

Student Handbook and Policy Guide

2020 – 2021

Areté
Christian Academy
c/o Liberty Christian School
8094 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 Areté Christian Academy will read the Areté Christian Academy Handbook and Policy Guide. Each parent and student must sign a confirmation stating that he/she has read, understood, and are in agreement with the Handbook and Policy Guidelines.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of Areté Christian Academy (ACA) 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.

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 Areté 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 Areté 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 prepared for class. Areté Christian Academy is a co-operative program, not a private school.

Parent Volunteers

As a homeschool cooperative, Areté Christian Academy needs the help of all our families in order to provide the best possible educational experience. Our parent volunteers provide another set of eyes on the campus and pitch in to help wherever needed. This is good way for parents to have an opportunity to experience what students do during their time at Areté. Parents will take turns volunteering at Areté throughout the year.

Partnership for Character Development

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

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 Areté is not suited for students younger than 12.

Christian Emphasis

Areté Christian Academy is committed to providing God-centered instruction with Christian distinctives. Areté Christian Academy is made up of a student body that is primarily from Christian families which share the vision and theological commitment of the academy. 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 the academy for education and discipline which reflects the academy's theological, educational, and moral convictions. The Academy 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 the Academy.

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. Areté 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, ACA 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 Areté Christian Academy.

Special Need Students

Parents must consider the age and academic development of their children before enrolling them in Areté Christian Academy. ACA, nor its tutors, have the equipment or special training to help students with disabilities. Areté will review the enrollment requests of students with special needs on a case-by-case basis and will consider the Academy'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 Areté. Please understand that Areté 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 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 Areté Christian Academy.
- 3) Read through the entire handbook with your student and submit payment and forms to the address below for processing.

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- 4) New Students: The parents or guardians and the student are required to meet with representatives of the Areté Christian Academy Board of Directors in order to be considered for enrollment. Please contact the Registrar to schedule your appointment.
- 5) Enrollment Decision: All Areté enrollment decisions are at the sole discretion of the Areté 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 discuss the needs of your child 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 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 regards to registration, scheduling, and payment 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 in the academy 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. 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.

Course Drop Period

If a parent enrolls a student in a class and later decides to drop the enrollment, the parent must inform the tutor and the academy Registrar of the drop. All fees paid for the class are non-refundable. The last day that a course may be dropped without 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 for the classes in which their students are enrolled.

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 for the conduct of the students during their presence at ACA.

Honesty

Areté 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.

Dress Code

Areté's dress code is intended to reflect the Academy's commitment to its stated purpose of honoring God and discipling students in moral excellence. It 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 Christian community. While most neat casual clothing is acceptable, the following items are considered inappropriate: exposed midriff, spandex shorts and pants, excessively tight clothing, clothing with inappropriate messages or design, tank-tops, any shirts or tops worn too low revealing too much chest or bra straps/fabric, shorts or pants that ride below the waist revealing undergarments, dresses or skirts shorter than above the top of the knee, or shorts with inseams less than five inches. Hats are not to be worn inside the buildings.

****Dress and Makeup*: Styles resembling ghou, goth, punk, or excessive makeup, are 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.

In all instances of the dress code infraction, 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.

Attendance 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 eminent, 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. Due to the disruptive effect of absences on a class, excessive absences may result in Board Review and could ultimately result in dismissal from Areté.

Use of Phones, Electronic Devices, and Internet

Following are the general guidelines surrounding the use of phones, electronic devices, and internet: Student use of cell phones during instructional hours is LIMITED. 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. If at any time a tutor believes that electronics are contributing to class disruption, 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.

Inappropriate Possessions

Areté Christian Academy will not tolerate the possession of weapons, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, or drugs. Additionally, students who have been dismissed from another school because of discipline problems related to these possessions should not seek enrollment in Areté.

Property Damage - Accidental or Intentional

In the event that property is damaged, the student or tutor who caused the damage will be responsible for appropriate repairs. If it is determined that the damage or destruction was an intentional act of vandalism, parents will be responsible for repair costs. 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. No gum is permitted in the building.

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 Arête. 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 Arété classes, or complete dismissal from Arété 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, ACA 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 Arété enrollment and class registration. Board approval for future enrollment will be required.

VIII. LUNCH BREAK

There will be designated areas provided for lunch-break. Students should bring lunch for the time between second and third period, which is 12 NOON – 12:30 P.M. Clean up will be the responsibility of each student. A microwave will be available for student and tutor use. The church kitchen IS NOT available for Arété participants' personal use.

Lunch Break Guidelines

- 1) 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.
- 2) Students should not leave the premises in their vehicles with only a 30-minute break in their schedule.
- 3) The Areté lunch monitor will be provided with a list of students who are expected to be present during the lunch period and any unapproved absences may result in an orange card warning as outlined in the Code of Conduct section above.

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, they he/she will need to wait in the study hall room.

X. 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 the academy 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.

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

Last Updated 2/20/2020