



ACS | COBHAM

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

A passion for achievement

London, England

Lower School Handbook
2009 - 2010

Contents

	Page
Introduction	3
Overview of ACS Cobham	
ACS Philosophy	4
Lower School Philosophy	5
Overview of the Lower School	5
The School Day	
School Behaviour	7
Attendance	7
Late Arrival/Early Pick-Up	8
Change to Regular Home Transportation	8
Lunch/Snack	8
Recess	8
Special Area Classes	8
Library	9
Physical Education	9
Homework	9
Extracurricular Activities	9
Field Trips	10
Textbooks	10
School Supplies	11
School/Parent Communication	
Parent Involvement	12
Report Cards	12
Parent/Teacher Conferences	12
Standardised Testing	12
Student Study Teams	13
Change of Address/Telephone Number	13
Withdrawing from School	13
Health and Safety	
Supervision of Lower School Students	14
Cars on Campus	14
Bus Regulations	14
School Nurses	15
Medication	15
Food Allergies	15
Emergency Closure	16

contents continued

Miscellaneous Information

Facilities Usage	18
Lost and Found	18
Telephone	18
Security	18
Fire Alarm/Drills	19

Appendices

Admission Policy	20
Procedures for Assigning Class Placement	20
Student Relations Policy	21
Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviour	23
Jewellery Policy	24
Complaints procedure	27

Introduction

ACS Cobham International School serves the educational needs of the American and International community in Surrey and the surrounding area. The Campus is located on a 128 acre estate known as “Heywood”, between the towns of Cobham and Esher on the A307 Portsmouth Road. The school is one of three comprising ACS International Schools with other campuses located in Hillingdon, Middlesex and Egham, Surrey.

The School, opened in 1975, has over 1,300 students currently enrolled as day students and about 100 boarders in the higher grades.

The “Heywood” campus features several academic buildings, a sports centre with swimming pool, fitness suite and sports arena, an additional sports hall, cafetorium, dormitory, playing fields and a track complex, gardens and woodlands.

The school is organised in 3 divisional levels – a lower school division, middle school division and high school division. With the exception of sharing certain facilities, each division has its own programme. Administratively, a principal is responsible for each division and a head of school coordinates the overall school programme.

The purpose of this handbook is to give students and parents an introduction to the school programme and outline the rules and regulations governing the school life.

Overview of ACS Cobham

ACS Cobham International School: Statement of Philosophy

ACS is:

- a dynamic educational community made up of international students, teachers, supporting staff and parents
- accredited by The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (USA) and by the Independent Schools Association (GB)

We offer:

- a secular, American based curriculum for students aged 2 to 18
- an American High School Diploma
- the International Baccalaureate Diploma
- Advanced Placement (AP) courses

The Success of our programme is based on:

- teamwork, collaboration and the broad participation of our community
- the pool of diverse ideas, experiences and values which our community offers through the involvement of each individual
- a thorough awareness of educational programmes throughout the world
- continuous learning and professional development

We provide:

- each student with the opportunity and support to reach their full potential
- each family with effective guidance to pursue the next step in each student's formal education

We believe that:

- all students can learn and each is a unique individual with equal potential to make a positive contribution to our school community
- it is important to instill an enthusiasm for life-long learning in each student along with the skills necessary to prepare for the challenges and changes which will be faced in their future
- our students must develop the skills and understanding that will enable them to become responsible, contributing citizens of the global community
- physical activity, a healthy diet and well-informed decision making are important for a healthy lifestyle
- self-expression is enhanced through the development of aesthetic appreciation

We support our philosophy through:

- high standards of achievement and performance
- a developmental, student-centered approach to teaching
- a comprehensive and varied curriculum aimed at understanding

- a constructivist approach to learning and understanding through the development of critical and creative thinking skills
- the development of independent learning skills and self-reflection in the learning process
- constructive feedback for learning
- nurturing a strong sense of self-esteem, personal integrity and a respectful, caring attitude toward others
- developing an understanding of, and appreciation for, the philosophies of people from many different cultures
- facing problems within a framework of fairness and shared values
- nurturing a sense of responsibility for our environment
- encouraging participation in fine arts through a variety of fine arts opportunities
- teaching the principles associated with healthy living and encouraging participation in physical activity

Lower School Philosophy

The lower school teachers work together to provide a stimulating and positive environment in which children learn and grow to appreciate cultural diversities.

We believe in an inquiry-based approach to the process of learning that emphasises creative and critical thinking.

We recognise and address the broad range of developmental needs of children aged 2 to 10 years. We support these needs by assisting students in the transition from home to school, encouraging positive social interaction with peers and providing opportunities for students to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for life-long learning and successful social interactions.

We value the importance of maintaining close communications with families to promote the development of the whole child.

Description of the Lower School

Our youngest Flopsy Bunnies and Scramblers attend half day classes. Pre-Kindergarten students have a full day program with the option of mornings only, if required and Kindergarten students attend a full day program. There are up to five classes per grade level, with a maximum of 16 students per class in Flopsy Bunnies, Scramblers, Pre-K, 17 in Kindergarten and 20 students in grades one to four. Art, computer, dance and movement, French, library, music, science lab, people skills and physical education are taught by specialist teachers who supplement and expand the lower school program.

The lower school curriculum is modelled on the American system of education. We take advantage of our international student community and the cultural diversity that it offers. We celebrate and learn about different countries' cultures, traditions, habits and holidays. Our local community also has an impact on our curriculum in that we have chosen topics and themes that can be enriched by what is offered in London and the surrounding area.

The school provides an integrated approach to meet the needs of students with special needs, working closely with our own resource support team and outside professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists, occupational therapists). Our resource department also helps teachers and parents by suggesting strategies and modifications to support students with learning differences. We have a full time counsellor who offers guidance to students, parents and teachers with transitional, emotional and social needs. For students in grades 1 – 4 with little or no English proficiency, we offer special support for English as an Additional Language.

The lower school community is warm and nurturing. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the daily education of their children by reading to children, volunteering to help in classrooms and sorting books in the library. ACS also has a very active and supportive Parent School Organization (PSO).

The School Day

School Behaviour

In the lower school, a proactive and collaborative approach is used to solve discipline problems. The staff is committed to working together with children, parents, teachers and administrators to maintain high standards of behaviour. Students are expected to behave appropriately and respectfully at all times. They must observe the following rules of conduct and any other rules established in the classrooms by their teachers:

- Movement between classrooms and buildings must be quiet and orderly.
- School property and equipment are to be treated properly.
- Gum chewing is not permitted.
- Neat and clean dress is expected. Hats are not worn in the building.
- Students are expected to use appropriate language at all times.
- Toys, electronic games and Mp3 players should not be brought to school except for special projects.
- Play guns, knives and other dangerous objects are not permitted.
- Students must be supervised by an adult at all times. Middle school and high school siblings cannot be responsible for lower school students.
- Students should not bring money to school except when sent by parents in a marked envelope for a designated purchase.
- Students should not climb or play on trees, walls, planted areas or the fountain.
- Students should not bring candy and carbonated drinks to school.
- Lower School students should not bring mobile phones to school.
- Children are expected to be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions.

Students are expected to abide by school rules and procedures any time they are at school, including after-school and evening activities, weekends and any parent sponsored events. Parents are asked to enforce these rules when on school grounds.

Attendance

Parents are expected to call the school between 8:00-9:00 a.m. when their child is absent from, or will be late to school. Absences due to illness, family bereavement or urgent medical appointments are excused absences, but must be explained clearly and specifically in a note written by a parent or guardian and presented by the student to the home-room teacher on the day of the student's return to school. All absences from school require a note that states the date(s) of the absence.

Students will be excused from class only for emergency reasons or illness. Parents are urged to schedule medical, dental and other appointments after school hours or during vacations.

All students are expected to abide by the school schedule and attend school on the days before and after vacations.

Parents are asked not to take children out of class to attend siblings' performances.

Parents are expected to attend conferences on the scheduled parent/teacher conference days in the fall and spring.

Late Arrival/Early Pick-Up

Parents are expected to sign students in or out of school at the early childhood or lower school office if they arrive or depart at any time other than 8.30am or 3.10pm. If a student is late arriving to school, parents must accompany their child/children to the lower school reception, or EC office as appropriate, to sign in and receive a late pass.

Change to Regular Home Transportation

If a child is going on a playdate, two notes must be sent to school, one from the parent whose child is going to the friend's house and the other from the parent who is hosting the playdate. If this involves using the school bus, the parent must call transportation to ensure there is space on the bus.

Lunch/Snack

Students in grades 1 – 4 have the option of bringing lunch from home or purchasing a school meal. We encourage students to eat healthy foods. Menus are sent home regularly. Milk and water are provided for all students. Children should bring a healthy snack from home to eat during the morning break. Any food sent to school should not contain any nuts or nut products. Children in early childhood eat in their classrooms and must bring a packed lunch.

Recess

Students have a scheduled recess time. The playground near the early childhood village is used by the early childhood students and the lower playground is for the students in grades one to four.

All students are expected to play safely and fairly and to be respectful of each other and of the equipment.

Special Area Classes

Specialist teacher classes and their programs are integrated with the curriculum in order to expand children's understanding of themes taught in the classroom.

In grades one to four, students attend weekly special area classes for instruction in art, computer, dance and movement (grades 1 and 2), French, music, library, people skills (grades 3 and 4) and physical education. In addition, we have a science lab and a science teacher who works closely with the classroom teacher to enrich the students' scientific studies.

In kindergarten, students attend weekly special area classes for instruction in drama, art, dance and movement, French, music, and physical development. Kindergarten children visit the library once a week to check out books and learn basic library skills.

Pre-kindergarten children have weekly special area classes in dance and movement, French, music and physical development and Forest Schools. Pre-kindergarten children may visit the library in small groups. They check out books for the class library and develop basic library skills.

Library

During their library lessons, students are given the opportunity to check out books. Teachers may give assignments, which require the use of library books, materials or technology. Students and parents may want to check out books for their own personal enjoyment. Students are expected to return their books on time. The cost of lost books will be charged to the student. The lower school library is open Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:10 p.m.

Physical Education

Each class participates in one or two 50 minute physical education classes per week. Grades 1 – 4 classes have swimming lessons in the first and fourth quarter. Kindergarten classes have swimming lessons in the spring. Students are required to attend all physical education classes unless we are provided with a written statement that details a sound reason for release from a particular physical education activity.

Students in first, second, third and fourth grade are required to wear standard ACS Cobham uniform (shorts and t-shirt) for physical education classes. They are also expected to have a change of shoes for indoor classes. All students should keep physical education clothes in a bag in their classroom locker to change for physical education classes. Physical education clothing must be kept reasonably clean. We recommend that the clothes be taken home on Fridays and returned clean on Monday mornings. All students should label their clothes with washable tags. Due to health and safety guidelines, a strict non-jewellery use is enforced during PE and swimming lessons. Please see the Appendix for the Jewellery Policy.

Homework

All students are expected to complete homework on a regular basis. Teachers follow the time allocations as follows:

Grade One	20 minutes
Grade Two	30 minutes
Grade Three	45 minutes
Grade Four	60 minutes

Homework should also include time to read with your child and time to play math games.

Homework might be work that was not completed during the school day, reinforcement of skills introduced that day or project work.

If a child cannot complete a homework assignment because of illness or other extenuating circumstances, the parent should write a note requesting that the student be given extra time to complete the work.

Extracurricular Activities

The lower school sponsors an optional after school club program on Tuesday afternoons. We offer a wide variety of activities for students in grades one to four who choose to participate.

These clubs are designed to provide an opportunity for students to socialise with each other in a fun atmosphere. Transportation after clubs is not provided. Students who participate should be picked up at 4:00 p.m. from the village green. Some clubs run until 5:00 p.m. and those children should be picked up in the gym car park.

The lower school has a choir (grades 3 and 4) and band (grade 4) that meet once a week after school.

Parent committees organise Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Native Language instruction programs on campus. Information about scouts and sign up forms can be found in the PSO Pages (www.psopages.org).

Students not participating in an after school program should go home by their normal mode of transport at 3:10 p.m. . No supervision can be provided after school for students not participating in an after school program. Parents who are waiting for activities to finish are encouraged to take siblings outside or to the Sports Centre.

Please help us keep pods, halls and the reception area quiet as they are working environments, even during after school hours.

Field Trips

Throughout the year, field trips are arranged to visit local places of interest - theaters, museums, historic buildings, farms, etc. They are considered part of the curriculum and participation is encouraged. Permission forms must be signed by a parent or guardian. The school will pay for all transportation, entrance fees and guided tours with the exception of the Grade 4 week long residential trip to an adventure center.

Whenever possible, experts are invited to 'bring the field trip to school' as a means to enrich the curriculum.

Standards of dress and behaviour are the same on field trips as during a regular school day and students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately.

School Supplies

We provide all the required classroom supplies except for those listed below.

Children can, if they want to, have a small pliable pencil case with some personal supplies for their desk. General classroom supplies will be available to all students.

All students in grades one to four are required to have:

- An art smock which can be an old t-shirt or shirt
- A PE kit which consists of:
 - ACS t-shirt (white or blue), purchased from the Sports Centre
 - ACS blue shorts, purchased from the Sports Centre
 - A pair of sweat pants and sweat shirt (for colder weather)
 - Indoor tennis shoes that will be used only in the gym and/or sports arena
 - Swimwear, swim cap (for long hair) and a towel during first and fourth quarters

In addition to the above, grades 3 and 4 students are required to have a descant recorder for music classes. Recorders can be purchased from the lower school office.

Grade 4 students will also need a compass, protractor and a simple calculator.

Family Games Kits to support the Everyday math program can also be purchased from the lower school office.

Birthdays

Birthdays can be celebrated at a convenient time during the school day. Please arrange this with the classroom teacher a few days in advance. Invitations to birthday parties can only be sent via school if all students are invited. If you plan to invite only a few classmates, please be aware that this can cause uncomfortable or awkward situations, and/or hurt feelings.

Please ensure that all treats do not have any nuts or nut products.

Parent Communication

The school maintains close communication and cooperation with parents. At the beginning of the academic year, an orientation day and an open house are held to introduce parents to the faculty and the general curriculum. During the first and third quarters, parent-teacher conference days are scheduled to permit the discussion of individual student progress. Written grades and comments are sent after the second and fourth quarter. Parents are invited to quarterly assemblies and other special activities throughout the year. The school encourages parents and teachers to communicate with each other by telephone, note, email or conference at any time. Conferences with the teacher, principal or headmaster may be arranged by appointment. The school keeps parents informed of upcoming events and lower school news through class newsletters.

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the school. In addition to PSO committees and the scouting program, volunteers are always welcome to help in the library and in the classrooms.

Report Cards

In grades one to four, every nine weeks, parents receive an evaluation of their child's performance and effort in language arts (including reading, writing, spelling and handwriting), French, math, science, social studies, art, music and physical education. Early childhood reports are issued after second and fourth quarter only. We also give grades to reflect work habits and social development. Students receive a grade-only report card following the first and third quarters when progress is discussed in parent-teacher or student led conferences. Teacher comments are written along with the grades for the second and fourth quarters.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are an important part of our educational program and provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss the student's overall progress. There are two conferences in the school year. The first conference is a parent/teacher conference held in October. Parents are expected to attend parent/teacher conferences and there is no school for students. In March, there are student-led conferences for the children in grades one to four where the students celebrate and reflect on their learning with their parents. Parents and students are expected to attend student-led conferences. In early childhood, regular parent/teacher conferences are held.

Standardised Tests

In the spring, students in grade four take the ERB (Educational Records Bureau) test, which is a standardised comprehensive test that measures students' abilities and achievements in language arts and mathematics. This test is given to students in American international schools around the world.

Scores in the form of percentile ranks are reported to the parents. These scores become part of the children's school records.

Student Study Teams

We use a structured process called the Student Study Team (SST) to support children with academic, social, emotional or transitional needs. The team includes the parent, the teacher, an administrator, the counsellor and a resource teacher. The purpose of this process is to establish an understanding of a child's strengths and to define our concerns so that we can discuss ways to modify the school program or to design a more efficient and appropriate means of maximizing success at school. This plan may include further classroom options or modifications, in class or pull-out resource lessons or out of school tutoring. The plan may also include a referral for a medical examination or an assessment by an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist or a speech and language therapist. Support from a guidance and counselling professional may also be recommended by the team. Reports generated from any of those referrals are not part of a child's permanent school record.

Change of Address

If a family moves, the school Registrar, the lower school office and the nurse should always have current details of your address, telephone number and mobile number. The accuracy of this information is vital in the case of an emergency. We also request a phone number of a friend we can call if we cannot reach the parents.

Withdrawing from School

All notices of withdrawal must be in writing to the Registrar. Forty-five school days of notice (or payment of tuition in lieu) are required in cases where the family is transferred out of the Greater London area. Ninety school days of notice (or payment of tuition in lieu) are required in cases of transfer to another local school. Families who are leaving ACS should give the school a forwarding address where they may be reached.

Health and Safety

Supervision of Students

A parent or a responsible adult must supervise lower school students when on the school campus at all times. Middle school and high school siblings cannot be responsible for lower school students. Our campus is too spread out for us to be comfortable with children wandering around on their own.

When on campus, students are expected to follow school rules after school and on weekends. They must be with an adult at all times.

We operate a sign in and out procedure for all lower school students arriving or departing school between 8:30 a.m. and 3:10 p.m. Students arriving after 8:30 a.m. must be walked to the reception area of the lower school or early childhood to be signed in by a parent. Parents must also sign students out for early dismissal.

Please note that we provide adult supervision from 8:00 – 8:30 only.

Students should be picked up from the early childhood or lower school office, at 3.10pm from the black gates and after clubs from the village green. Please do not arrange pick ups from any other area.

Cars on Campus

All cars driving on campus require an ACS car sticker and must follow the five miles per hour speed limit.

There are two parking lots on campus: one by the main entrance beside the security hut and another in front of the gym. The lot in front of the gym is also used as the bus parking lot. In the mornings, a bus lane runs along the sidewalk in front of the gym and buses drop off all the students in grades one to twelve. The buses then continue along to the early childhood drop-off point where the early childhood assistants meet them. All cars are required to park in the centre section and parents are expected to escort their children to the sidewalk.

In the afternoons, buses park in assigned spots. No cars are allowed in the gym lot between 2:30 a.m. and 3:20 p.m., as the students are boarding the buses. The lower school has a teacher supervised pick-up point for students going home by car. This area is on the lawn behind the kindergarten building. Parents are asked to park in the parking lot by the security gate and follow the pathway from the security hut to the big lawn area by the black gates where they will meet their lower school students.

Parents should not drive down the hill towards the lower playground unless going to the nurse's office. Cars are not allowed to park behind the lower school building at any time as it is an access to fire hydrants.

Bus Regulations

Students who use the school bus either regularly or as a guest at any time on special occasions must observe the following rules:

- Students are expected to demonstrate respect for the driver and other passengers and to respond to the requests of the bus driver.
- Students must be seated with a buckled seatbelt whenever the bus is moving.

- Students are not permitted to shout or engage in horseplay or use disrespectful language at any time on the bus.
- Students are expected to keep the buses tidy and not dispose of rubbish on the bus.
- Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus.
- Students in flosy bunnies and scramblers are not permitted to ride school buses.
- Students in lower school are not permitted to ride the 5:30 p.m. bus.

Students may ride home with another child if there is enough room on the bus. Parents should check before noon with the Head of Transport to confirm that there is space. Both the driver and the classroom teacher must be notified in writing of any alteration to normal bus arrangements.

School Nurses

A registered nurse is on duty during school hours. The nurse is here to assist pupils who become ill or injured during the day. Parents are asked to complete the medical forms sent home at the beginning of the year and to keep the nurse informed of medical problems that might affect the student at school or have a bearing on his/her academic work.

Should a student become ill, the school will attempt to contact the parents. All parents are required to complete an emergency contact form that will enable the school to contact a third party or family doctor if necessary.

Several first aid kits are located throughout the campus (gymnasium, offices, art rooms, science labs, etc.) and certain teachers and members of staff are qualified to administer first aid.

Medication

If at all possible, we ask that students not bring medication to school. If it is necessary for a child to take any kind of drug, a consent form must be filled in by parents, which will be kept on file by the school nurse.

If a student is sick with any type of diarrhoea or vomiting they must not return to school until 48 hours from their last episode, unmedicated.

Students should not return to school until they have been fever free, without the aid of medication, for 24 hours.

Before students return to school after surgery, injury or trauma the nurses and parents must meet to formulate a care plan and carry out a risk assessment (including a fire/evacuation risk assessment).

Food Allergies

Parents must inform teachers and the school nurse if their child has any type of allergy.

Any food brought to school must not contain nuts or have been prepared with any nut product as many students have severe allergic reactions to them.

Emergency Closure

Reasons for School Closure

There are a number of different events that could lead to the cancellation or early dismissal of school. The reasons for closure may include:

- Interruption of basic services at school (electricity, water, communications)
- Serious disruption to transportation (dangerous travel conditions due to snow, ice and wind)
- Public transportation shutdown
- Security – related events
- Natural disasters

The most common reason for closing school is connected with bad weather and dangerous driving conditions.

The Head of School, the Head of Transportation and the Head of Security Services at school make the decision to close school based on information and consultation with appropriate agencies. This would include:

- Current weather conditions and predicted weather conditions issued from by the national weather service
- Advice from our bus drivers and contractors about driving conditions in their pick – up areas
- Radio reports on the weather and the general status of public transportation (rail service, road closures)
- Police advice, and information provided through embassies
- ACS security team advice
- Direct observation

The decision to close school for weather – related reasons is usually made between 5:00 AM and 6:00 AM. Once the decision has been made, the Head of School will contact the radio station and also communicate a text message to all mobile telephones registered with the school.

Communicating School Closure

In the event of a school closing, the following methods will be used to communicate with ACS families.

1. **Radio: Radio station 96.4 (FM), "Eagle Radio"**, will broadcast an announcement if ACS Cobham must be closed. You should test your reception and preset this station on your radio if possible. The decision to close school for severe weather conditions is made before 6:30 a.m.
2. **Mobile Telephone:** A text message will be sent to your mobile telephone that will inform you that school is closed. There will be a telephone number in the text message for you to call to get more information. Use your mobile telephone to make this call. When you are connected, you will hear a recorded message providing more details. You can call the system from a landline telephone, but in order to listen to the recorded message you will need to provide your registered mobile telephone number as a "password". Our text messaging system will tell us who has opened the text message we sent, and who has

called and listened to the message that we have recorded. We will know who has received the message, and who hasn't. We will know which children may need assistance and care, and we will also know the parents we need to contact using alternative methods (landline telephone, for example).

Important Note:

In an emergency, a text message will be sent to all mobile telephone numbers that are registered with school. The "Family Data Form" that each family updates at the start of each school year asks for a mobile telephone number for use in emergencies. The mobile telephone number provided on this form is used to deliver a text message in an emergency.

Mobile telephone numbers that are registered with the school will receive an initial test message which will read "ACS Cobham International School is carrying out a system test. There is not an emergency. Please call 09224 28567 for more details." If you do not receive a message on your mobile telephone, it will be for one of the following reasons:

1. Your mobile telephone number is not registered with the school.
2. Your registered mobile telephone number does not match the number in our records.

Please contact Ms. Aoife Lehane in the Head of School's office to correct this problem.

Cancellation of Activities, Meetings, and Events

Without exception, all activities, meetings and events will be cancelled with the closing of school. Every effort will be made to reschedule activities, meetings and events as soon as possible.

School Re-Opening

A radio announcement is made and a text message sent each day if school must be closed. If you do not hear an announcement or receive a text message, then school will be open and all activities are planned to take place at their scheduled time.

Calling the School During the Closure

You should only call school if you have a problem. We need to keep the telephone lines as open as possible so that we can assist families with problems connected with child care or supervision problems. Questions to do with issues such as homework, rescheduling cancelled activities and events or similar inquiries should be addressed after the emergency has passed.

Miscellaneous Information

Facilities Usage

The school grounds are open to parents and students in the evening and on Saturdays and Sundays. At certain times of the year, usually during the school holidays, some portions of the grounds may be closed to allow maintenance work to be carried out. However, buildings, classrooms and other educational rooms are not open, unless prior arrangements have been made with Divisional Principals.

Families may use the sports centre, tennis courts, golf course, barbecue area and picnic tables, provided they do not conflict with other scheduled events.

Groups must reserve the school's facilities for special events at the head of school's office.

Lower school students must be accompanied by their parents or another adult when using the school grounds. Older siblings should not be left in charge of lower school students. Children are not allowed to climb or play on trees, walls or planted areas. Please note that there are no nurses on duty during the weekends or after 4:00 p.m.

Students can play on the playground after school hours and/or on weekends as long as they are supervised by an adult who is responsible for their well-being and their behaviour. Rules of safe behaviour and a general respect for the equipment and each other must be followed at all times. We ask that parents not drive to the lower school playground on school days.

When classrooms are assigned to be used by different groups, e.g. scouts or native language instruction, it is important that school rules and expectations of student behaviour are enforced. Classrooms can only be used by prior agreement with the principal and classroom teacher. The integrity of the classroom must be maintained.

Lost and Found

Items found in the lower school areas are collected in the early childhood office and in the lower school reception area. Parents are encouraged to label all items, especially jackets and lunch boxes and to check the Lost and Found frequently. Valuables that are lost will be kept by either the athletic director or divisional secretaries, depending on where the item was found. At the end of each semester, all lost and found items are donated to charity.

Telephones

The telephones are for official use only. Students should not ask to call home for unnecessary reasons. In the case of emergency, the secretary will call the student's home. Lower school students should not have mobile phones.

Please call the lower school office when trying to contact a teacher. The teacher will call back when the students are not in class.

Security

A security officer is on duty on the school campus at all times. The officer is there to assist families on weekends and to make certain that academic buildings are properly locked during non-school hours. In case of an emergency, the security officers have access to a telephone. Students are not to seek admittance to academic buildings on weekends or during non-school hours.

Fire Alarm/Drills

The buildings on the campus are fitted with a fire alarm system. Periodically throughout the year, fire drills will take place in order to familiarise pupils with the procedures of escape exits.

1. When the alarm is sounded, students should leave the building immediately in an orderly fashion using the designated exit.
2. After leaving the building, students should report to their designated assembly point for an attendance check. The assembly point for students in the lower school building is the lower playground and for the early childhood students, it is the big lawn area by the black gates.
3. Emphasis is placed on absolute silence and strict observance of the rules during the fire drills.

Appendices

ADMISSIONS POLICY

A student applying for admission must be accepted by the Divisional Principal, based on the school's ability to meet the educational needs of the student. While ACS can accommodate reading and learning problems of varying degrees, it is not staffed or equipped to handle the needs of severely disabled children. There are a number of such schools in the Greater London area and ACS would be pleased to provide families with appropriate information.

Age Requirements for Students Applying for Particular Programs/Grades:

Flopsy Bunnies

For admission to Pre-Scramblers, children must be 2 to 3 years of age

Scramblers

For admission to Scramblers, children must be 3 on or before September 30th

Pre-Kindergarten

For admission to Pre-Kindergarten, children must be 4 on or before September 30th

Kindergarten

For admissions to Kindergarten, children must be 5 on or before September 30th

Grades 1-4

In general, the lower school places students where they would have been in the most recent school attended. If the school has doubts regarding the child's placement, if records are not available or if the parents feel that the recommended grade placement is not suitable, then the school will determine the child's grade placement based on prior records and recommendations.

PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING CLASS PLACEMENT

We believe strongly in the importance of well-balanced mixed groups – we want children to work within a heterogeneous group so that all benefit from the diversity of backgrounds, talent and thinking skills that makes ACS a special place. It is important that each class is representative of the whole grade level and can be held accountable for the same academic standards. In order to create the optimal class environment, we need to know as much as possible about the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of each child. A well-balanced learning environment has to take into account many different factors. The obvious ones are gender, nationality, new to ACS or returning family and level of English fluency. But just as important, are the social relationships, emotional and physical needs, academic levels, learning styles and past experiences.

To facilitate our process of class placement, we use "pink and blue cards". The teachers fill out a pink or a blue card for each student (pink for the girls, blue for the boys). These cards indicate the child's age, sex, nationality and number of years at ACS. The teacher also includes the names of three or four friends the child would like to have in the class next year (and sometimes a few who would be better separated). The teacher summarizes the child's academic level, and describes any support or pull out program the child needs or other special concerns or program modifications currently in place. The pink and blue card gives a quick overview of each child.

For new children, we use the report cards and records from previous schools to determine as much about the child as possible and record that on their pink or blue cards.

The teachers then use this information to create balanced classes for next year.

Parental input does play a part in this process. We hope that through the year you have formed a partnership with your child's teacher and you are confident that the teacher knows and understands the social and academic needs of your child. This knowledge of the child plays an important part in the negotiations and shuffling which eventually yields the class lists. The ultimate task is to match teaching strengths and learning needs and to match teachers' management styles and students' management needs considering the teacher's observations, parental concerns and student input, while still keeping the balance of gender, nationality, and new and returning students. Because our overriding value is to create balanced groups of kids who will work well together, we are not able to entertain requests for placements with specific teachers. We ask that you refrain from asking for particular teachers so that we are not being asked to compromise the integrity of this process for any child. You can be confident that all the teachers on any grade level work and plan together and provide similar learning opportunities and experiences for students.

Right up to the day school starts we continue to add new students to these lists, so we are not able to post these lists until the week school starts. Despite the fact that we will have done the best job we can, not everyone will think his or her placement is ideal. We have found that the best advice we can give you if your child expresses disappointment with his or her new class group, is to acknowledge a child's disappointment as genuine but to show your child that you have confidence in his or her social ability to live through the disappointment and to settle successfully in the new situation. Your child will be heavily influenced by your reaction! This is an opportunity for social growth and independence, trust your child to grow and learn. Children are so open to new and different experiences, relationships and learning if we encourage and support them in their efforts.

STUDENT RELATIONS POLICY

Our aim is to create a community of learning in which every student has a right to receive an education in a safe and secure environment free from the threat of harm from others. ACS is committed to developing students' social awareness and reinforcing ethical and moral values such that they demonstrate respect for each other and value individual differences.

Responsibilities

Students at ACS are required to take personal responsibility for conducting themselves at all times so that their individual behaviour does not intimidate or harass any other student for any reason whatsoever.

Parents and Guardians of ACS students are responsible for reporting to the appropriate teachers or administrators, any instances of bullying or other forms of intimidation that may come to their attention.

The academic and administrative staff at ACS are responsible for taking immediate action to deal with instances of bullying, intimidation or other anti-social behaviour as soon as it comes

to their attention. This may be by personal observation or by another student or a parent reporting an instance. Academic staff should regularly remind students of the standards of behaviour that are expected of them.

The Effects of Anti-Social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour can take many forms ranging from the extremes of violence to less obvious acts such as deliberately excluding an individual from a group activity. Whatever form this kind of behaviour takes, it will be unwanted and unpleasant. Bullying and intimidation perpetrated by fellow students can have a very adverse effect on a student's self esteem, learning effectiveness and general health and well-being.

Commitment

ACS Cobham International School commits to its students that all reported incidents of bullying, harassment or other forms of anti-social behaviour by one student or group of students towards another will be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively. The necessary support will be provided to the recipients of such behaviour and the perpetrators will be dealt with openly when appropriate to demonstrate that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten, intimidate or distress someone.

Bullying can be:

- Physical* – pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching
- Verbal* – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, persistent teasing
- Emotional* – excluding others, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
- Racist* – racial taunts or gestures
- Sexual* – unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

For Students

What should you do if you are bullied or you notice others bullying?

Telling about bullying is not telling tales. If you were attacked and mugged or your house was broken into you would report this to the police. It is the same with bullying. Bullying is wrong and you should report it. You have the right to be safe from attacks and harassment and nobody should expect you to be silent when you or others are being tormented or hurt.

You should tell your parents about what is happening. Also tell the principal, a teacher, your counsellor, the school nurse or any other trusted adult. Explain who is involved and what is happening. You may want to take some friends with you for support, especially if they have witnessed the incidents.

For Parents

If your child is a victim of bullying:

Encourage your child to talk to you about their school and social life.

Watch your child for signs of distress.

Listen to your child and take seriously any reports of bullying. Do not keep the bullying a secret.

Contact the principal or the counselor immediately.

Check that your child is not inviting the bullying. Your child may have weak social skills. This does not justify bullying but may cause a child to receive negative attention.

Work with the school to develop strategies to support your child.

If your child is responsible for bullying:

Never ignore it.

Make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Work with the school to develop strategies to change behaviour.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Failure to follow school rules and regulations is treated seriously. Our goal is for students to accept responsibility for their actions and begin to understand the link between their behaviour and its effect on others.

Conferences and Problem Solving

Some concerns about student behaviour are referred by teachers to the office. In order to gather information about a problem, it is normal for an administrator to schedule a meeting with the students involved. At this meeting, students discuss what occurred and they are counselled about their behaviour. With serious problems or those that repeat, a conference between the parents of the child and an administrator is scheduled.

Loss of Social Time (Lunch, recess, breaks, before and after school)

If students demonstrate lack of control, they may be removed from the class activity or lose the privilege of socialising with their friends for a designated length of time.

Home-Suspension

If a serious problem occurs where any student's safety is threatened or there are concerns which remain unresolved after other techniques have been tried, a student may be placed on suspension for a designated period of time while the matter is investigated and considered. In order for a student to be readmitted to school, a conference between an administrator and the parents will be required. During a home suspension, a student is not permitted to be on campus or to participate in any school related activity.

Expulsion

The school reserves the right to expel without refund of fees, any student whose conduct seriously disrupts the academic program or exerts a negative influence on other students.

JEWELLERY POLICY

The ACS Cobham International School strictly adheres to the regulations regarding the wearing of personal effects in its physical education classes and sports activities as delineated in the "Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport" manual as prepared by the Association for Physical Education (afPE) in conjunction with UK governmental agencies including the Department of Education and Skills.

These guidelines are as follows per **Chapter Nine - Clothing, Personal Effects and Protection**

Section 9.1.2

Personal effects (e.g. jewellery, religious adornments, watches, hair slides, belts, spectacles, hearing aids) constitute a hazard if worn while participating in physical activity and should be removed beforehand whenever possible. Accidents have been recorded where the wearing of such items during physical activity has caused injury. Exceptions to the rule of removing all personal effects should be occasional and closely managed. The final decision as to whether a pupil may participate without removing all personal effects rests with the teacher.

Section 9.3 Personal Effects

- 9.3.1 The wearing of non-essential personal effects by pupils can pose a difficult management problem in physical education, since such items need to be removed for safety reasons before active participation takes place.
- 9.3.2 The following principles shall be applied:
- a) All personal effects should be removed.
 - b) If they cannot be removed, the adult in charge should take action to make the situation safe (e.g. adjust the activity for the individual pupil or group).
 - c) If the situation cannot be made safe, the individual pupil should not actively participate.
- 9.3.3 Some pupils may need to wear personal effects such as spectacles or hearing aids. In these circumstances, the adult in charge should determine whether it is more or less hazardous for the pupils to actively participate wearing such items, both in terms of their own safety and that of other pupils.
- 9.3.4 Body jewellery may be hidden. Pupils should be asked at the beginning of physical education sessions whether they are wearing it. If they disclose this information, the principles described in paragraph 9.3.2 should be applied. If this information is not disclosed, the session may proceed as planned. However, if the adult in charge becomes aware that body jewellery is being worn during the session, he/she should apply the principles described in paragraph 9.3.2 as soon as he/she becomes aware of the situation.
- 9.3.5 Taping over ear studs is sometimes used to make the situation safe. However, the adult in charge should be confident that this strategy will be effective.
- 9.3.6 When medical bracelets have to be worn, they should be covered with sweat bands secured by adhesive tapes.

- 9.3.7 Any willingness on the part of parents to indemnify teachers for allowing a pupil to wear personal effects should be declined. Indemnities have no legal status, as pupils may bring retrospective action against teachers in their own right within three years of reaching age. (Section 5.3.5 - "Indemnity forms seeking to absolve the school of responsibility for injury have no standing in law. Parents sign participation agreements (e.g. consent forms) without removing the school's duty of care.")
- 9.3.8 Long hair should be tied back to prevent it obscuring pupils' vision or becoming entangled in apparatus during physical activity.

In adhering to these principles, ACS Cobham International School physical education instructors and sports coaches will follow these procedures:

Physical Education Classes

1) Check prior to each class via non-invasive observation and verbal request as to any potentially hazardous personal effects as outlined including items of piercing such as tongue studs. If any are forthcoming, the instructor shall proceed as follows:

- a) **Fashion Personal Effects** - Students shall be requested to remove any such items and give them to the instructor for safekeeping. The instructor shall endeavour to secure all such effects in a proper manner to avoid theft or misplacement. If a student wishes to retain a medical bracelet, it shall be taped over in an unobtrusive manner.

If the student refuses to comply with the request of the instructor, the student(s) shall, at the discretion of the instructor, be assigned other PE-related activities as deemed appropriate or sent to the respective division principal's office for an academic-related assignment such as study hall.

In the instance of difficulties with a Lower School student, the instructor should only have a student report to that principal if escorted by another adult.

Given that class observation at times can be beneficial, one specific option available to the instructor shall be for the student(s) to observe the class and, per parameters established by the instructor, submit a written report as to the activities of the day prior to the start of the next applicable scheduled PE class for the student(s).

Failure to adhere to the request of the instructor in terms of removing potentially hazardous "fashion personal effects" or complying with any assigned activities shall have a negative effect on their marking for the day.

Should any student(s) consistently refuse to remove potentially hazardous "fashion personal effects" the instructor shall schedule a disciplinary meeting with the Head of Sport, Leisure and Physical Education, the Head of Department and the respective division principal.

At all times, instructors must also follow Physical Education Department procedure in terms of Non-Participation Notices being sent to the parents of the offending student(s).

- b) **Religious Adornments** - Instructors shall attempt to identify any students in their class at the initial meeting of each instructional unit who, for religious reasons, will not be removing any religious-related potentially hazardous personal effects.

The instructor shall coordinate with the principal of the appropriate division for the request from the parents of a statement as to the nature of non-removal of adornments. The instructor shall advise the Head of Sport, Leisure and Physical Education (HSLPE) and the Head of Department as to the names of such students and the HSLPE shall liaise with the appropriate principal(s) as to the receipt of the statement.

It is expected that the request and receipt shall be in an expedient manner. No request for placement by the appropriate principal of any such student(s) into an academic-related activity for the duration of the current unit shall be made until receipt of the parental response. (See below)

The instructor shall then proceed under **Section 9.3.2** to address the situation in the prescribed manner. If a successful resolution involving active participation cannot be attained, the instructor shall proceed as follows:

- i) Based upon the components of the current full unit of activity, ascertain whether the student(s) will be able to participate in a minimum of two-thirds of the class meetings. If not, the instructor shall, given the age/division status of the student(s), either assign other PE-related tasks/activities as outlined in Part A or coordinate a request with the HSLPE and the Head of Department for placement in an academic-related activity by the appropriate division principal for the duration of the current unit.
- ii) Non-participation under these circumstances shall not carry a negative impact on a student's grade for the class unless any alternative assignments per the instructor are not properly completed.

2) At all times, per the guidelines, the final decision as to whether a pupil may participate without removing all potentially hazardous personal effects rests with the instructor.

Additionally, per the guidelines, it is not permissible for the school/instructor to accept a statement from the parents absolving the school/instructor of any liabilities and requesting the student actively participate in a physical education class.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND LEGAL GUARDIANS

At ACS we recognise the importance of regular interaction between faculty and parents so that student learning and development can be supported consistently. In the circumstance that parents have a complaint, the school will treat it in accordance with its procedure.

1. Informal Resolution

- a) It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally
- b) If parents have a complaint or concern they should, in the first instance, contact their son's/daughter's teacher. In most cases, the matter will be resolved. If the teacher/parent cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to contact the Divisional Principal.
- c) Any complaint made directly to the Divisional Principal will normally be referred to the relevant teacher unless the Divisional Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- d) Teachers and Divisional Principals will keep anecdotal records of concerns and complaints on the date when they were received and reviewed. The principal/teacher will document the outcome in a letter to the parent/guardian.

Most complaints will be resolved informally. In the case(s) when this does not happen, parents will be advised that they may follow a formal procedure.

2. Formal Resolution

- a) If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head of School. The Head of School will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- b) In most cases the Head of School will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 3 days of receiving the complaint, and will discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- c) The Head of School may need to carry out further investigations.
- d) The Head of School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- e) Once the Head of School is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head of School will also give reasons for the decision.
- f) If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to address the issue to the Superintendent who will review the situation using the same procedure as the Head of School. Alternatively the parents may request a formal Panel Hearing (Stage 3).

3. Panel Hearing

- a) If parents seek to involve Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Superintendent who has been appointed by the Board to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- b) The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons, a Board member, the Superintendent and another person independent of the management and running of the school. The panel members will be appointed by the Chairman.
- c) If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 2 days prior to the hearing.
- d) The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- e) If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately, without the need for further investigation.
- f) Where the investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations which it shall complete within 5 days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head of School, the Chairman and where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

ACS International Schools Mission Statement

ACS International Schools based in London, England were founded in 1967. We serve international and local communities. The schools are non-sectarian and co-educational (day and boarding) for students from 2 to 18 years of age. We educate a multinational student body in accordance with American and internationally recognised educational principles and practices.

We inspire our students to become successful lifelong learners and responsible global citizens. We promote high standards of scholarship and challenge all members of the community to fulfil their potential.

Our Vision

ACS International Schools will achieve global recognition as the centre of excellence in international education.

And:

- We will provide the opportunity for all to achieve more than they believe they can
- Each campus will receive international recognition for a relevant aspect of education
- We will use opportunities consistent with our values to promote internationalism on a local and global stage
- We will source, recruit and develop leading people in their respective fields
- We will create an environment in our schools where all feel safe and secure and can thrive.

Our energy, innovation and dynamism will take us there.



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