
Integrity
No Excuses
Kindness

In some instances, a teacher may send home a discipline slip that makes note of a particular behavior or incident. These are intended as communication tools and parents are asked to discuss the situation with their student, talk about alternatives, and work in *partnership* with the teacher so the student has words, skills, and resources to handle the situation differently next time. Our ultimate goal is to establish a positive learning environment for all students.

BIRTHDAYS/ HOLIDAYS

Aspen Academy strongly discourages birthday treats in the classroom. Treats in the classroom can be harmful to students with food allergies and sensitivities. Also, the time taken to distribute and eat the treats takes away from instructional time. Please consider alternate ways to celebrate without an edible treat. Food shared in the classroom must be store purchased. No peanut or tree nuts are allowed.

Party invitations are not allowed to be distributed at school. Also, sending flowers or balloons to school is discouraged. If the school receives deliveries of these items, they will remain in the office until the end of the school day at which time your child may pick them up

BUILDING SAFETY AND SECURITY

Building security is an important element in any public building. The staff at Aspen Academy will take this very seriously and will use the following plan: All outside doors will remain locked during the school hours with the exception of the front doors. The front doors are open to the office area, the vestibule is locked. Visitors must enter the main entrance and check in at the office in order to gain entry.

VISITOR PROCEDURES

Visitors are defined as any person not assigned to the Aspen Academy staff. This includes parent volunteers, student volunteers, contractors, visiting district staff, school board members, parents, siblings and relatives not attending Aspen Academy.

The following procedure will be used as it relates to school visitors:

1. Visitors are required to report to the office and sign in and receive a Visitor Badge.
2. If staff members do not see a Visitor Badge, they will stop you and ask you to return to the office to check in.
3. Before leaving the building, visitors will need to report back to the office to check out.

SAFETY DRILLS

As a proactive measure, our school will practice fire, tornado, and lock down drills throughout the school year. We urge you to talk with your children about these drills at home. We explain lock down drills to our students as a situation where a stranger did not check in at the office and we need to stay in our classrooms until we know it's safe. If you are in the building during a drill, you will be expected to participate.

BUS RESPONSIBILITIES

All students who ride the bus are expected to follow and observe the safety rules, as well as those of the bus driver. Students who do not follow rules will be subject to suspension of bus-riding privileges as designated in the procedures listed below. ***Families who have paid for bus services do not***

receive a refund in the event of a suspension. Because transporting 60-70 children on a bus is a very serious business with potential dangers, we firmly enforce bus regulations.

1. **Previous to loading:**
 - a) Be at the assigned school bus stop 10 minutes **prior** to boarding
 - b) Stay off the road while waiting for the bus
 - c) Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to board
 - d) Be courteous

2. **While on the bus:**
 - a) Follow the directions of the school bus driver
 - b) Keep noise levels down
 - c) Keep personal belongings on your lap
 - d) Use of profane or abusive language will not be tolerated
 - e) Keep hands and head inside the bus at all times
 - f) Do not throw anything out of the bus windows
 - g) Always remain in your seat while on the bus
 - h) Always be courteous to fellow pupils and bus driver
 - i) Fighting, spitting, wrestling or throwing objects are not tolerated
 - j) Treat bus equipment with care. Any damage to equipment will result in disciplinary action and restitution to the bus company
 - k) No eating, drinking or gum

3. **After leaving the bus:**
 - a) Cross the road at the least 10 feet in front of the bus but only after checking to be sure no traffic is approaching and/or after receiving a signal from the driver
 - b) Never walk behind the rear of the bus
 - c) Stand clear of the bus at all times

4. **Bus behaviors that are unacceptable:**
 - a) Insubordination: refusal to follow instructions of the bus driver
 - b) Smoking, drugs and alcohol
 - c) Fighting
 - d) Profane language
 - e) Destruction of the bus
 - f) Harassment or bullying of other students

Questions about busing:

Call Durham Bus Company 952-736-8004

- *to verify bus pick up times
- *to check on a late bus
- *to share bus concerns with the Terminal Manager
- *with questions regarding school attendance boundaries

Call the office at 952-226-5940

- *to add a student to a bus route
- *questions about bus payment

CHANGE IN BUSING ARRANGEMENTS:

Students may only ride their assigned bus. Only students assigned to a bus may ride on that bus.

If your child is not going home as he/she usually does, the teacher must be notified IN WRITING detailing the change in arrangements. The school must receive a note from a parent or guardian that gives permission for a student to leave school in a way different from usual. If a student is going to another child's house after school, both child's parents must send a note indicating this. If communication is not received, the student must go home as they usually do.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONICS

iPods, video games, cell phones, or other expensive items are not allowed at school or on buses without permission by the principal. Aspen Academy is not responsible for lost or damaged items that are brought to school.

Parents, we ask that while you are inside the building you silence your cell phones, this includes the lobby. We further ask that there be no cell phone use (including texting) in the car pool line. Such use distracts parents from driving safely during pick up time.

Cell phones may be allowed with specific exceptions and in special circumstances. This would need pre-approval via the principal. Should students with parent permission, need a cell phone for before or after school communication (not on buses) must first receive permission from the principal. If permission is received, elementary students must keep phone in their backpack and turned off during school hours.

CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS

To help minimize classroom disruptions, please observe the following:

- If students forget their lunch or homework, bring it to the office with the child's name and teacher noted. PLEASE DO NOT deliver it to the classroom while class is in session. We will get it to them with the least amount of disruption.
- Please plan ahead and communicate plans to your child before school.

Parents who wish to contact a classroom teacher during the day should be prepared to leave a voice mail requesting that the teacher contact the parent at the teacher's convenience; E-mails are also welcome. Teachers are generally not available to come to the telephone during the time school is in session because they are teaching and giving their full attention to their students.

After School Activities

We believe that having a broad range of after-school activities that appeal to a variety of interests is important to keep students engaged. As we create these programs, along with committed staff to coach/staff/supervise them, we'll post them on the school website. We also invite parents to lead clubs and activities. Please contact the Community Ed Coordinator, Jemma Wahl, jemma.wahl@aspenacademymn.org if you are interested in helping with or supervising an activity.

Please see our website to a link to Active Solutions.

CONFERENCES

Conferences are held twice a year to communicate your child's academic and social strengths and needs. Please see the calendar for dates and times. Teachers are not required to schedule conferences at alternate times if families choose to use conference dates for vacations instead. Please make sure you are respectful of appointments as time is limited.

Teachers will notify parents whenever a student is having difficulty with school work or his/her behavior has changed. Parents are encouraged to discuss their questions and concerns with their child's teacher(s) and set up additional conferences if necessary.

EAGLE'S NEST

Eagle's Nest is our program that provides care for students before and after school.

To participate, parents must pre-register, and must sign up for days of attendance in advance. Calendars are due the 20th of the month prior. Parents picking up their child late will be charged \$5 for every 5 minutes late. **For staffing reasons, Aspen Academy no longer provides drop-in care.** For registration information, please see our website or contact the business office at 952-226-5942.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

School may be closed at times due to inclement weather or other emergencies. If such a closing should occur parents will be notified in one of three ways – via the home page of our website, via the local TV stations, and/or via TRZ (our emergency phone notification system). For this reason, it is important that you keep your phone numbers up to date for us. If we have to make the decision to close, you may get the call very early in the morning, and for this we apologize in advance. However, some staff and families have to leave extremely early in the morning and so must be notified in time.

FIELD TRIPS AND ACTIVITY FUND

Field trips are not required, however we encourage all students to attend. Signed parental permission slips are required for all field trips. They will be sent home with the children before each planned field trip informing you in advance as to the educational purpose, date, times, destination, cost and any other specific arrangements that are made. Students who do not return parental permission slips will not be permitted to go on the field trip. Although we ask for parents to pay for these activities, students will not be denied the opportunity to participate if they cannot afford to pay. When we send home permission slips, there will always be a line asking for a contribution to help families that cannot afford to pay. Your assistance is appreciated. If you need assistance in paying, please contact the Business Manager, 952-226-5942.

Classroom teachers appreciate the extra help that adult chaperones can offer during this time. Due to the safety and liability that is encountered from leaving the school premises, we ask that younger siblings not accompany chaperones on field trips. All chaperones are required to attend a volunteer orientation prior to chaperoning.

FIGHTING, GANG, AND HAZING

Fighting, gang, and hazing are governed by Policies 526.

FORGOTTEN LUNCHES/HOMEWORK/INSTRUMENTS/ETC

We cannot interrupt classes to deliver forgotten homework, band instruments, lunches, etc. If these are delivered they must remain in the office. We will notify the teacher and they will send the student up to retrieve them when it is not during their teaching time. Thank you for your help with this.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Aspen Academy and its faculty and staff are devoted to resolve concerns and complaints of its students and parents when they arise. To this end, Aspen Academy has provided opportunities for students and parents to express their concerns through processes established in the Aspen Academy grievance policy. The Aspen Academy grievance policy identifies processes and provides a mechanism for resolving complaints in an informal manner. While Aspen Academy encourages informal resolutions, it recognizes that students and parents may want a more formal process and can refer to Policy 103.

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Aspen Academy is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers and patrons, free from harassment, intimidation or bullying.

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, when the intentional written, verbal, or physical act:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student’s property; or

- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education; or
- Is severe, persistent, or pervasive so that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms including: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendos, demeaning comments, drawing cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, oral or physical actions. “Intentional acts” refers to the individual’s choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).

When these words or actions take place in emails, on Facebook, or in text messages, it’s called “cyber-bullying” and we encourage parents to be watchful of it as this is an area that may become a school-home issue.

Sometimes students will say they were “only joking”. It is **not a joke** to harass or bully someone. Play fighting is never allowed at Aspen Academy and we do not excuse such behavior as “kids being kids”. Aspen proactively addresses bullying through discussions in the classroom, school-wide assemblies, and in disciplining situations that arise between students.

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the education environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may still be prohibited by other district policies or building, classroom, or program rules.

Students who know that someone else is being harassed or bullied should let an adult know. If a parent feels the actions of another child have infringed upon the rights of his or her child, they should approach the classroom teacher to seek resolution to the situation. Under no circumstances shall a parent approach that child while at school to chastise the other child.

HEALTH INFORMATION

ILLNESS

Students are **NOT** to come to school ill. Any student complaining of illness and running a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above may be sent home at the discretion of the health office staff or other appropriate school personnel.

If a child is too ill to go outside, they are too ill to be in school. If a child has a medical problem that necessitates they be kept inside, a note from their doctor is required.

Students will not be sent home from school unless an adult accompanies them. A parent or someone designated by the parent is expected to pick up an ill child when called. Please thoroughly complete the emergency contact information online or paper copy at the beginning of each school year.

Please update any phone number changes throughout the year.

Parents of students with excessive absences from school related to illness may be contacted by the school staff for follow-up information.

Any student who has been home due to an illness (i.e., vomiting, diarrhea, fever > 100 degree's, etc.), should not return to school until symptom free and fever free for a full 24 hours.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

It is a state requirement that the health department record all reportable communicable diseases. Therefore, we must have this information to facilitate keeping accurate records, to inform the appropriate public health agency, and to identify any clusters of illness in the classroom. When you call Aspen Academy regarding illness please inform the school as to the reason for your child's absence from school. Included below are guidelines for a few common illnesses which require medical evaluation, an exclusion period, and treatment.

PINK EYE: Students with pink eye are to stay home for a **full 24 hours** after they start antibiotic treatment. This condition is contagious and excessive tearing washes out the antibiotic very quickly. All students must practice good handwashing.

STREP THROAT: Strep Throat is also a condition that is highly contagious. Students must be on an oral antibiotic for a **full 24 Hours** before they can return to school.

HEAD LICE: Our school has a policy of notifying parents when there is a head lice problem. When a child is found to have head lice, the child is discreetly removed from the classroom and the parent is called. The child can return to school when he/she has received an appropriate lice treatment product, and is free from lice. When cases of head lice occur, the Health Staff may check siblings. We follow Health Department protocols in the handling of head lice.

Be sure to contact the Office and your family physician if you have any questions about your child's health or illness.

HEALTH RELATED EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- The school will attempt to contact parents at home immediately in the event of an emergency, such as an illness or accident.
- The parent or guardian will be called at his/her place of employment if no one is at home.
- The name(s) designated on the emergency card filed in the Office will be called if we are unable to reach parent or guardian.
- The school will call for emergency service if it is impossible to reach someone in a reasonable length of time or if the accident/illness is severe enough to warrant such service immediately.

IMMUNIZATION LAW

Aspen Academy complies with the State of Minnesota Immunization Laws. Immunizations are required for measles, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis B, meningitis, and Chicken pox vaccine or evidence of disease. Please plan to have your child properly immunized before they start school. Each student must supply written evidence (month, day and year) of the minimum required doses of immunizations or have properly signed/notarized medical or conscientious exemptions on file with the school. Please contact enrollment with immunization questions, 952-226-8185.

MEDICATIONS TAKEN AT SCHOOL

Written statements and/or orders are required to be on file in the building office for EACH new school year before any medications may be administered. Medications must be in the original packaging.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION requires the parent signature and a physicians/ licensed prescriber's written instructions on file before the medication can be administered at school. Prescription medications must be in a properly labeled pharmacy prepared container with the students name and current dosing schedule. Most pharmacists will provide an extra container to be kept at school if requested.

Most medication (such as antibiotics that are to be given three times a day), may be given before school, after school, and at bedtime, and therefore need not be sent to school.

Parents of students with known food allergies which require an epi-pen and Benadryl must complete an allergy action plan and provide these medications.

"OVER-THE-COUNTER" medications require a signed parent permission form. "Over-the-counter" medications must be in the original manufacturers packaging. School personnel may administer over the counter medications which follow the manufacturer's dosing schedule, unless a physician's written order is on file and directs otherwise. This includes cough drops and throat lozenges.

The school will do everything possible to cooperate with parents in implementing this policy. Parents may call the school if they have any concerns. The appropriate permission forms need to be completed by the child's parents/physician **before any** medication is to be administered at school. Medication Forms are available in the office.

If medications and/or dosages are discontinued or changed, the parent is responsible for notifying the office. If the school is not notified by the parent about a discontinuation or change in medication, the parent assumes liability for resulting consequences. Changes in doses and/or medications require new orders from the medical provider.

STOCK MEDICATION

Please note: The school does not provide Ibuprofen, Tylenol or Tums. Parents must provide those medications and a separate over the counter form will need to be filled out.

Any infirmity items used in the office require yearly written authorization. Parents must complete and sign the health and emergency infirmity form authorizing permission to administer these medications.

CHILDREN CANNOT BE IN POSSESSION OF ANY MEDICATION AT SCHOOL. Medications will be kept under lock and key in the office. The exception may be made with inhalers given appropriate physician/parent authorization and prior arrangements made through the office.

HOMWORK GUIDELINES

Guidelines:

- Daily homework is designed to support student learning in their subject areas. Homework should average about 10 minutes per grade. If your student is taking longer, please contact the teacher to seek support before they fall behind.

- When teachers assign homework, it is usually due the next day.
- Teachers at Aspen do not post homework on their web pages because this puts homework in the hands of teachers and parents instead of having the student take responsibility for it. Teachers will, however, work with students at the end of the day to make sure assignments are listed in your child's planner. If you feel your child is not listing enough information in his or her planner for you to understand what is due, please speak with your child and/or your child's teacher to remedy this. It is the student's responsibility to make sure homework comes home and gets put back in the backpack when done. It's also important to develop good homework habits.
- Homework (other than general reading, things already prepared) will not be given in advance for students going on vacation, etc. Doing so requires the teacher to put the rest of the class' learning needs aside. All homework missed will be provided upon student's return.

Additional Expectations:

Grades K - 1 Read for 10 - 20 minutes and practice Math facts for a few minutes every night.

Grades 2 - 5 Read for 20 minutes and practice Math facts for a few minutes every night.

Grades 6 - 8 On top of their daily homework, students are expected to read for 30 minutes every night. In middle school student homework requirements increase and an emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning becomes an expectation.

Daily homework should average about 10 minutes per grade. If your student is taking longer, please contact the teacher to seek support before they fall behind.

THINK HOMEWORK

Tenacity:

- ***Accept only your best***
- ***Focus your attention on each task and work on them one at a time***
- ***Ask questions after YOU'VE tried more than once***

High Expectations

- ***Always read the directions***
- ***Bring home the materials you need***
- ***Show your best work***

Integrity

- ***Always show YOUR thinking/learning, that's what we care about most***
- ***Hand materials in on time***

No Excuses

- ***Accept responsibility, that's how we learn to improve next time***
- ***Accept help from your parents/school staff – it is our job to help you learn how***

Kindness

- ***Accept only your best, you are worth it***
- ***Helping others is okay, doing things for them is not***

INSURANCE

The school does not carry insurance to cover student injuries while attending school. Any injuries that happen on school property or while on a field trip should go through the parent insurance.

INTERNET USE

Use of the school's computer systems and the internet is for legitimate educational and business needs of the school only. All other uses are strictly prohibited. Use must be in compliance with school board Policy 524: Technology Acceptable Use and Safety Policy. Inappropriate use of the district electronic technologies, including interfering with the network functions and the standardization of technologies, may result in the limitation or revocation of access. Users have no expectation of privacy when using school computer systems as use of the school district system and access to use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Signing of the handbook constitutes agreement to Technology Use Agreement as discussed in school board Policy 524.

Electronic communications are governed by Policy 406, Public and Private Data, and Policy 515, Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records. Should the user violate the school's acceptable use policy, the user's privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. All provisions of the acceptable use policy are subordinate to local, state, and federal laws.

LOST AND FOUND

A Lost and Found area is located near the commons area. Your child should check this area for lost items. Any items that are found should be turned in to the office. Be sure to check for lost items at conference times and at the end of the school year.

- To help avoid losses, put **names** on all clothing, shoes, and school supplies.
- Unclaimed items are donated to clothing collection agencies at random times throughout the year and at the end of the school year.

LUNCH PROGRAM AND SNACKS

Students may choose to order hot lunch through Lancer Food Services in advance online or they may bring their own lunches from home. Menus are posted online typically around the 15th of the month prior. Hot lunches must be ordered the month prior. Please see our website for ordering instructions.

Aspen is not an allergen-free school although our lunch caterer does guarantee that hot lunches are pork and peanut free.

If a student forgets his/her lunch, we will provide an alternate option and the parent will be charged. Due to the sheer number of students who forget their lunch on a given day, we do not allow students to call home from the office. **We do not allow fast food in the lunch room.** If you are purchasing a lunch to bring in to your student, we only accept healthy options, such as sub sandwiches or salads.

There is no refrigerator or microwave available for student use.

If you would like to have lunch with your student, we ask that you call the office ahead of time.

FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH

Free or reduced lunches are available for those families who are eligible according to the Federal guidelines published each fall. Each student will receive an application for free or reduced lunch. These forms are to be returned to the office as soon as possible. Applications will be approved or denied by the Business Office according to Federal guidelines and parents/guardians will be notified of eligibility. Information regarding free and reduced lunches is available to all Aspen Academy families upon request from the business office at 952-226-5942.

NUTRITION BREAK

Elementary teachers usually provide a nutrition break during the day. Snacks need to be a healthy one, like fruits or vegetables. We do not allow candy, desserts, or sugary snacks. Students may have a water bottle in the classroom, but no pop or juice. Please do not send products with peanuts or tree nuts.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Some of the most important principles upon which Aspen Academy is founded and the basis for school rules that students at school are expected to follow are founded on respect for others and personal responsibility. Parents play a formative role in the development of their child's sense of justice, equity, and the dignity and worth of all members of our school community. As one of the most influential role models in a child's life, one of the best ways for a parent to teach is to lead by example. Accordingly, Aspen Academy expects the behavior of each parent and responsible adult with children enrolled in our school to adhere to the standards of conduct set forth below.

- a) When visiting or volunteering at the school, parents should observe all rules of the school, including checking in at the office. This applies to the times directly before and after school.
- b) If a parent feels that actions of another child have infringed upon the rights of his or her child, under no circumstances shall the parent or guardian approach another child while at school to discuss or chastise them. The parents should address with staff only.
- c) If a parent has questions or issues relating to the classroom or a class they should first be addressed directly to the staff member in question.
- d) All communications regarding issues with other parents or staff at the school or school events shall remain respectful and address the issues at hand. Yelling, taunting, threatening or abusive behavior, cursing, foul language, or derogatory remarks are not acceptable means of communication. Parents are expected to resolve issues through calm dialogue between the parties directly involved while respecting the dignity of others.
- e) We cannot interrupt class time for parents to discuss evening plans, birthday parties, play dates, etc. Please make sure these conversations are taking place at home prior to coming to school.
- f) Parents shall uphold Aspen Academy in all conversations in the community. If there are concerns about an issue, we ask they are brought to Aspen's attention rather than discussing negatively in public.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

We believe parents and teachers are partners in your child's education. To maximize communication and reduce our use of paper, we send the majority of information electronically. Please contact the office if you are unable to access this communication and we can provide you with paper copies. If you have any suggestions to improve parental communication, please let us know.

Please allow up to 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) for a staff/teacher response.

ASSIGNMENT PLANNERS

Assignment planners are used daily for all students in grades K-8. Each day your child will write down reminders and assignments that need to be communicated to you. Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher any time in the assignment notebooks. This habit of becoming organized and responsible is an essential skill for our students.

REFLECTIONS AND PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS

We want to know what you think about Aspen Academy. Please call or email at any time to share your thoughts about our school. **When you are especially pleased about something a teacher or the school is doing, it would be nice to hear from you.** If your child tells you something about school that sounds unreasonable or you have a question, please send a note or call us. This type of communication helps prevent misunderstandings. If you are concerned about a situation in your child's education, please, **always talk directly with the staff member involved.** Most concerns can be resolved at this level. If you cannot resolve the conflict or answer the question, please contact the office and they will direct your question to the appropriate person.

ASPEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The Aspen Community Council (ACC) is OPEN to *ANY and ALL* Aspen Academy school parents, guardians, and staff members of Aspen Academy. You are invited to attend our meetings listed on the calendar on the website (typically the 2nd Tuesday of the month). Meetings begin at 4:00.

The ACC provides meaningful contributions toward the development of our school's learning program. We promote progressive actions for continuous improvements at the school to support the whole child.

ASPEN WEEKLY UPDATE

The office sends out a weekly update. Typically these are on Fridays. There are many items covered each week that may include deadlines, ordering, etc. Please take the time to read this update each week.

PARKING

Aspen Academy assumes no responsibility for damage to cars or for theft of vehicles or articles from vehicles. Please do not park by the Martial Arts Building, this is private property and you may be towed.

PAYMENTS AND DEADLINES

All deadlines are firm (for example: yearbooks, t-shirts, field trips, Eagles Nest, lunch, etc.). Please take the time to return all payments in a timely manner. We set the deadlines due to staffing needs, staff schedules, and vendor contracts. We ask that forms and payments are turned in to the office during business hours (8 am-4 pm). If you have a concern about sending payment in via your student, please bring it in or mail in. Thank you.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Each fall and spring arrangements have been made with Lifetouch to provide individual student pictures. This service is provided on a voluntary basis to the students. Each parent has the option of ordering the package of their choice from the options listed. If a parent is not fully satisfied with the pictures, he/she may have their picture re-taken during all school re-take day. On the fall date students must wear the school uniform. All students will have their picture taken on the fall picture day. Participation in spring pictures is optional. Those taking pictures may be out of uniform according to out of uniform day guidelines. Students not participating in picture day must wear uniforms.

RECESS

K-5 students have daily recess except in extreme weather conditions such as rain or severe cold/wind chill. Our cold weather policy is:

- If the temperature is 0 degrees F or below, the students will not go outside for recess
- If the wind chill is colder than 0 degrees F, the students will not go outside for recess
- If it is raining, the students will not go outside for recess

Please consider these factors related to weather as you and your child make your daily decisions on outerwear. Hats, scarves, boots, snow pants and mittens or gloves are necessary. Most playground games are played in the snow. If students do not have boots on they are restricted to play on the cement area. Also, as the snow melts, the grassy areas of the playground can become muddy or soggy.

Students are not permitted to stay indoors, except at the teacher's request, during recess time without a written request from a physician. We do not have the staffing to supervise students per parent request. If your student is too ill to go outside, they are too ill to be at school.

REPORT CARDS

Aspen focuses on the intellectual, creative, and social learning of each student. We report formally on their learning three times per year using our Standards Based Report Card. Standards Based Report Cards enable us to state specifically what students have learned according to Minnesota State Standards, Core Knowledge Curriculum Standards, National Standards in Specialist areas and our Aspen THINK values.

SCHOOL BOARD

Parents interested in having input on school matters can best do so at board *committee* meetings. This is where the discussion of ideas and policy takes place – much more so than at board meetings which is a reporting on, and summary of, the committee meetings. Through the committee process the school board better understands the needs of the Aspen community and makes decisions. For a full description of committee commissions, committee chairs, and committee meeting agendas, please see the Aspen website.

SCHOOL LOCKERS

Aspen Academy provides lockers, at some grade levels, for the convenience of its students. Lockers are assigned by the student's advisor. Students may not share school lockers or use them to store items which are not school related. Any item found in a locker assigned to a particular student may be deemed to be in the possession of that student.

Students do not have an expectation of privacy in school lockers. All school lockers are the property of Aspen Academy, and the school retains ownership and possessory control of all school lockers which have been assigned to students. If a school official or employee determines that a locker search is necessary or appropriate, the school official or employee may conduct a locker search without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

The personal possessions of students within a locker may be searched only when school authorities have reasonable grounds to believe that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules.

Students are responsible for the contents of their assigned school locker as well as its physical condition. Lockers will be assigned in a clean, working condition. Any damage to school lockers must be reported to the office immediately. Students are discouraged from bringing valuable items of personal property to school, as such items are rarely school related. Aspen Academy is not responsible for any items which are lost or stolen from a school locker.

Students may access their lockers before or after school or during passing time. We do not allow students to leave class to access their locker. This helps with classroom disruption and noise levels in the hall during teaching time.

Lockers may be opened by school authorities per MN Statute 121A.72.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Aspen does have a Facebook page. Many times parents want to connect with other parents via social media and start their own group pages. We are a close knit school and love to see parents connecting with other parents. If you do so, please remember to be respectful of other students' privacy. If there are specific concerns, we encourage you to help keep our school positive by sharing those concerns with the Aspen office or the person(s) best able to address them.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

As a public school, Aspen Academy is required to evaluate students who are referred for services and provide services for students who meet defined criteria. We have paraprofessionals and licensed special education teachers on staff and contract with outside service providers as needed.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Aspen Academy places great emphasis on the healthy development of the mind, body and spirit of all its students. Substance abuse includes tobacco, drugs or alcohol. Contact with dangerous drugs/controlled substances and/or alcohol is a detriment to a child's growth and development. Being in the possession or under the influence of dangerous drugs/controlled substances and/or alcohol on school property or at any school related functions will have serious consequences, including suspension. This also includes the possession of related paraphernalia and the abuse of prescription and over the counter drugs.

Tobacco, drugs and alcohol are not allowed by anyone, not even adults, on school property, on field trips, or at any activity of which the school is responsible. Field trips and after-hours events are considered an extension of the school day and any parent participating in these events must respect all school policies with regard to alcohol, drugs and tobacco, serving as role models for the students.

Any adult who has information about student use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs should inform the Principal or other employee of the school.

TWO HOUSEHOLD FAMILIES

A parent may not ask us to withhold information from the student's other parent, deny the other parent the right to visit the school, or deny the other parent the right to pick up the student from school. We cannot legally do so unless there are Court documents that prohibit it. In custody hearings, a parent will sometimes ask a teacher or other school employee to testify on their behalf. In most instances, the teacher is not witness to the parenting that takes place in the home and therefore will not testify unless subpoenaed.

The parent requesting or arranging for optional, fee-based services at Aspen Academy (e.g. hot lunch, after-care, etc.) will be responsible for payment of the services provided to their child. Any arrangements beyond that are between the student's parents/guardians and our staff will not get involved or mediate to determine who is financially responsible. If payment is not made, your child may be removed from the optional program(s). If Court documents exist that we need to be aware of,

please contact the Principal or Business Manager. We will otherwise assume the situation to be a family matter.

UNIFORMS

Aspen Academy has a Uniform Policy for students. All parents and students are expected to know the full policy and follow. Policy 504 and uniform guidelines. Specific details (colors, styles) are listed in the guidelines. **Students may NOT wear:** shoes with cartoon characters, wheels or lights. No baggy pants/tight fitting or cargo shorts or yoga pants. Knit pants will not be allowed at school. Nothing that is ripped or torn or dirty. Students who are cold should have an appropriate sweater (see policy). No hats or boots of any kind inside. No hair decorations or jewelry that is distracting. We send home uniform reminders if students come to school with something that is not part of the Aspen uniform. If necessary, administration may have the student call home to bring appropriate uniform clothing to school.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

- We welcome volunteers at Aspen Academy, but they must attend an orientation meeting prior to volunteering for the first time.
- Please check in with the front office and wear your visitor badge when you are in the building.
- Be positive with the students and with the work that they do. Maintain realistic standards for their work.
- Feel free to help or guide a student, but please do not do the work for the student. Students learn by experimenting so let them do their work if at all possible. Ask those questions such as, “What do you think you should do?”
- Respect the confidentiality of the students and data privacy. Don’t discuss the lives or learning of the students you assist with anyone other than the classroom teacher. If you have a concern, please feel free to bring it to the attention of the classroom teacher or the principal.
- Please be on time. If you are unable to come at your scheduled time, please call the office or send a note. We depend on you.
- Be professional. We are always role models for the students.
- Emergency Procedures: In case of emergency, contact the classroom teacher.
- Have fun with the students.
- Please refrain from cell phone use while helping students.
- Please make alternative arrangement for younger siblings.
- THANK YOU for volunteering your time!

WEAPONS

No kind of weapon (real or pretend) is allowed at Aspen Academy. It is a felony to possess, store or keep a weapon on school property. The definition of a weapon includes:

1. Firearm, regardless if it is loaded or not, or in a working or non-working condition.
2. Any item that looks like a firearm.
3. A knife.
4. Explosives or any incendiary device (bomb) or item that looks like an incendiary device.
5. Any item which is utilized in such a manner so as to threaten, intimidate, or produce bodily harm or the fear of such harm.

Students must make sure they do not have anything in their backpack or jacket pockets that is a weapon or even looks like a weapon. Students who find a weapon at school, or see another student with a weapon, must tell an adult immediately.

Refer to Policy 501.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for your careful review of the Student/Parent Handbook. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you have any questions. Additional policy information is posted in the board section on our website.