



أكاديمية الإبداع الأمريكية

American Creativity Academy

# Kindergarten Student and Parent Handbook



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## Welcome to the American Creativity Academy

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*The American Creativity Academy is a private school that delivers a standards-based American curriculum within an environment in which Islamic values are respected and practiced. The school is dedicated to preparing students for university success*

The American Creativity Academy Core Beliefs were developed in partnership with students, parents, teachers, and administrators and represents our commitment to education. *We believe:*

- Practicing Islamic values develops character within honesty, integrity and responsible behavior
- Education requires a partnership among parents, students and staff
- Students learn and thrive in a healthy, safe, orderly, and caring environment
- In challenging students to think critically and creatively
- In developing the whole child – intellectually, spiritually, socially and physically
- In Preparing students to contribute constructively to global society
- Effective communication is essential for a cohesive school community and a positive school climate
- Learning is a life – long process
- In inspiring excellence

## Principal's Welcome Letter

Welcome to the Kindergarten Department, nicknamed the "KG", at the American Creativity Academy! InshahAllah this letter finds everyone healthy and excited about the **2015-2016** school year. It is our pleasure to work with your young child. The following ACA Kindergarten Student and Parent Handbook will offer you important information regarding the KG program and what to expect for your young child's education with us.

My name is Mrs. Allison Tennyson-Ibrahim. It is a pleasure to return as the KG Principal. I have an M.A. in Educational Administration and Leadership, B.A. in both Early Childhood and Elementary Education, and USA licenses for Principal and Teacher, with Kuwait Ministry of Education approvals. I am equally as pleased to have Mrs. Besma El-Bakri returning as Assistant Principal, also with an M.A. in Educational Leadership. The KG Counselors available to support children, parents and staff are: Mrs. Khuloud Al Ahmed, B.A. in Social Services and Development and an experienced educator, will be working with Maryam Najafi, B.A. and M.A. Counseling with ten years school counseling experience in Kuwait. We are very pleased to have returning our dedicated KG Secretary, Mrs. Hanin Mismar, B.A. in English Language/Translation, and Ms. Tamara Boulghourijian, our experienced and cooperative KG Receptionist.

The KG is full of activity, learning, and fun! The teachers and administrators are all ready to encourage your child in the academics of the English and Arabic languages, math, science, social studies, Islam, and P.E., while working to help develop independence, social skills, citizenship, healthy lifestyle choices and learning through exploration.

We welcome and need your support as the parents of our wonderful KG students. With your active participation in your child's education, the team of Student-Parent-Teacher is complete.

Some points to think about during this school year:

1. We ask that your child be at school on time and stay until dismissal. The bell for morning assembly rings at 7AM for the recitation of the Holy Quran and singing of the Kuwait national anthem.

Pre-K & KG1 class time	7:15 am -12:30 pm
KG2 class time	7:15 am - 2:00 pm
2. If your child is sick, please let him or her rest at home. School is a challenge and tires out your child when he or she is sick. However, when absent please notify us as we care about our students well-being.
3. Please send your child with healthy energy foods like fruits, vegetables, cheeses, sandwiches, yogurt, milk, juice, water, and healthy snacks. **NO chips, chocolate, candy, or soda in KG.**
4. Talk to your child about the importance of school, listening to teachers, and hard work.
5. Read the weekly newsletters, schedules, and notes from your child's teachers for information about what we are doing day-to-day. Discuss this important link between KG and you with your child.

Your child's well-being and safety are our number one concern. At ACA, we encourage open communications between you as parents and the faculty and staff. If you have questions, concerns, or comments my door is always open, but I strongly encourage you to develop an open relationship with your child's teachers. Showing your child that we are a community of students-parents-teachers will promote a sense of belonging to our school.

I wish you a fantastic year and look forward to saying "hello" to you all in the coming days.

Allison Tennyson-Ibrahim  
KG Principal  
2267-3333 ext 1519 or 1523

## **The Kindergarten Program-Information, Policies, and Procedures:**

The Kindergarten Program at the American Creativity Academy (ACA), called the “KG”, is one of the largest in Kuwait with 567 students, among 25 classes, with 67 educators and staff members. The three levels of instruction are: Pre-K, Kindergarten I, and Kindergarten II. ACA provides the foundation for social and academic learning for students between the ages of three and six.

ACA follows an American curriculum taught by a mainly North American staff that teaches to the highest academic standards to attend to the social needs of young children. The KG provides a quality early childhood program that includes comprehensive learning experiences in a planned environment. We work closely with parents to ensure that the children’s school time can be reinforced at home. Our Kindergarten is not a day care. It is an environment that employs appropriate practices to meet the early developmental needs of children in a consistent and secure setting.

Our program focuses on the needs of the whole child: physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and familial. Activities and routines are based on sound educational practices and are built on children’s natural curiosity and problem-solving abilities. Children participate in many play and language activities and have opportunity to work and play in small and large groups as well as individually. Our child-centered approach reflects an understanding of the needs of children in a complex society.

### KG students:

1. Must be 5-years old on or before December 31 of the school year enrolled for KG-2.
2. Must be 4-years old on or before December 31 of the school year enrolled for KG-1.
3. Must be 3-years old on or before December 31 of the school year enrolled for Pre-K.
4. Must have a passing score on the entrance exam.
5. KG2 and KG1 students are administered the entrance exam in **English Only**.

The ACA KG program delivers a fully-aligned, standards-based curriculum, adopted and adapted from the early childhood education curriculum standards of the USA as per below:

<p><b>Curriculum concepts presented in KG:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters – words/reading skills development</li> <li>• Phonics – sounds (blending/decoding skills)</li> <li>• Numbers</li> <li>• Shapes</li> <li>• Colors</li> <li>• Sequencing</li> <li>• Patterning</li> <li>• Opposites</li> <li>• Field trips</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<p><b>KG Program goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An active learning format of instruction</li> <li>• Interactive / hands-on approaches and activities</li> <li>• Student-lead/teacher-facilitated methods</li> <li>• Teaching through an multitude of resources</li> <li>• Use of hands-on manipulatives and resources</li> <li>• Testing/assessment match curriculum benchmarks</li> <li>• Skills-based methods of assessment incorporated</li> <li>• USA curriculum standards implemented</li> <li>• Curriculum revision performed on an annual basis</li> <li>• Incorporation of teacher-made materials</li> </ul>
<p><b>Daily Schedule:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrival Routines</li> <li>• Morning Meeting (discussions/show &amp; tell)</li> <li>• Calendar &amp; Movement (intro. core subjects)</li> <li>• Language Art (reading/academic concepts)</li> <li>• Centers (review core subjects)</li> <li>• Specials - PE &amp; Library (2 days/50 minutes)</li> <li>• Lunch/Recess</li> <li>• Arabic (5 days days/50 minutes)</li> <li>• Quiet Time/Dismissal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated instruction based on student needs</li> <li>• Language acquisition skills development</li> <li>• Phonics program</li> <li>• Whole-language and thematic-based instruction</li> <li>• Student-participative / child-oriented learning</li> <li>• Oral language development – songs, poems, role-play, interactive presentations</li> <li>• Whole-group, small-group, and individual instructional styles incorporated</li> <li>• Social/emotional skills development</li> </ul>

### **Pre-Kindergarten**

Our Pre-K program is designed for three and four-year olds whose third birthday falls on or before December 31st of the academic year. Pre-K is usually a child’s first school experience, so a positive first year sets the stage for future dispositions towards learning. The focus in Pre-K is on social skills development, self-help, and language development. Academic skills such as the concepts of counting, recognition of colors and shapes, and basic use of the computer are introduced. Children are exposed to a variety of pre-reading activities in fun, age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate methods.

## **Kindergarten I**

Our KGI program is designed for four and five-year olds whose fourth birthday falls on or before December 31st of the academic year. KGI is still a transition year from home to school, and is the first school experience as well for children who have not attended Pre-K. In KGI children are exposed to hands-on, fun, and age-appropriate concepts and skills that will be built-upon in the Kindergarten II program, in a more structured way. Our expectation is that your child has developed some English-language and is able to communicate simple needs.

KGI continues to focus on the development of social skills, self-help, and further English and Arabic language development. Pre-reading and pre-writing concepts include recognition of numbers, letters, shapes, and colors, as well as the correct use of classroom tools such as the pencil, scissors, and glue stick. Name recognition and Handwriting are introduced. Students learn to love and take care of books. Notions of science are presented through hands-on activities exploring concepts of the five senses, seasons, plants, space, water and matter. Social studies activities include the concepts of global citizenship, a community, and recognizing Kuwait on a large map.

## **Kindergarten II**

Kindergarten II is the equivalent of a Kindergarten program in the United States. KGII is designed for five and six-year olds whose fifth birthday falls on or before December 31st of the academic year. The KGII curriculum continues to focus on oral language, listening, and social skills, while offering more structured approaches to academic concepts in preparation for Grade One. Children learn to recognize all upper and lower-case letters, initial consonant, and long and short vowel sounds. Handwriting is continued and expanded upon. Children at this age are encouraged to be self-reliant and independent in the classroom. The expectation of the students attending the KGII program is a reasonably developed level of English-language proficiency, including oral, reading and written skills of fairly comfortable communication.

## **Parent and Visitor Access on Campus**

In order to ensure that the campus is secure so students, staff, and visitors are safe while on the grounds of the school, we have limited access for **all parents** and **visitors** during instructional time. Upon entering the school all parents and visitors must present their civil ID to the security guards(s). Parents are asked to sign in the guest book kept at the Security Guards' desk. The parent or visitor is given an ACA Visitor's ID Badge to wear. This badge should always be visible. The parent or visitor will then proceed to the Receptionist who will contact the staff member about the appointment. The parent or visitor must remain in the Reception Area until the staff member has arrived to escort them onto the campus grounds.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES is a parent or visitor to pass the Receptionist desk without a staff member as an escort and an ACA Visitor's ID Badge in the parent or visitor's possession and visible. If a parent or visitor is on campus without an escort and/or ACA ID Badge the parent or visitor will be asked to return to the Reception Area.

We thank you for your cooperation with these security procedures.

## **LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS**

ACA is a closed campus providing safety for your children. Students are not allowed to leave the grounds during the scheduled school hours. If you wish to pick up your child early you must request to check your child out of school directly with the Principal's secretary. Parents must give written notice first before a child will be released from the school to anyone else during the school day. It is recommended that parents whenever possible send a note to the teacher indicating the time they intend to pick up their child so that we can make every effort to have the child ready in time.



**KG Hours:**

The Pre-K and KG1 program runs from 7:15AM-12:30PM daily. The KG2 full-day program runs from 7:15AM-2:00PM daily. ACA expects students to be on time daily and stay all day. The KG gates open at 6:30AM with teachers on duty supervising children starting at this time. **The school is not responsible for children who are left at the school before 6:30AM, and parents are advised not to bring their students early.**

Pre-K and KG1 students end their day at 12:30PM, while KG2 ends at 2:00PM. Parents are urged to be punctual in picking up children at the respective dismissal times. Children are sensitive to waiting after the other children have left.

Parents, relatives, maids, and drivers are to sign the “sign-out sheet” for the release of children at the end of the day. It is very important that parents be consistent in sending the same person to collect the child after school. If a child is to go with a different driver, relative, or other individual, who normally does not collect the child, parents must telephone the KG secretary or send in a note with the child. For the students’ safety and protection, no child will be released to anyone unknown to the staff unless a notice or call has been given to the school.

If a child needs to be released early from school, the person picking up the child must first obtain a hall pass from the KG Secretary or receptionist, who must in turn, obtain approval from the KG Principal. Once a student is picked-up, they should not be left unattended, and should leave. Students with parents may stay after school on the playground, **but may not with nannies or drivers** as if an accident occurs, household staff cannot administer the necessary medical attention an injured child may require.

School rules, schedules, and policies are important and remain consistent for everyone. Please help us to ensure that the policies and procedures are followed in order to be a role model for our students.

**Daily Schedule:**

The daily schedule is broken down into different activities and varies from year to year and from classroom to classroom. The following are the activities that all children participate in during the school day:

**Calendar/Circle Time:**

Each morning begins with attendance and Calendar Time in English. Calendar time introduces students to the concepts of time, seasons, and weather. During this morning meeting, teachers also review numbers, shapes, counting, colors, patterns, and thematic units. It is very important that your child attend this session daily and on time.

**Lesson Time:**

Lesson Time includes: stories, group discussions, curriculum instruction within the academic areas of numbers, shapes, colors, letters, letter-sounds, and word recognition, with general to specific academics introduced, along with games, and activities that teach important concepts directly related to the curriculum. Lessons are interactive, and the English and Arabic experiences, between students and teacher, allow maximum participation for all children.

**Structured Activity Time:**

Structured Activity Time consists of planned activities designed to implement the English-language curriculum. These activities take place within the numerous learning centers where small groups of children work individually, together, or with the teacher and assistant. Structured activities take place during this time include math games, pre-reading and reading, fine motor skills, pre-writing and writing practice, science, social studies, integrated-computer lessons and interactive activities, art, and gross motor skills exercises and development.

**Center Time:**

Center Time is also conducted in English and is structured to allow children to make choices about their activities in the classroom. Centers (as varied stations) are areas of the room that focus on particular skills. The focus of learning in centers may include math, library, computer,

science, art, reading, writing, puzzles and motor skills, blocks, imagination and creativity, the home center, and current theme activities. During center time, teachers and assistants interact with and observe the children, moving from center to center as needed. Learning centers give children opportunities to develop social skills, creativity, independence, and, most importantly, oral language skills.

### **Arabic/Islamic Studies:**

The Arabic/Islamic studies classes are 50 minutes a day in Pre-K, KGI, and KGII. The curriculum includes stories and discussion of a variety of topics, with emphasis on vocabulary enrichment, Islamic studies including: daily prayers (Dua'a), and Quran memorization. The Arabic lessons include a math component: instruction in numbers, counting, and concepts of size, shape, and measurement, all presented in a fun and exciting manner. KGII students also do simple addition and subtraction during Arabic class. Islamic studies accounts for nearly two-hours in the KGII weekly schedule and is rich in stories about Al-Seerah and Islamic stories and lessons about the Prophets. An annual Holy Quran recitation competition is held in KG. Use of technology, with computer integrated activities is included in all Arabic and Islam classes.

### **“Specials”:**

Children at all levels also take physical education and visit the Library on a weekly basis. Outings are planned around educational concepts that reinforce a skill, theme, or topic that is being covered in class.

### **Snack: Promoting Healthy Eating Habits**

Snack Time is 20-30 minutes long and is scheduled during mid-morning and is also an integral part of the curriculum. Please send healthy, energy foods like fruits, vegetables, cheeses, sandwiches, yogurt, milk, juice, water, and other healthy snacks; **NO chips, chocolate, candy, or soda.** Specific life skills are taught during snack time: table manners, eating politely, cleaning up, and washing before and after are all part of the routine. Teachers sit with the students during Snack and discuss daily activities, encourage English conversation, and reinforce proper eating habits. KGII students have an additional lunch break during the full-day program.

**Recess:**

Outdoor activities on the playground, during which teachers and students interact, is a specifically scheduled and integral part of the ACA KG curriculum that totals 30 minutes daily (45 minutes for Pre-K). During recess, teachers circulate among the children, encouraging, and ensuring safe play on the playground area. Accidents can happen. Children bite, hit, and even fall down, and although we take extreme care to prevent such mishaps, we cannot guarantee that they will not occur. All jackets and toys need to be labeled with the student's name and **NO hard balls** will be allowed for play in KG.

**Admission Requirements:**

The American Creativity Academy enrolls students regardless of gender, nationality, or race who demonstrate an ability and desire to benefit from ACA's academic program. The school may not admit students with special needs or behavioral problems.

**Pre-K Admissions:**

- Must be 3 years old on or before December 31st of the school year for which enrollment is requested
- Must be toilet trained by the first day of the school year enrolled
- Must have a passing score on the entrance exam (Pre-K students may take the entrance exam in Arabic or English)

**KGI Admissions:**

- Must be 4 years old on or before December 31st of the school year for which enrollment is requested
- Must have a passing score on the entrance exam, which also indicates age-level proficiency in English (The KGI entrance examination is given only in English.)
- Must be able to tend to their personal needs without adult assistance, specifically able to ask to use the bathroom.

**KGII Admissions:**

- Must be 5 years old on or before December 31st of the school year for which enrollment is requested

- Must have a passing score on the entrance exam, which also indicates age-level proficiency in English (The KGII entrance examination is given only in English.)
- Must be able to tend to their personal needs without adult assistance, specifically able to ask to use the bathroom.

#### **Steps for Admittance to ACA:**

- Parents submit a completed application form and all required supporting documents to the ACA Registration Office.
- The applicant is notified of non-eligibility or of the assessment date and time.
- The applicant sits for the entrance exam by appointment. If the applicant misses the assessment appointment, without notifying the school in advance, the exam will not be rescheduled.
- The KG Child Study Team, consisting of the Principal, Assistant Principal, and Counselors, review the assessment and make the final decision of pass or fail, with retesting offered on a limited basis and for exceptional circumstances, as determined by the KG Principal, and only 3 months after the first test is administered.
- Within five working days of the assessment, the school notifies the applicant of the results.
- The admission process can only occur once all documents are complete and on file. Failure to comply will delay or terminate the admission process. Accepted students must attend school within 4 days of the official start of the school year. Parents must inform ACA in advance if their child will be late for the beginning of the school year. Otherwise, they will be officially dropped from the school registration, and their place will be given to another applicant.

#### **Toilet Training:**

The American Creativity requires that all students be toilet trained as of the first school day of the school year in question. If a child experiences bathroom accidents frequently, ACA reserves the right to suspend or terminate enrollment without refund of the 100 KD registration deposit, as well as that portion of the fees paid toward the term in progress.

Occasional accidents, however, are normal, particularly during the first weeks of school. Parents should send in one or even two complete extra changes of clothing to keep in the classroom, clearly labeled with the child's name. When an accident occurs, children are more comfortable changing into their own clothes.

**Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken at 7:15AM. KG children arriving between this time and 8:00AM will be marked tardy, and after 8:00AM are marked as absent. Students with guardians are allowed access to the classrooms until 8:00AM, but afterwards parents may not enter the KG section to accompany students to their classrooms.

Parents must notify the school no later than the third consecutive day of absence. The returning child must bring a written note of explanation from the parent or medical excuse for more than 3 days absence. Parental cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated. Success in school depends to a great extent on regular attendance and punctuality. Students who arrive late or who are often absent miss important information and contact time. Lateness and absences may interfere with your child acquiring the skills and concepts necessary to succeed at the next grade level.

**STUDENTS ABSENT FOR MORE THAN TEN DAYS IN A SEMESTER, WITHOUT A CERTIFIED MEDICAL EXCUSE, MAY BE RETAINED AT THE SAME GRADE LEVEL OR EXITED FROM THE SCHOOL FOR THE COMING YEAR.**

**Tardiness:**

It is the expectation of ACA that all students arrive to school on time and that they are prepared for class. Late arrivals disrupt the educational process.

**Illness:**

**Children who have fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or a contagious disease such as measles, chickenpox, strep throat, or conjunctivitis MUST remain home.** Follow the fever policy that before coming back to school, your child must be fever-free, without medication, for at least 24 hours. If a child has a fever or is sick, the nurse is allowed to give medication, unless specifically noted otherwise by submitting the form **“Do Not Administer Medication”**. For routine health problems and accidents at school, there are two nurses on campus. They determine the seriousness of the illness or accident and call the parent if the child is to be sent home. Parents must pick up the child for the duration of the day. Parents must inform the school immediately if their children have special health problems, such as allergies, asthma, diabetes, etc. The nurses are alerted with regard to special needs and precautions, and they inform the child’s teachers and KG administration.

**Medication:**

Ideally, all medicine should be administered at home before a child comes to school, but the nurses may administer medicine that must be taken during school hours. Teachers are not responsible for giving medicine. Any medicine brought to school must be accompanied by a note from the parent or doctor stating the name of the student, name of the medicine, dosage, and the time the medicine is to be given to the child. If you do not want your child to be administered medication, please sign and return the attached form with your request to **“DO NOT ADMINISTER MEDICATION”**. This form will be kept on file in the nurse’s office and will remain in effect until written consent is filed otherwise.

A student who is ill at school will be sent to the school nurse. The nurse will determine the course of action to be taken. The nurse will inform the parents and school administration if a student is to be sent home. It is crucial that the school has correct home and work telephone numbers, so that a parent can be notified in case of an illness or injury.

Parents planning to be out of the country should leave a name and phone number of a responsible relative or neighbor who can be contacted. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the school informed in any changes in telephone numbers. Students should not be allowed to attend school if he/she has a fever, is vomiting, or has a rash. A child with conjunctivitis (pink eye), lice, or H1N1 is not allowed to attend school and must be seen by a medical doctor. Pink eye is highly contagious. The following criteria should be used for keeping your child at home:

- Sore throat and swollen glands
- Diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Undiagnosed rash or skin eruption (such as chickenpox)
- Ear ache or drainage from the ears or eyes
- Fever and vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Lice

**Payment of Tuition and Fees:**

ACA reserves the right to withhold a report card due to tuition fees and/or library book fines not being paid. Once payment has been made and there is a receipt of proof of settling the account, the report card will be given to the family.

**Extended Vacations:**

The school does not encourage students to be absent from school due to extended vacations. Parents will be required to notify the school in writing and fill out the appropriate form if such an absence is unavoidable, so that arrangements can be made for missed schoolwork.

**Parent and Visitor Access to the Campus:**

In order to insure that the campus is secure so students, staff, and visitors are safe while on the grounds of the school, we have limited access for all parents and visitors during instructional time. Upon entering the school all parents and visitors must present their civil ID to the security guard(s). Parents are asked to sign in the "Guest Book" kept at the security guard's desk. The parent or visitor is given an ACA VISITOR'S ID badge to wear. This badge should always be visible. The



parent or visitor will then proceed to the receptionist who will contact the staff member about the appointment. The parent or visitor must remain in the reception area until the staff member has arrived to escort them onto the campus grounds. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES is a parent or visitor to pass the receptionist's desk without a staff member as an escort and an ACA VISITOR'S ID badge in the parent's or visitor's possession. If a parent or visitor is on campus without an escort and/or ACA ID badge, the parent or visitor will be asked to return to the reception area.

**Uniforms:**

The uniform for all KG boys and girls is dark blue pants and white shirts with a collar. Girls may also wear a knee length skirt or jumper, preferably with shorts underneath. In cool weather, students may wear any color winter jacket, but preferably dark blue, black, or white jacket or sweater. All clothing must be labeled with the child's full name. Children should wear comfortable closed shoes or sneakers. SANDALS OR CROCS are not appropriate ACA attire, and may not be worn to school by KG students.

**Jewelry:**

KG students may not wear jewelry or watches to school, although girls may wear small earrings that do not dangle. ACA is not responsible for jewelry lost at school.

**Buses:**

Bus service for kindergarten children is available through the school. Parents must contact the Transportation Office to make arrangements. Pre-K and KGI bus children board the busses, leaving school by 12:15PM and KG2 bus children leave by 1:45PM. Bused students are placed on the buses unless a note or phone call from the parents specifies other provisions. Children riding the bus MUST behave properly to ensure the safety of all passengers. If a child misbehaves consistently on the bus, a warning letter is sent home. If the behavior continues, the child may not be permitted to ride the bus.

**Field Trips:**

Field trips are scheduled throughout the school year. Children receive a permission form a few days before the scheduled trip. This form must be signed and returned to the teacher the next day. Children who do not have a signed permission form are not permitted to go on the trip and remain at school under the supervision of another classroom teacher. Verbal approval from a parent by phone or in person is not acceptable. Non-participation in a field trip is very hard for the child, so parents are urged to return all field trip forms on time, with applicable activity/entrance fees as required.

**Academic Retention:**

In order to succeed at the elementary level, students must first be successful with the kindergarten curriculum. Students who fail to show success in kindergarten may be retained at that grade level for the coming year and/or outside testing may be required before reenrollment is allowed. The final decision regarding retention is made by the Kindergarten Child Study Team, which consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Counselors, classroom Teacher, Arabic Teacher, and with the ELL/PE Teachers. An eventual decision to retain or to deny reenrollment is made after careful deliberation and discussion. This decision is taken in the best interest of the student, to ensure every opportunity for academic success in the appropriate grade level.

**Parties/ Birthdays: Balloons Are Never Allowed In KG!**

Birthday parties may be celebrated at lunchtime, but only with prior permission from the teacher to ensure that the party does not interfere with lessons and activities. Birthday parties should be kept as simple as possible. Parents must be present to facilitate the event, bring the cake, plates, and all utensils as KG does not have these on hand. Parties should not last longer than one half hour, and parents are encouraged to leave as quickly as possible afterward. Parents who do not wish for their child to participate in birthday parties must inform the teacher early in the year so other arrangements can be made during parties. No balloons, outside photographers, characters, carnival activities, games, or face painting are allowed at school as this is an academic environment. The following procedures are for the benefit of all KG students:

- Birthday candles are a fire hazard and are NOT allowed in KG
- Gift bags will not be opened in class, but rather sent home
- Cupcakes or small cakes are highly recommended as young children have small appetite
- No small, removable decorations on cakes or as gifts to keep young children safe from choking hazards
- KG does not allow visitors/guests (adults or children) or other ACA students (KG or otherwise) to attend in-class birthdays. This is a disruption to the academic process and thus may only be shared with students from the same class
- No combined birthdays for multiples (twins/triplets). Separate, in-class parties only as space does not allow for such events
- No costumes or party dresses as children must stay in ACA uniform while at school
- KG staff may not distribute event invitations for outside parties, not unless all students in the class are invited.

## **Home School Communications**

### **Weekly Schedules:**

A weekly schedule is sent home each Thursday or Sunday so that parents can follow their children's progress. The schedule includes theme topics, academic skills being taught, special projects and events, and field trips. Teachers may also use the weekly schedule to request that a child bring inexpensive materials for an art or science project or to announce a special project or achievement. Details on classroom lessons, activities, and ACA events are available by newsletters.

### **Homework:**

Homework is not given in Pre-K and KG1. English and Arabic homework is usually given once a week in KGII. Homework at this age is designed to be fun, yet educational, and as preparation for the homework expectations of the elementary department. It may consist of journal and name writing, reading, and/or math practice. Homework is sometimes individualized to meet the specific needs of the child.

**KG2 Home Reading Program:**

Parents play an important role in this fun experience in which students and parents read to each other. KG2 students check out and return books during their weekly library time. They take the library books home with a reading journal to enjoy reading with their families. After reading, they draw a picture and write about the story in their journals. Students also learn from this experience how to use a library, care for books, and take responsibility for returning their books on time. Parents are notified regarding overdue or lost books and are asked to pay a fine for an eventual lost book.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences:**

A formal parent-teacher conference is scheduled every semester. The teacher will outline the child's areas of strength and weakness and offer suggestions for possible courses of action. The teacher or the parent may initiate additional meetings at other times. Parents may be called, for example, if a child displays moderate to severe behavioral problems, academic difficulty, or changes in behavior for more than two weeks.

Parents may request an additional conference by means of a note or call to the teacher. Messages may be left with the KG secretary. Unless absolutely urgent, parents should allow 24 hours between the time of request and the time of the meeting to allow for proper preparation by the teacher. Most difficulties can be resolved by speaking directly with the classroom teacher. If meetings with the teacher do not resolve the concern, parents are invited to schedule an appointment with the Kindergarten Principal who makes every effort to help resolve any difficulties or questions.

**Report Cards:**

At ACA, learning is assessed in an authentic, performance-based method of evaluating student comes. Report cards are sent home quarterly to be signed and returned. They indicate student progress in meeting curricular goals, both academic and social. Parents must remember that each child develops differently. They should be encouraging and supportive as they discuss the report card with their children.

**Panther Paw Awards:**

Each Sunday, Panther Paw Awards are handed out to students who have shown positive performance whether academic or behavioral. Awards are based on a goal of building students' self-esteem through expectations of responsible global citizenship, positive academic performance and behavior, independence and responsibility, and with the incorporation of environmental mindedness as caretakers of our earth. One student from each class is chosen and their group picture is taken to hang in our KG Reception. Parents are invited by the classroom teacher to attend their child's award morning.

**Student Discipline:**

In KG, discipline means helping children to practice acceptable behavior. We believe that children learn self-discipline when they are treated with respect. We do not use the same disciplinary techniques in every situation for we recognize that each child and each situation is unique. However, all staff members follow the general disciplinary techniques endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- Set clear, consistent, and fair guidelines for classroom behavior and remind children of these guidelines when necessary.
- Redirect children to a more acceptable behavior or activity.
- Listen carefully to what children have to say about their feelings.
- Regard mistakes as opportunities for learning.
- Help children to develop the skills to solve their own conflicts.
- In KG, children are taught that everyone deserves to feel safe, to respect others, to be good citizens, and to expect the like treatment from others. Hitting, or any negative physical contact, is never acceptable forms of communication and will not be tolerated at ACA. Should repeated reminders be needed, the KG including the teachers, counselors and principals will request to work with you to encourage your child to adjust to the expectations of school.
- Model appropriate and respectful treatment of people and materials.

**Guidance:**

KG has two qualified, bilingual Counselors, available for consultation with students, teachers, and parents, in case of behavioral and academic concerns. Appointments are made directly with the Counselors.

In case of inappropriate behavior, the staff member first tries to determine what happened, then uses professional judgment to decide how best to handle the situation. Children are encouraged to use words to talk about what is bothering them, and staff members try to involve children in the resolution of their conflicts. Staff members also try to encourage the children to see each other's point of view, which is a first step in the development of empathy, an important pro-social behavior.

On occasion, the teacher may direct a child away from a group or activity, but this "redirection" is not used as a punishment. It is an attempt to change a situation that is leading to inappropriate behavior. "Time-out" is used if redirecting a child's activities is not effective. Students are brought to the principal when their behavior is dangerous to themselves or others, or if all other attempts to solve the problem have failed. Finally, the KG Counselors may be called and a parent conference scheduled. Techniques that are **not** used at ACA under any circumstances are hitting, yelling, criticizing, threatening, or making hurtful or sarcastic comments.

The Kindergarten Department at the American Creativity Academy is very excited about working with your young child this year. We look forward to offering your child a very positive school experience.

# PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING HABITS



Dear Parents,

We all know that getting your child to eat healthy foods can be a struggle sometimes. Every child is different, and every child comes from a different environment that might influence his/her eating habits. In Pre-K, we want to start, with your cooperation and encouragement, to teach the students that eating healthy can be both fun and satisfying. Eating the correct foods can also help with focus and alertness in school; which is the key to success.

Therefore, we are going to develop a rotation schedule from the beginning of the year; where every Thursday one student will share a **healthy snack** with his/her classmates. Examples of healthy snacks to share could be:

- Carrot and cucumber sticks (with or without dip)
- Fruit (cut up fruit or fruit salad)
- Pretzels
- Popcorn
- Dried fruit
- Cheese and crackers
- Healthy mini sandwiches using whole wheat or multi grain bread (peanut butter, turkey, or unprocessed cheese)
- Etc.



We look forward to your cooperation and for a healthy and happy year in KG.

Thank you.

The KG Teachers

