

Student Handbook and Policy Guide

Effective 2024-2025

Areté
Christian Academy
Compass Christian Church
8137 Liberty Circle
Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Areté: “striving for moral excellence”

II Peter 1:3 “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.”

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It is expected that all parents and students participating in Arété Christian Academy will read the Arété Christian Academy Handbook and Policy Guide. Each parent and student must sign a confirmation stating that he/she has read, understood, and is/are in agreement with the Handbook and Policy Guidelines.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of Arété Christian Academy (Arété) is to provide middle and high school level classes to **supplement the parent-directed education** of home-schooled children. As we seek to glorify God through the facilitation of God-centered classes, we will provide a nurturing environment that encourages parental involvement, strives for academic excellence, and promotes the development of godly character in the students.

Statement of Faith

We believe there is one God who lives ever in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Bible is the only written Word of God to the world, speaking to us with authority and without error. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. Crucified for our sins, He rose from the dead. He will return in His glory to claim this earth for God’s kingdom. We believe that all mankind is lost in sin and needs to turn from it and trust in Jesus Christ, which is to be born anew by the Holy Spirit’s power into God’s family. We believe in unity for all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ and seek community together. In every way, we want to become more like Him, who is the head of His body, the Church. We are called to love Him and one another and are enabled to do this only as His life flows in and through us. We believe in the traditional, biblical definitions of marriage, gender, and sexual morality.

II. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND INVOLVEMENT

State of Virginia – Laws Governing Homeschooling

Areté Christian Academy is designed to complement the academic goals of families who have made a commitment to homeschooling their children. All students enrolled in Arété Christian Academy must be in compliance with the Homeschooling Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia (section §22.1 – 254.1 of the code of Virginia (1950) as amended) and with those of local school boards. The parents of the students are fully responsible for insuring they are in compliance with the statutes. Proof of compliance may be requested by the Arété Christian Academy Board prior to admission.

Parental Involvement

Parents understand that it is their role to act as their child's academic supervisor. The parents are responsible for establishing a study schedule with their child, for checking to be sure that assignments are completed, for helping with time management for successful completion of long-term assignments, and for ensuring that their child comes on-time and prepared for class. Arété Christian Academy is a co-operative program, not a private school.

As a homeschool cooperative, Arété Christian Academy needs the help of all our families in order to provide the best possible educational experience. Our parents provide another set of eyes on the campus and pitch in to help wherever needed. Parents will take turns serving at Arété throughout the year. Parents who fail to fulfill this requirement will pay a \$100 penalty per student before being allowed to enroll their student(s) for the next academic year.

Partnership for Character Development

Parents are also expected to partner with the Arété Christian Academy community in modeling biblically established moral values in their relationships with Arété students, tutors, directors, and other community members. Actions involving or directed toward other participants of Arété Christian Academy that compromise the spiritual testimony or educational ministry of Arété may result in a mandatory meeting with the Board of Directors in order to resolve the issue. Disciplinary actions may include student expulsion from Arété.

III. GENERAL ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Age Requirements

Students must be at least 7th grade and 12 years old to attend. While some younger students may be academically ready for middle and high school classes, we feel that the environment at Arété is not suited for students younger than 12.

Christian Emphasis

Areté Christian Academy is committed to providing God-centered instruction with Christian distinctives. Arété Christian Academy is made up of a student body that is primarily from Christian families which share the vision and theological commitment of Arété. While we are open to admitting students from families which may not share the Christian faith, all families must be willing to entrust their children to Arété for education and discipline which reflects Arété's theological, educational, and moral convictions. Arété reserves the right to refuse admission to students whose parent(s), or whose own personal, spiritual, and moral life is inconsistent with biblical teachings, or which may compromise the spiritual testimony and educational ministry of Arété.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Areté Christian Academy enrolls students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of this academy. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, enrollment policies, and other school-administered programs.

Disciplinary Exclusions

Areté Christian Academy's philosophy of education sees homeschooling as an academic choice, not a solution to disciplinary problems that have occurred in other educational settings. Arété Christian Academy is not able to offer the supervision or support required for students that have been expelled, suspended, dismissed, or withdrawn (either voluntarily or involuntarily) from a public or private school, home school co-operative, or other educational facility for disciplinary reasons. Therefore, Arété cannot enroll any student who has been involved in disciplinary action during a school year. Furthermore, no student who has ever been charged with an offense by the police will be allowed to enroll. Any exceptions to this provision are at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors of Arété Christian Academy.

Special Need Students

Parents must consider the age and academic development of their children before enrolling them in Arété Christian Academy. Arété, nor its tutors, have the equipment or special training to help students with disabilities. Arété will review the enrollment requests of students with special needs on a case-by-case basis and will consider Arété's and the tutor's abilities to satisfactorily meet the needs of the student. Our resources limit our ability to meet the needs of some students. Please discuss the needs of your child with the Board of Directors **prior** to beginning the enrollment process to insure your child's education can be adequately met through a partnership with Arété. Please understand that Arété Christian Academy is an academic co-operative with homeschooling families and tutors --NOT a private school.

IV. NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

Enrollment Process

- 1) Please download and completely fill out, sign, and initial a [Family Information Form](#) (one per family).
- 2) Please download and completely fill out a [New Student Enrollment Request](#) and [Course Registration Form](#) for each student who is seeking to enroll at Arété Christian Academy.
- 3) Read through the entire handbook with your student and submit payment and forms to the address below for processing.

Areté Christian Academy
PMB 141
8005-C Creighton Pkwy
Mechanicsville, VA 23111

- 4) New Students: The parents or guardians and the student are required to meet with representatives of the Arété Christian Academy Board of Directors in order to be considered for enrollment. Please contact the Registrar to schedule your appointment.
- 5) Enrollment Decision: All Arété enrollment decisions are at the sole discretion of the Arété Christian Academy Board of Directors. Enrollment responses may include full, conditional, limited, or denial of enrollment. New students will be informed of their acceptance/status by the Registrar.

Course Registration, Pre-test, and Placement Testing

Once notified of acceptance into Areté Christian Academy through the enrollment process, class registration can proceed. Enrollment in Areté does not guarantee that a student's class registration will be accepted. Recent grades or test scores may be required prior to being accepted into a class. Tutors have the discretion to limit the number of students participating in their classes based on a student's academic level and their own ability to meet the educational needs of the students. Tutors reserve the right to require a pre-test to determine academic suitability of a student to be enrolled in the class. (Please consider carefully which courses are best suited to your child's academic needs, interests, and schedule and discuss these with the appropriate tutor **prior** to registering in specific classes.) All costs associated with the pre-testing or placement testing are the responsibility of the parent or guardian of the student.

V. COURSE REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION

Returning Student Registration

- 1) Please download and completely fill out, sign, and initial a [Family Information Form](#) (one per family).
- 2) Please download and completely fill out a [Course Registration Form](#) for each student.
- 3) Read through the entire handbook with your student and submit payment and forms to Areté.

Study hall periods are considered normal Areté classes in regard to registration and scheduling procedures. Individuals who wish to participate in a study hall period must follow the normal registration process for that class.

Areté Orientation

Each year Areté Christian Academy facilitates a Parent/Student Orientation event. This event occurs each August prior to the beginning of the new academic year and provides an opportunity for the families and tutors to meet one another. This meeting, unless announced otherwise, will be held at Compass Christian Church, the host church for Areté Christian Academy. It is expected that all parents and students participating at Areté will be in attendance.

Payment for Classes and Class Supplies

The tutors are individual contractors and will receive the fees for their classes directly from the parents. Unless otherwise announced by the tutors, all fees for textbooks and supplies are **nonrefundable** and are due at Parent/Student Orientation along with the first month's tuition. All subsequent tuition fees are paid to the individual tutors and will be **due on or before the first of each month** unless otherwise arranged with the tutor. The fee for study hall covers a single hour and a half block per week and is payable in full for the year at Orientation. Tuition fees are calculated on the basis of each course and are not subject to adjustment for missed days due to inclement weather, illness, or other planned absences. Please check the class description or contact the tutor if you have questions in regard to the expected payment amounts. Tutors may charge a \$15 penalty to be added to tuition checks paid after the 20th of the month. Failure to pay after 90 days may be grounds for dismissal.

Course Add/Drop Period

- If a parent enrolls a student in a class and later decides to add or drop a course **before July 31st**, the parent should contact the Areté Registrar.
- For changes **after July 31st but before the first day of class**, the parent must contact the class tutor directly by email. Each request to add a course will be taken into consideration but cannot be guaranteed.
- For changes **after the first day of class**, the parent must **inform the tutor and the Areté Registrar** of the drop. All fees paid for the class are non-refundable.

- The last day that a course may be dropped without a penalty is the second Friday of October. This is also posted on the academic calendar. After that date, the family will owe the full monthly tuition for the entire duration of the course. Parents must sign and comply with the registration agreement concerning payment and for the classes in which their students are enrolled.
- Courses that drop below the minimum number of students needed may be canceled. This includes classes that are dropped by the second Friday of October. Please discuss concerns with your child's tutor and prayerfully consider before dropping any courses as this may cause a hardship for the tutor as well as end a class for other students.

VI. CODE OF CONDUCT

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:17

Tutor Responsibilities

- Each tutor is in charge of his or her classroom and/or designated areas and has the responsibility of maintaining guidelines and standards in accordance with the handbook and guidelines set by the Board of Directors for the conduct of the students during their presence at Areté.
- Areté has set a maximum of 12 students per class, but it is at the discretion of each tutor to set the minimum and maximum number of students for his/her class.
- Each tutor has the right to cancel a class if enrollment does not meet the pre-determined minimum number of students needed in order to move forward with a class up to the second Friday in October.
- Tutors have the discretion to limit the number of students participating in their classes based on a student's academic level and their own ability to meet the educational needs of the students.

Honesty

Areté Christian Academy students and tutors are expected to be honest in every aspect of Academy involvement. It is expected that each student will do his or her own academic work and will use the property of others only with the permission of the owner. Students will at all times be truthful and will use their influence to encourage honorable conduct among all fellow students.

Offenses against the honesty code include, but are not limited to the following:

Lying, stealing, and cheating. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism or the copying of passages from works of other writers, such as books or magazines or websites, without proper credit given; copying homework or class work from another student; cheating on tests in any way, including the use of a cheat sheet or looking at another person's paper. Instances of lying or cheating are very serious and may be grounds for dismissal from Areté.

On occasion, students may be asked by tutors to sign a pledge similar to: "On my honor I pledge that I have neither given nor received any type of prohibited help on this work."

Respect and Attitude

- Students must be respectful of their tutors, their classmates, and any other adults who volunteer their services during the day. Attitudes, actions, or tendencies of unruliness, physical altercations of any type, and psychological or verbal bullying will not be tolerated.
- All reports of bullying – whether assumed, suspected, or obvious - must be reported to the Areté Board immediately and an investigation and/or disciplinary action will follow.

Dress Code

Areté Christian Academy's dress code is intended to reflect its commitment to the stated purpose of honoring God and discipling students in moral excellence. The dress code is designed to encourage modesty, decency, and

propriety in the area of dress and to discourage the use of clothing as a significant means of establishing self-identity or gaining attention of social status. Students' dress should draw attention to their countenance, not to their body or apparel, and should demonstrate respect for themselves as well as the entire Areté community.

- *Shirts or tops* shall not expose the midriff, chest, undergarments, or private areas. No tank tops are permitted, but sleeveless shirts are allowed if the shirt meets the guidelines above.
- *Pants and shorts* shall be worn at the waist so that undergarments are not exposed. Leggings or similarly tight pants shall only be worn with tops that cover the pelvic area.
- *Shorts, dresses, and skirts* shall cover the pelvic area and extend to at least the mid-thigh.
- Excessively tight clothing or see-through clothing is inappropriate unless it is paired with appropriate clothing as described above.
- Clothing with inappropriate messages or design is prohibited. This is including, but not limited to, profane, lewd, or anti-Christian language or images.
- *Makeup*: Excessive makeup is not acceptable.
- *Personal Hygiene*: It is expected that participants of Areté will present themselves with good personal hygiene. If instances of poor oral hygiene, wearing clothes that are excessively dirty, or repugnant body odor arise, participants will be asked to correct the issue.
- Beyond what is described above as appropriate or inappropriate, decisions about what qualifies as a dress code violation are at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the tutors.

In any instance of a dress code violation that is not immediately rectified, parents will be contacted and asked to immediately assist in remedying the situation. This may include bringing correct clothing or assisting their child in cleansing themselves prior to being able to reenter the classroom to participate in classes. If a satisfactory remedy cannot be found, the student may be required to leave campus. Blatant or repeated disregard of the dress code may result in an orange card. No violation will be tolerated.

Public Display of Affection

While at Areté, students are expected to refrain from any public displays of affection (PDA). Examples of PDA include, but are not limited to, inappropriate contact such as kissing and prolonged frontal hugs.

Attendance, Tardiness, and Participation

It is the parent and student's responsibility to make sure that the student arrives to class on time and is prepared for the class. In the event that absences are imminent, parents are to notify all Areté tutors whose classes will be affected by the student's absence. Students are responsible for requesting the make-up work from the tutor. **Notification for planned absences should be given at least one week in advance. Tutors should be notified of unplanned absences (i.e., resulting from emergency or illness) prior to the class time**, if at all possible, via text or email.

Guidelines for tardiness and absences are at the discretion of the tutor. Due to the disruptive effect of tardiness and absences on a class, excessive unexcused tardies or absences may result in an orange card.

Study Hall

Students registering for Study Hall must be capable of sitting quietly for 90 minutes without talking or disrupting other students during the study hall block. If a student fails to meet these standards for study hall, parents will be required to pick the student up during the study hall block.

Middle School Students in Study Hall and/or Lunch

On a case-by-case basis, middle school students will be allowed to attend study hall and/or lunch. Registration for study hall requires a middle school student to register for a class both immediately before AND after the study hall block (with the exception of lunch). In order for a middle school student to attend lunch, the student must be enrolled in a class immediately before AND after lunch.

Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Internet

Following are the general guidelines surrounding the use of cell phones, electronic devices, and internet:

- Student use of electronic devices during instructional hours is STRICTLY PROHIBITED, unless otherwise noted by the tutor for that particular class session(s).
- Electronic devices are to be kept in the student's backpack and on silent during class.
- If at any time a tutor believes that electronics are contributing to class disruption and/or cheating, she/he may implement more stringent rules that are conducive to facilitating a successful class period. If necessary, the tutor may ask students to turn off or turn in all phones and electronic devices.
- Internet use is to be limited to studying purposes or in-class assignments only. Social media and video streaming are not permitted. During study halls, music and gaming that do not require the use of the internet will be allowed with the use of ear buds.

Inappropriate Possessions

Areté Christian Academy will not tolerate the possession of weapons, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, or drugs. This includes any knife except for a pocketknife with a blade less than three inches in length. Additionally, students who have been dismissed from another school because of discipline problems related to these possessions should not seek enrollment in Arété.

Property Damage - Accidental or Intentional

In the event that property is damaged accidentally or intentionally, the party who caused the damage will be responsible for appropriate repairs and/or payment for such repairs. If it is determined that the damage or destruction was an intentional act of vandalism, parents will be contacted, and these actions will be grounds for automatic expulsion. Students are to refrain from running or wrestling in the hallways. They are to move from one class to another quietly with dignity and promptness.

Code of Conduct Infractions

Conduct, by any person, that is contrary to the Code will not be tolerated. Students are encouraged to report any infractions to their tutor, parents, or a Board Member who should then report back to the tutor of the class in which this infraction occurred. Tutors are required to report any form of these infractions to both the parents and a Board Member as described in the Disciplinary procedure listed below.

VII. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Areté Christian Academy uses an Orange Card Disciplinary System of warning and correction for its normal disciplinary procedure. In situations where students are guilty of an infraction against the Arété Christian Academy Code of Conduct they will literally be issued an orange card. On the orange card will be the name of the tutor who issued it, the infraction or reason the card has been issued, as well as locations for the parents to sign and acknowledge the receipt of the card. The student is responsible for carrying the card home, presenting it to the parents, and returning it to the issuing tutor the next day of classes.

A record is kept of the orange cards that have been issued throughout the year. If at any point throughout the year a student receives a second orange card, a card is again sent home. In addition, the parents are contacted by a member of the Arété Board of Directors. Depending on the severity and timing of the second infraction, a meeting between the tutor(s), student, parents, and a Board Member may be held to determine the student's status at Arété. Should a third orange card warning be necessary, it will result in a meeting with the student, the parents, and at least one member of the Arété Board of Directors. During the meeting it will be established how and why things have progressed to the point that they have, and the Arété representatives will attempt to discern the commitment of the family to bring correction and resolution to the issues at hand. The results of the meeting will be discussed with the Board of Directors, and a final determination will be made. The result outcomes may include a final chance action plan, a final chance action plan which could include dismissal from

certain Areté classes, or complete dismissal from Areté Christian Academy. If a student is dismissed from a class, he may not be readmitted to that class during the current school year. **Tutor fees for the entire duration of the class, including time not attended due to dismissal, are due in full to the tutor.**

Depending on the severity of the infraction a student has committed, Areté reserves the right to immediately dismiss the student regardless of the student's progression in the Orange Card Disciplinary System.

Students that have received two orange cards may be denied future Areté enrollment and class registration. Board approval for future enrollment will be required.

VIII. LUNCH BREAK

There will be designated areas provided for a lunch break. Students should bring lunch for the time between second and third period, which is 12 NOON – 12:30 P.M. Each student attending lunch is responsible for setting up chairs, cleaning up after themselves, and putting away chairs. A microwave will be available for student and tutor use. The church kitchen IS NOT available for Areté participants' personal use.

Lunch Break Guidelines

All students must stay in the designated lunch area for the entire half hour lunch period unless they have permission from the Areté monitor to leave the area. There will be no loitering in the hallways, in the bathrooms, in the classrooms, or in the parking lot.

The Areté lunch monitor will be provided with a list of students who are expected to be present during the lunch period. Students who drive to Areté must provide a parent-signed permission slip prior to leaving the premises during lunch. Leaving without approval or with unapproved passengers will result in an orange card warning as outlined in the Code of Conduct section above. Leaving during lunch is a privilege and may be revoked if the student is tardy to the class following lunch or if he/she is found to have unauthorized students in his/her vehicle. Students who have permission to leave during lunch must sign in and out on the designated form in the Study Hall classroom.

IX. PARKING, DROP OFF, & PICK UP PROCEDURES

Please observe and obey all posted signs on the church and school grounds. Parents may briefly stop in the driving lanes to drop off students, but please **park in the parking lot when picking up students** after class. Please do not park in driving lanes. Student drivers must also park in the assigned parking lot. Congregating for extended periods of time in the parking lot or on the grounds is prohibited. Students should wait to be picked up on the sidewalk area. For the safety of everyone, loitering in the parking lot is prohibited. If a student needs to wait for a ride for more than ten minutes, then he/she will need to wait in the study hall room.

X. STUDENT DRIVERS

- To ensure the safety of students, tutors, and all others within the Areté community, all licensed students driving to Areté must provide a Student Driver Registration form. In the event that a student obtains his/her license after the start of the school year and intends to drive himself/herself to Areté, the form must be provided beforehand.
- All student drivers leaving Areté outside of their normally scheduled time MUST provide a parent-signed permission slip to the Study Hall monitor and must also sign out on the designated form in the Study Hall classroom. Any students found forging a parent's signature, leaving without approval, or with unapproved passengers will receive an orange card warning as outlined in the Code of Conduct section above.

XI. DISAGREEMENTS & RESOLUTIONS

All matters of concern or disagreement will be handled according to the principles of Matthew 18 and Matthew 5. We seek to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Areté community in conformity with Biblical injunctions of Galatians 6:1-2, I Corinthians 6:1-8, Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-20. Therefore, if a parent is displeased with the way a tutor is teaching or handling his/her class, the parent should first go to the tutor to discuss the issue. If the parent remains concerned after a reasonable amount of time and effort have been put forth in the reconciliation process the parent should then contact a Board Member to further discuss the concern and potential solutions.

All families, tutors, and representatives of the Areté Christian Academy community agree to abide by a system of arbitration in an effort to settle any disputes that may arise and cannot be settled within Areté Christian Academy. The agreement reads as follows: The parties to this agreement believe that the Bible commands them to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian community in conformity with Biblical injunctions of I Corinthians 6:1-8, Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-20. Therefore, the parties agree that any claim or dispute arising out of any aspect of the co-op relationship, including any claim or statutory claims, shall be settled by Biblically based mediation. The parties agree that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of Areté's relationship and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit against one another in any civil court for such disputes, except to enforce a legally binding arbitration decision.

Each party, regardless of the outcome of the matter, agrees to bear the cost of his/her own arbitration and one-half of the fees and costs of the neutral arbitrator and any other arbitration expenses.

XII. HANDBOOK CHANGES

We reserve the right to make any necessary changes to this Student Handbook and Policy Guide at any time, and if so, will provide sufficient notice to tutors, parents, and students.

If you have any questions, please contact: aretemechanicsville@gmail.com.

Areté Christian Academy is a registered 501(C)3 Non-Profit Corporation registered in Virginia

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