

Arborbrook Christian Academy
Discipline Policy

“I Am, I Can, I Ought, I Will”

This motto, used in Charlotte Mason schools over one hundred years ago, is still relevant for our use today. ***I am*** a unique child of God, created in His image. ***I can*** do all things through Christ who gives me strength. ***I ought*** to do God’s will because He loves me and knows what’s best for me. ***I will*** make the right choice and do what the Lord requires of me.

Student Expectations

It is our primary goal to help parents train up children who love the Lord with all their hearts, souls, minds and strength. Second to this goal is to help parents train up children with godly character. Third, it is our desire to help parents instill in their children a love for learning that will last a lifetime.

In order to achieve these goals, we must achieve an atmosphere of respect in the learning environment. The discipline policy of Arborbrook seeks to cultivate basic habits of body and mind, so that students contribute to a learning environment based on respect for themselves, each other, and property. We do not seek legalistic compliance from students, but rather, willing obedience. Our desire is that students go beyond good conduct, to good character. We believe that all students have the ability to make right choices. Right choices are an expectation for all Arborbrook students.

Respect Each Other

Love your neighbor as yourself. Leviticus 19:18

Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. Luke 6:31

Positive character traits that demonstrate respect for other people are taught, modeled, encouraged, and reinforced: kindness, thoughtfulness, compassion, honesty, courtesy, generosity, integrity, etc.

At Arborbrook, students are expected to behave respectfully toward teachers and all those in authority. Students will address teachers and other adults with respect: “Yes Ma’am,” “No thank you, Sir,” etc. Students will be encouraged to make eye contact and use good posture when addressing adults.

Students at Arborbrook are also expected to treat each other with kindness and mutual respect in the classroom, on the playground, and in all other settings. Cliques and other expressions of exclusivity are not allowed. Students are encouraged to respect, appreciate and embrace individual differences. Good manners and common courtesies are taught and practiced at Arborbrook.

Respect Property

As good stewards of the building and the materials God has given to us, students are expected to respect property. There will not be any defacing of property whatsoever – not even the child’s own property. Students will treat the property of our host facility with care. They will not wander into any area that is not designated for school use. They will respect the property of the teacher and stay out of the teachers’ desks, supply closets, etc. They will also show respect to their classmates’ property by staying out of their desks, lockers, cubbies and other personal spaces.

Academic Behavior

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. Col. 3:23
The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied. Proverbs 13:4*

The formation of strong academic habits in the early years will serve the individual throughout his or her entire life. At Arborbrook, we seek to help students develop habits of attentiveness and accuracy. Each student is expected to do his or her very best in all of their work. Students are given plenty of opportunity and training in thinking, reasoning, imagining, creating and remembering.

Good habits of promptness are encouraged in students and parents. Students are expected to come to school on time each day. Students should be ready to learn by being prepared for the day's activities. Any assignment given shall be completed to the student's best ability. Any items needed for class will be with the student (assignment, books, notebooks, paper, pencils, etc.).

In class, students will put forth their best effort by paying attention and participating positively. The classroom lessons are kept at a length that is appropriate to the child's development. Lessons needing acute concentration are followed by activities that require a different type of learning response. Teachers vary the learning activities to appeal to all learning styles and promote attentiveness.

Students are taught proper posture for the classroom known as **"learning positions."** When needed, teachers will direct students to assume one of two "learning positions": 1. *Seated*, facing forward, quiet, feet on the ground, and hands to themselves – or attending to the given task; or, 2. *Standing*, facing forward, quiet, with hands to one's self.

This learning posture will contribute to a positive and healthy learning environment. "Assume the seated learning position." is a positive request that all students will understand. It is quick, clear, concise and attainable by all students. This tool will eliminate the need for teachers to continually address negative behaviors: "Don't slouch, don't poke your neighbor, stop talking, turn around, etc." The teacher does not have to bring attention to negative behavior and thereby embarrass a child or continually bring attention to the undesirable behavior.

It is our desire that this plan to promote positive discipline not seem legalistic, but rather, simple tools to create an environment where students are free to learn without distractions. The Arborbrook classroom environment will challenge students to grow in a safe and caring atmosphere. Although the growth may seem difficult or uncomfortable at times, some degree of struggle is essential to learning and growth.

Corrective Discipline

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently." Galatians 6:1

The goal of corrective discipline at Arborbrook is to restore the child as a learner in right relationship with the teacher, fellow classmates, and God. This redemptive discipline can only be beneficial when the teacher, the student and parents each do their part.

Guidelines for Corrective Discipline

1. We seek to maintain an atmosphere of respect, kindness and caring at all times. Students are recognized and given attention when they exhibit positive character traits and good habits. Teachers continually look for opportunities to praise and encourage students for paying attention, putting forth their best effort, and demonstrating positive character traits.

2. Misbehavior presents an opportunity for the student to receive instruction in appropriate responses, responsibilities and behavior. When appropriate, the teacher will inspire the student with the Word of God and challenge them to act according to what they ought to do. Their will is appealed to as opposed to a programmed response.
3. Teachers will not shame, humiliate or ridicule a student. They will take care to form the heart and mind without crushing the spirit. Teachers, like students, are under God's authority and expected to act in ways that are just, humble and respectful. Students and teachers are expected to practice self-control.
4. Teachers will use natural consequences to teach students that they are responsible for the choices they make. For example:
 - a) Work that is not completed neatly may need to be redone during recess.
 - b) Unacceptable speech will result in apologies to those who have been offended. Practice of appropriate speech and respectful comments will take place between the teacher and student at an appropriate time.
 - c) Work not completed on time may result in missing a field trip or other special activity.
 - d) Choosing to repeatedly undermine the positive learning environment of the classroom may result in the student being directed to leave the classroom.
 - e) Additional consequences may be given as necessary.
5. Teachers will not allow individual students to dominate the classroom with negative, attention seeking behavior. The following incremental steps of consequences may be put in effect for a child who continually chooses unacceptable behavior:
 - a) The child will be given a clear warning or request. Along with the warning, the child will be reminded of the appropriate learning position, and the positive behavior that is expected.
 - b) If the child repeats the undesirable behavior after the above is carried out, it will be assumed that the child is not ready to learn or to relate to others with respect and needs additional adult direction. The child will be asked to wait outside the classroom or in another designated space until the teacher is able to speak privately with him or her. The teacher will appeal to the will and reason of the child. The child will verbalize both the undesirable and appropriate behavior. The teacher will pray with the child and ask God to help the child to do what is right and expected of him or her. The child will be invited back in to the classroom when ready to be a learner once again.
 - c) When steps (a) and (b) are not sufficient and the child continues to misbehave, the teacher may then apply an additional and more serious consequence. In addition, the teacher will contact the child's parent by phone or e-mail within 24 hours. At that time the parent is invited into the discipline process and will administer any discipline that he or she deems fit.
 - d) When a teacher has consistently followed the discipline procedures listed above and is still having problems with a student, it is time to get the supervising principal or the director of the school involved. At the teacher's discretion, he or she will send the child to the principal's office. The principal or director will give counsel to the student. This counsel may involve a process of seeking admission of wrongdoing, and seeking forgiveness and restoration with all those offended. If this goes well, the child will be allowed to return to the classroom at some point during the school day. The principal or director will always notify the parents when the child is sent to the office, even when the problem appears to be resolved.
 - e) If step (d) (the child is sent to the principal's office) occurs three times, the parents will be asked to meet with the director, the teacher or other individuals involved, and a designated board member to determine if a plan can be worked out for the continued education of the child at Arborbrook. If it cannot, the student will be expelled.

Parental Participation in the Discipline Process

Moreover we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. Hebrews 11:9

There is no place that loving discipline is more important than in the home. When corrective discipline is necessary in the school, the parents are invited to be a part of the process very early on. Parents are best able to discern the heart issues of the child that may be contributing to the unacceptable behavior of the child at school.

Instead of developing a lengthy, legalistic list of demerits and punishments, the ultimate discipline for offensive behavior beyond those previously listed is left in the hands of the parents. Parents are in closest relationship to the child and able to instruct the child in what is right.

Parents are expected to do the following:

- Support the discipline measures of the teacher, the principal and the director.
- Administer appropriate discipline at home when necessary.
- Work with the school to help the child develop habits of courtesy, integrity, politeness, promptness, and respect.
- Limit the child's at home "screen time" (television, video games, computers, etc.) as excessive over indulgence to these media have been shown to impede learning and promote poor behavior.

If parents believe their child has been unfairly treated or disciplined, we strongly encourage them to apply the Matthew 18 principal of taking issue first with the teacher or person whom they believe unfairly treated their child. If the issue is not resolved there, they may schedule an appointment with the director and the teacher. If this does not resolve the issue, they may request a meeting with the teacher, the director and representatives from the Board of Directors.

It is our sincere desire to create a loving and caring environment most conducive to learning and most pleasing to our Lord. By enforcing this discipline policy we hope to support, encourage and stand with the parents in the training of their children. We hope that our methods always reach that delicate balance between grace and law.