

The Albuquerque Sign Language Academy

children. family. community. possibility.



Employee Handbook

Updated: JULY 2024

Note: The information contained herein may be updated throughout the school year. For the most recent copy of this handbook please contact the Executive Director.

A complete copy of all school policies and procedures are available on the school website or by contacting the Business Manager.

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225 Griegos Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107 | www.ASLacademy.com

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School Advisory Councils

The Albuquerque Sign Language Academy

A Public Charter School Authorized by the New Mexico Public Education Commission

General Information

Location	225 Griegos Rd NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107
Phone/Fax	Main (505) 247-1701 / VP (505) 435-9680 / Fax (505) 247-1704
Website	www.ASLAcademy.com
Office Hours	7:45am – 4:00pm
Instructional Hours	7:50am – 2:50pm
School Calendar	Available on the school website or by contacting the office.

School Administration

Raphael Martinez, Executive Director	RafeM@ASLAcademy.com
Stephanie Lovato, Director of Curriculum	StephanieL@ASLAcademy.com
Gabe Cordova, Student Support Coordinator	GabeC@ASLAcademy.com
Rachael Mesillas, Community Engagement Coordinator	RachaelM@ASLAcademy.com
Laura Vasiliauskas, Special Education Coordinator	LauraV@ASLAcademy.com
Sarah Pina, Business Manager/Human Resources	SarahP@ASLAcademy.com

Mission Statement

The mission of the Albuquerque Sign Language Academy is to improve educational outcomes for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing students in the greater Albuquerque area by providing a rigorous standards-based dual language educational program which utilizes American Sign Language and English to achieve academic excellence, support family involvement, and promote multi-cultural community partnerships.

Communication Policy

As an ASL-English bilingual community supporting deaf, hard of hearing and hearing persons, all students, parents and family members should make an effort to use American Sign Language when on campus. If you are in need of an interpreter, please contact the office.

Governance Board

Regular meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at 4:00pm via Zoom videoconference. The meetings are open to the public. To request an interpreter, please contact the office at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. For more information, please visit the school website.

Employment

Equal Opportunity Employment: The ASL Academy and its Governing Board is committed to providing equal treatment of all prospective and current employees. Neither the ASL Academy nor the Governing Board shall discriminate against any person on the basis of race, age, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, physical or mental handicap, serious medical condition, sexual orientation, or gender identity with respect to hiring and other employment practices.

Background Checks and School Personnel Act: As a condition of employment, all employees must successfully complete a background check and must meet all requirements mandated by the State of New Mexico (see School Personnel Act: NMSA 1978, Section 22.10A.1 et seq.) and as indicated in their employment contract.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Reasonable accommodations will be made for employees with a disabling condition, as defined by ADA, which affect his/her abilities to perform the essential functions of her/her job. The request may be made through any form of communication, written or otherwise. Documentation may be requested from the employee regarding limitations that arise from the disability that requires reasonable accommodations. Requests for reasonable accommodations should be made to the Executive Director.

Immigration Law Compliance: All offers of employment are contingent upon verification of an employee's right to work in the United States. Employees will be asked to provide original documents verifying their right to work and to sign Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form, as required by law. Failure to provide such documentation may result in termination of employment or retraction of an offer of employment.

At Will Employment: Unless otherwise approved by the Governance Board, all employees of the ASL Academy shall be hired on an 'at will' basis, and can be dismissed at any time with or without cause, pursuant to NMSA 1978, as indicated in the employment contract. Any employee who has been employed by the ASL Academy at the end of three consecutive years may not be terminated without just cause.

Resignation: Employees shall provide the Executive Director with at least 30 days written notice of their intent to resign, and, in the event that the employee fails to give such notice, the Executive Director shall be entitled, in his or her discretion, to file a written complaint to the Public Education Department requesting the suspension or revocation of Employee's license.

Please see your Employment Contract for additional information concerning your employment.

For a complete and current copy of ASL Academy Policies and Procedures, please visit the school website or contact the Business Manager.

Employee Information

It is imperative that the school office be notified of changes to your home address, telephone number, email address, or emergency contact information. Please email the Business Manager to make changes to your information.

Confidential Personnel File

The school shall maintain a confidential personnel file for each employee. The personnel file will contain employment contracts, licenses and endorsements, professional evaluation documentation, and any other employment-related documents or correspondence.

Parent/Student Handbook and School Policies

All school staff must read the Parent/Student Handbook and all school policies and procedures in order to familiarize themselves with the information contained therein. Staff are required to follow and enforce the policies and procedures of the school at all times. Questions concerning school policies and procedures should be directed to a school administrator. Because this information is subject to change and revision throughout the school year, complete and current information is available on the school's website or by contacting a school administrator.

Employee Attendance

Instructional Hours: 7:50am – 2:50pm. Staff should report to school no later than 7:45am. Staff is expected to attend before and/or after school meetings, trainings, school events, etc. as indicated in professional development plans and employment contracts. Employees should refrain from scheduling other appointments during staff meeting times.

Planned absences should be reported via email to the Leadership Team for approval as soon as the planned absence is known. It is the Employees responsibility to arrange for coverage of duty assignments during planned absences. Unplanned absences, such as illness, should be reported to the Administrative Team as soon as possible or no later than 7:00am on the morning of the absence so that substitute staff can be arranged. Leave slips for all time off must be submitted by the employee to the Executive Director and Business Manager in a timely manner (no later than Friday of the following week). Please see the Leave Policy section of this handbook for additional information.

Failure to report to work without notifying school administration may be considered abandonment of employment and voluntarily termination of employment by the employee. In such instances the school will provide a written termination notice to the employee. The employee may choose to file a grievance if they dispute the termination. For a complete copy of the Complaint Policy and Procedures, please visit the website or contact the school. Please see the Complaint Policy section of this handbook for additional information.

School Delays or Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather

Please check local TV station KOB-Channel 4 for announcements regarding school delays and cancellations. The ASL Academy follows the same inclement weather schedule as Albq. Public Schools (APS). School staff should report to school no later than 9:45am in the event of a two-hour delay (10:00am student start time). Cancellation of school may result in “make-up” days being added to the calendar.

Employee Parking

Parking in the designated spaces/lots is provided free of charge. Do not leave items of value in your car. The ASL Academy is not responsible for damage or theft.

Keys/Building Access Cards

Staff will be supplied with building access cards and keys. Staff should immediate report the loss of any keys or access cards to school administration since it possess a safety and security risk. The fee to replace lost or damaged access cards and keys will be charged to the employee Classroom doors, both interior and exterior, should be locked and closed at the end of each day. Staff should remain vigilant in ensuring that all building entrances/exits are secure throughout the day and are not propped open or left unlocked for any reason. Staff is responsible keeping school keys/access cards on their person at all times.

Staff Sign-In/Sign-Out

If staff members leave campus during the day, even for their lunch break, it is requested that they sign in/out so that in the event of an emergency they can be accounted for. Use of sick or personal leave must be reported to the school administration by the employee in a timely manner (no later than Friday of the following week).

School Visitors/Reporting Suspicious Persons

All parents, volunteers, and visitors must report to the office, sign-in, and obtain a “VISITOR” badge. School staff should immediately report unauthorized or suspicious persons to administrators, including persons located on campus, in the parking lots, or playgrounds.

Lost and Found

All personal staff possessions should be marked with the staff member name. Please turn lost items into the office. Please do not bring items of value to school and be sure to lock up all purses/cell phones in your desk. Found items should be turned into the office. At the end of the year all unclaimed staff and student articles will be donated to charity. The school is not responsible for any lost, stolen or donated items.

Staff Dress Code

Staff should dress in a manner which reflects high standards of personal conduct and promotes a positive, safe, and healthy atmosphere at school. Staff dress should, at a minimum, meet the student dress code requirements.

Employee Standards of Conduct

The ASL Academy expects each employee to maintain the highest standards of conduct and to act in a professional and responsible manner at all times. Employees must not engage in activities which violate federal, state or local laws or the policies and procedures of the school.

Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug-Free Policy

The ASL Academy is deemed a drug and alcohol-free zone. Involvement on or near school grounds by staff, students, parents/guardians, volunteers or visitors with tobacco, alcohol, or drugs in any form is strictly prohibited. The administration of ASL Academy makes known its legal authority and intent to search school property and facilities when reasonable. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of illicit substances is prohibited on school premises or as a part of any school activity. Such activity during work hours, on or near school grounds (including parking areas) and while performing employment services off campus is prohibited. Specific actions, including termination, will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibitions. Offenses should be immediately reported to a school administrator. For a complete copy of the Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug-Free Policy, please visit the school website or contact the office.

Employee and Student Work Product

The products and results of services rendered by an Employee, including but not limited to lesson plans, curriculum, assessments, photos, videos, etc., is the property of the school. The removal or destruction of employee and student work product may result in termination and/or criminal action.

Leave Policy

Sick Leave

Because of the high population of students with health-related needs, including numerous medically fragile students, it is important that school staff stay home when they are sick. Sick leave is available to employees to provide for full salary and benefits for absences due to illness or injury as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) that prevent the employee from working. Eligibility for sick leave shall follow the NMPSIA rules. Full-time staff shall accrue 6 days of sick leave at the start of each school year. Sick leave shall be prorated for part-time staff. If the Employee is absent from work due to illness for more than three (3) consecutive days, the Employee must provide a note to the Executive Director which is signed by a medical professional excusing the absence and indicating an expected return to work date. If the employment contract concludes, is terminated, or is not renewed, employees will not be compensated for unused Sick Leave.

Personal Leave

Full-time staff shall accrue 2 days of personal leave at the start of each school year. The use of "Personal Leave" is left to the discretion of the employee. However, all personal leave must be requested no later than two weeks in advance of said absence and is subject to approval by the Executive Director. Personal Leave can be denied due to scheduling conflicts. If the employment contract concludes, is terminated, or is not renewed, employees will not be compensated for unused Personal Leave.

Short Term Leave – REQUIRING APPROVAL

Short Term Leave is available to employees to provide for full salary and benefits for absences that align with FMLA standards and prevent the employee from working. Permitted examples include, but are not limited to: 1) Appearance in court as an interested party or under subpoena; 2) Death of an immediate family member; 3) An emergency caused by an accident or illness that requires the employee to be absent from work; or 4) Other Personal leave for urgent personal business or other emergencies. Short Term Leave MUST BE approved by the Executive Director in non-emergency instances and will align with FMLA precedent. Short Term Leave is not to be used as "vacation time." Eligibility for leave shall follow the NMPSIA rules. Full-time staff shall accrue 4 days of short term leave at the start of each school year and shall be prorated for part-time staff. If the employment contract concludes, is terminated, or is not renewed, employees will not be compensated for unused Short Term Leave.

Short Term Disability Leave Bank

If the current employment contract is renewed for the following school year, the unused leave for all categories (Sick, Personal & Short Term) will be transferred to create a Short Term Disability Leave Bank for use by the employee in the event an employee encounters the need for extended leave beyond the yearly allotment of leave days. Extended leave situations will be defined by FMLA and will be approved by the Executive Director. An employee's Short Term Disability Leave Bank Balance may not exceed 30 days. This means that employees will not be compensated for unused days in excess of the leave balance limit. If the employment contract concludes, is terminated, or is not renewed, employees will not be compensated for unused Short Term Disability Leave. In the event that an employee's contract is not renewed for whatever reason for the upcoming year, the employee may retain their Short Term Disability Leave bank balance upon rehire as long as the duration of the absence does not exceed one full school year.

Time Off Without Pay

If an Employee exhausts all paid sick and personal leave, the Executive Director must approve any time off without pay. If the Employee is absent from work and has exhausted all paid leave, the Employee's salary will be reduced for each day the Employee is absent from work. This amount is used solely for purposes of administrative convenience and does not mean nor shall it be construed to mean that compensation is calculated on a daily or hourly basis. Non-emergency requests for time off without pay must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director no less than ten (10) business days prior to the first day of leave requested for pre-approval.

Long Term Leave

The Albuquerque Sign Language Academy will comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Long-term leave shall be defined as unpaid leave for pregnancy, post-childbirth maternity or paternity, adoption, employee long-term illness, and any other reasons required by law. The school may require certification from a qualified medical professional to document the reason for the leave and/or to verify the employee's ability to return to work. Such leave shall be given for a maximum of up to 12 consecutive weeks, or longer if required by law. In no event shall such leave extend beyond the end of the employee's annual contract unless the contract is renewed. Such leave is available to full-time staff only who have been employed for at least one full school year. Any health benefits provided to the employee by the school will continue to be provided during this leave. Whenever possible, such leave must be pre-approved by the Executive Director and at least 30 days advance notice shall be given by the Employee.

Sick Leave Donation Program

The Sick Leave Donation Program is available to those employees who have completely exhausted all accumulated leave time and who are not otherwise receiving any related compensable benefits such as disability, workers' compensation, or unemployment. A complete copy of the policy is available on the school website or by contacting the Business Manager.

Jury Duty

Upon notification by a court to report for jury duty, the employee shall immediately request jury duty during non-school months. In the event this request is not granted, time off with no loss of salary limited to two (2) weeks will be provided for jury duty required to be served during the school year. Any employee, when advised of his/her notification of jury duty, must immediately inform the Executive Director. Salary will be paid as usual, and the check for juror fees is to be signed over to the school.

Professional Development Leave

Employees may be granted paid days during the school year for training purposes. The Executive Director must approve such training in advance.

Insurance Benefits

Employees that work 50% or more of a full-time position may elect health, dental, vision, life, and long term disability insurance coverage as provided under the rules and regulations of New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority and as authorized by the Board. The ASL Academy will pay the employer portion of such coverage. The Employee portion of the coverage will be deducted from the Employee's pay. Part-time employees may also request such coverage and the cost of such coverage will be prorated between the ASL Academy and the Employee based on that of a full-time equivalent position. No employee will receive paid health benefits beyond their term of employment. For information regarding Continuation of Health Coverage under COBRA, please contact the Business Manager.

Welfare Benefits

The ASL Academy will participate in the State ERB for all eligible core teachers and core staff and will pay the required employer contribution for such benefits if available and to the extent requested by the employee. The ASL Academy will make the required employer contribution toward federal Social Security for eligible employees.

Pay Periods

Payroll will be processed every two weeks and is prorated for a total of 26 pay periods throughout the school year (July 1 through June 30). Direct deposit is recommended. Timesheets for non-exempt employees are required and must be submitted on time and prior to payroll processing or they will not be processed until the next payroll cycle. Staff will be paid rates/salaries in accordance with state law and Board-approved salary schedules. Please see your Employment Contract for additional information or contact the Business Manager if you have any questions or need to make changes to your payroll-related information.

Mentorship Program

The ASL Academy will offer a mentorship program for Level I teachers. The program will be overseen and implemented by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Staff Evaluations

For a complete copy of the policy for Performance Evaluations for School Personnel, please contact the office. Staff may be required to participate in the ASL-PI test to assess American Sign Language skills. The annual evaluation process will include goals and strategies to raise ASL-PI scores. The ASL-PI exam will be required every two years until the employee scores a "3" or higher. The cost of the test will be paid by the school.

Complaint Procedures

Complaints should be submitted in writing to both the Executive Director and the Governance Board Chair, and the complaint should contain the necessary information as indicated in 6.10.3 NMAC. Appropriate and timely action will be taken to resolve the complaint. For a complete copy of the Complaint Policy, please visit the school website or contact the office.

Mileage and Travel Expense Reimbursement

The ASL Academy will reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred in the course of school-related business. For a complete copy the Mileage and Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy, please visit the school website or contact the office.

Health/Medical Related Issues

School staff is prohibited from providing or administering any medication to any student. The school nurse/health assistant and school administrators are the only persons authorized to administer medications, provided prior written authorization from a parent/guardian has been obtained.

Persons who become ill at school should be escorted to the nurse's office by a staff member, if possible. If the nurse/health assistant is unavailable, take the person to the main office. Do not leave an injured person alone unless you have no other option. Call or yell for help or send someone to get help. Do not attempt to move a seriously injured person. The nurse/health assistant will administer appropriate care. Additionally, staff will be provided opportunities for

CPR/First Aid Training as part of their professional development. First Aid Kits are located in each classroom. In emergency situations 911 will be called.

Teachers are required to immediately report all illnesses, injuries or accidents (observed or reported) to school administration. Written reports for students and employees are required for all accidents needing medical attention. These reports will usually be usually be completed by the nurse/health assistant. Teachers may be asked to complete reports if the incident took place within their duty time or classroom time.

Suspicion of infectious agents such as conjunctivitis (pink eye), impetigo, ringworm, or lice should be reported to the nurse/health assistant immediately. Staff should remain discreet when handling such situations.

For a complete copy of the Health Services Plan and Policy, including the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) policy, please visit the school website or contact the office.

Workplace Safety

The ASL Academy will maintain safety and health practices consistent with industry standards. If an employee is ever in doubt about how to safely perform a job, it is the employee's responsibility to ask a school administrator for assistance. Any suspected unsafe conditions and all injuries that occur on the job must be reported immediately. Compliance with these safety rules is considered a condition of employment. Therefore, it is a requirement that each administrator make the safety of employees an integral part of her/his regular management functions. It is the responsibility of each employee to accept and follow established safety regulations and procedures.

All accidents, injuries, potential safety hazards, safety suggestions and health and safety related issues must be reported immediately to an administrator. If you or another employee is injured, contact the nurse/health assistant or an outside emergency response agency, if needed. If an injury does not require medical attention, an Employee Report of Accident Form must still be completed in case medical treatment is later needed and to ensure that any safety hazards are corrected. The Employee's Claim for Workers' Compensation Benefits Form must be completed in all cases in which an injury requiring medical attention has occurred. These forms are available in the office or by contacting the Administrative Assistant.

Federal law requires that the school keep records of all illnesses and accidents that occur during the workday. The New Mexico State Workers' Compensation Act also requires employees report any workplace illness or injury, no matter how slight. If an employee fails to report an injury, s/he may jeopardize their right to collect workers' compensation payments as well as health benefits. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Business/Human Resources Manager.

Electronic Communication and Internet Use

Inappropriate electronic communication between a school employee and another employee, a parent/guardian, or a student is grounds for termination. Violations and suspicion of violations related to inappropriate correspondence should be immediately reported to the Executive Director.

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Staff is prohibited from using cell phones or personal electronic devices (iPads, iPods, etc.) for personal use during work hours. This includes using cell phones for personal calls, texts, emails,

and social media/internet access. Staff is also prohibited from using school equipment to access personal accounts during work hours.

Staff may find occasion to use personal cell phones for text messaging other staff or parent/guardians as a matter of convenience for issues such as coordinating persons during field trips or providing notification of meeting cancellations. Use of cell phones may also be necessary in emergency situations.

Text messages with parents/guardians should be kept to a minimum, should not be used for discussing school or student-related issues, and should never contain confidential student information. Staff should contact parents/guardians using the employee's school email account (____@ASLAcademy.com) or the "Remind App" for important and substantive communications.

Cell phone conversations and text messages with students should be kept to a minimum and should have a specific purpose. Staff are reminded that any inappropriate communication with a student or parent/guardian may result in termination.

Staff should refrain from taking photos of students using personal cell phones or electronic devices. Staff should refrain for storing school and student information on their personal equipment.

Email

School email account addresses and correspondence are the property of the school and subject to review by school administrators at any time and without notice. School email accounts should not be used by staff for personal matters. School email accounts will be immediately deactivated upon employee termination and retrieval of personal information from email accounts upon termination will not be permitted.

All school business shall be conducted using school email accounts (____@ASLAcademy.com or Achieve3000), not personal or private email accounts. If a staff member has personal business unrelated to the school they may contact parents/guardians using a personal or private email account, however all school-related correspondence should be conducted using the school email account only. Use of private or personal email accounts (any email account other than the school accounts) by staff to contact any student is grounds for termination.

Internet and Social Media

Staff members are strongly discouraged from "friending" or communicating with students online via social media. Staff members are prohibited from posting student photographs online or otherwise electronically circulating student photographs. Staff should refrain from taking photos of students using personal cell phones or electronic devices.

Internet Safety Policy

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the ASL Academy staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. See the school website for a complete copy of this policy.

Photographing Students

Students with signed Permission to Photograph forms on file may be photographed during school hours using school equipment. Staff should refrain from taking photos of students using personal cell phones or electronic devices. All photographs remain the property of the school and should only be downloaded to the school server or school computers. Staff members are prohibited from posting student photographs online or otherwise electronically circulating student photographs. School photos may be used for school newsletters, the school website, the school yearbook, etc., at the discretion of the school administration.

School Property and Equipment

Staff is responsible for all school-issued equipment including laptops, projectors, cameras, iPads and student laptops and iPads when they have been checked out and signed for by a staff member. Staff should ensure that all equipment is secured and accounted for daily and must report any missing or damaged equipment to school administrators immediately. Staff should refrain from storing personal information on school equipment, including their school email account. School equipment, and information stored on that equipment, is the property of the school and staff will not be allowed to retrieve personal information upon termination or upon return of the electronic equipment.

Information Technology Resources

Staff shall not upload or otherwise transfer out of the school's direct control any software licensed to the school or data owned or licensed by the school without explicit written authorization. Staff shall not use IT resources to reveal confidential or sensitive information, student data, or any other information covered by existing state or federal privacy or confidentiality laws, regulations, rules, policies, procedures, or contract terms. Staff shall not download executable software, including freeware and shareware, unless it is required to complete their job responsibilities. Staff shall not use school IT resources to intentionally disable or overload any computer system or network, or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of the school's IT resources. Staff shall not access, store, display, distribute, edit, or record sexually explicit or extremist material using school IT resources. All employees who have access to or may have access to personally identifiable student records shall adhere to all standards included in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other applicable laws and regulations, as they related to the release of student information.

Pesticide Use

Pursuant to the Pesticide Control Act, the ASL Academy will provide notice when pesticides are used in the building when parents or staff requests such information in writing. As regular practice, the school will make every attempt to ensure that pesticides are sprayed after school hours when students and staff are not present.

Homeless Education Policy

Many young people leave their homes due to abuse, neglect, and family conflict. Children and youth who have lost their housing live in a variety of places, including motels, shelters, shared residences, transitional housing programs, cars, campgrounds, and others. Their lack of permanent housing can lead to potentially serious physical, emotional, and mental consequences. The ASL Academy will ensure that all children and youth receive a free appropriate public education and are given a full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. The ASL Academy follows the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and will

ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment. For a complete copy of the Homeless Education Policy, please visit the school website or contact the office. If your family is in need of assistance, please contact the Director of Student Support (who is also the Designated Homeless Liaison).

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Parents or family members are to remain in the reception area during drop-off/pick-up and at other times during the day until a teacher or administrator escorts them back to the classrooms or brings the student to the front. The back alley is for buses only. Students may be dropped off to school duty personnel located at the main entrance or parents may park and walk students in. Please follow these procedures at all times and remind parents of the procedures as needed.

Student Information and Confidentiality

It is very important that teachers maintain current and accurate records for all students. Teachers should verify student addresses and phone numbers during parent teacher conferences, IEP meetings, or as needed. Teachers must ensure that emergency contact phone numbers are part of their regular records. Any updated information is to be shared with the main office and nurse's office immediately. Likewise, the office will provide notification of changes in student contact information to teachers and the nurse's office. Please shred all out of date forms to maintain student confidentiality.

Professional discretion and courtesy should be used in discussing all student related issues. Student behavior, progress, records, family situations, and medical information, etc., should only be discussed with school staff in a private setting and not in the presence of other students, parents, or visitors. Discussions with parents should take place in a private setting and not in the presence of other students, parents or visitors.

School staff will be mindful of the legal requirements of student confidentiality and shall not violate student privacy rights as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or by other law or policy. For the purposes of FERPA, the ASL Academy defines a "school official" as teachers, educational assistants, ancillary service providers, instructors, administrators, health staff, counselors, attorneys, clerical staff, board members, trustees, members of committees and disciplinary boards, and a contractor, volunteer or other party to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions. A "legitimate educational interest" means that the school official is obtaining such information because it is necessary for that official to perform appropriate tasks that are specified in his/her employment contract, in his/her position description, by contract agreement, as required or authorized by law, or otherwise. The information provided is to be used within the context of the official agency or school business and not for purposes extraneous to the official's areas of responsibility or to the agency or school, should be relevant to the accomplishment of some task or to a determination about the student, and is to be used consistently with the purposes for which the data are maintained. Having access to education records or the information within the records does not constitute authority to share this information with anyone not given access through the written policy. If a staff member has a question as to whether or not they should provide information to another person or agency, they should first consult with the Executive Director or appropriate administrative staff.

Student Attendance

The school is committed to having a 95 percent student attendance rate. Homeroom teachers are responsible for keeping daily records of student attendance and reporting any issues or concerns to the Director of Student Support in a timely manner. Please note: the teacher's attendance book

is the official record book for student absences.

Absences/Tardies - Students are allowed no more than five (5) unexcused absences or tardies per semester and no more than ten (10) per year. Parents should call the school office prior to the start of school so the absence can be noted and marked as excused. Absences (with appropriate documentation) may be excused for the following reasons: doctor's appointment, death in the family, religious commitment, illness, family emergency, diagnostic testing, and school visit. An unexcused absence is any absence that does not fit into the prescribed guidelines and is not school-related. Teachers should notify the Director of Student Support with concerns about attendance and when a child has accrued five unexcused absences or tardies so letter can be sent to parents. After ten (10) unexcused absences or tardies, a letter will be sent to parents and the school will notify a Court Liaison or CYFD.

Early Dismissal - Early dismissal is defined as leaving school for any amount of time prior to the regular dismissal time. If the amount of time exceeds two hours, then a ½ day afternoon absence will be logged. Parents are encouraged to plan appointments outside the school day when possible. Children may be released for appointments by the following procedure: 1) Parent/guardian must send a note to the teacher in the morning; 2) Parent/guardian must come to the office to sign the child out. (A photo ID may be required); 3) Office personnel will retrieve the student from class. Staff should only release students to the office (not to the parents directly).

For a complete copy of the Compulsory Attendance Policy, please visit the school website or contact the office.

Classroom Observations

Parents requesting to observe in the classroom must contact the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to schedule an appropriate time which will minimize student and teacher distractions and is respectful to the needs of other students and mindful of our educational mission.

Field Trips

Field trips should be planned to enhance the curriculum and should reflect an instructional or cultural learning purpose. Information concerning field trips should be submitted in writing (via email) to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for approval no less than 10 days in advance of the event and should include all pertinent information. The teacher(s) organizing the event is responsible for ensuring that all students have signed permission slips and that these permission slips are carried with the teacher/chaperone for the duration of the trip. All students must wear designated "field trip shirts" throughout the duration of the trip. The following rules and procedures apply:

1. Teacher must obtain permission from the Director of Curriculum and Instruction (provide information summary) at least ten days in advance. The request form will be available on the server.
2. Teacher must make reservations at the facility or the event.
3. With the assistance of the office personnel, the teacher must reserve a bus and determine and follow all payment procedures.
4. Teacher must send and collect parent permission slips, making sure both sides are signed.
5. Teacher must solicit and acquire volunteer parent chaperones, giving the office a list of the parents who will be going on the field trip. (At least one adult chaperone for every 8 students is needed). Parents who chaperone must never be alone with students.
6. With the assistance of office personnel, teacher must coordinate lunch service (if applicable) at least two weeks prior to field trip.
7. Teacher must notify the nurse/health assistant about field trip and makes arrangements for

- any students on medication.
8. Teacher must notify support staff of student absence due to field trip.
 9. Teacher must make arrangements with another teacher for students who DO NOT have permission to attend the field trip.
 10. Teacher must assure that any assigned school duty is covered during the absence.
 11. Teacher must assure that all contact numbers are registered with the office staff prior to leaving campus.
 12. Teacher must take permission slips on field trip. Emergency information is listed on these forms.
 13. The class is to stay together at all times. An ASL Academy certified staff member must be with the group at all times.
 14. If a parent makes arrangements to take a student from the field trip, they must sign a permission form with the teacher documenting the event.

The Executive Director and other school administrators must know where teacher and students are at all times when off the school grounds. A teacher must never take a student on a field trip without a signed parent permission form and never leave a field trip site without all students accounted for. A teacher must have means to contact the school for help if necessary. Permission to use a personal vehicle to transport students requires the submission of additional information to the Business Manager for approval.

Homework

Homework is an extension of lessons presented in class and benefits the student by providing practice and reinforcement. If a child is absent from school or out for an extended period of time and needs his/her homework assignment, please bring homework assignments to the office to be picked up by the parent at the end of the school day. Homework is to be completed in a reasonable amount of time related to the child's age, grade, and ability. Students in the primary grades should have homework that takes no more than 20-30 minutes a night. In the intermediate grades, homework time should take no more than 1 hour per night.

Instructional Materials

The school will provide students with textbooks and instructional materials for each class which conform to the curriculum requirements of the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED). Students will be allowed to take textbooks, instructional materials, library books and literacy materials home with them. Students are required to treat all items respectfully and to return such items in good condition. Teachers are to maintain an inventory control system for all books and/or materials placed in their classroom. Administration will provide the forms needed. Payment by parents is required for books that are lost or damaged by students. For a complete copy of the Instructional Materials Policy, please visit the school website or contact the office.

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Personal Learning Plans (PLPs)

Literacy teachers/Advisors are responsible for writing, maintaining, following and updating IEPs for special education students and PLPs for regular education students.

Student Assistance Team (SAT) Process

The ASL Academy follows the SAT process as outlined by the NM Public Education Department. Teachers are required to follow all procedures as indicated and set forth in trainings. For more information, please contact the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Student-Led Conferences

Student-led conferences will take place twice each school year. Staff and parental attendance is required. Special education students will have additional IEP meetings as required by law and staff is required to attend those meetings.

Student Assessments

Students will participate in a variety of short-cycle assessments and standardized testing as required by the NM PED. The ASL Academy uses such information to continually monitor the teaching/learning process, to track student progress, and to drive instruction. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will provide information concerning testing schedules and requirements. All staff is expected to assist during testing times as needed.

Report Cards & Standardized Grading System

Reports cards should be provided during parent/teacher conferences and at the end of the school year. Report cards will reflect student progress related to the New Mexico Common Core Standards, to which the school's curriculum is aligned. Beginning in sixth grade, students will receive a grade on their report cards that is based on a 4.0 grading scale. An annual written report for each student is provided in the spring. Teachers should keep comprehensive records of student work and evaluations which is subject to review by school administration. Teachers should adhere to the Grading Policy, which includes the procedure for changing a grade. A complete copy of the Grading Policy is available on the school website or by contacting the Administrative Assistant.

Parent Questions and Concerns

The school is dedicated to providing ongoing dialogue with parents regarding their child's academic, social and emotional progress. Teachers are encouraged to work productively and cooperatively with parents in order to create an environment which will positively impact all children. Parents with concerns about their child's progress should first contact their child's literacy teacher/advisor to schedule a conference to discuss the issue. Should the concern remain unresolved, teachers should contact the Director of Curriculum and Instruction or Director of Student Support.

Parental Notification of Professional Qualifications

Information regarding professional qualifications for teacher's, instructional support providers, and the school administrators shall be made available upon request to parents and the public.

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

The ASL Academy understands that children are learners in all aspects of their lives, including the social and emotional. ASL Academy educators are committed to helping children learn the interpersonal skills that will enable them to handle conflict and negotiate relationships without resorting to bullying, harassment, or intimidation. ASL Academy staff work with each child in a developmentally appropriate, case-by-case manner, to help him/her learn how to have positive peer relationships.

The ASL Academy is also dedicated to providing an educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers, and families, free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The ASL Academy is dedicated to providing a learning experience that promotes personal growth, wellness and freedom from discrimination and abuse. Harassment, intimidation and bullying behavior will invoke an appropriate response and consequence. Offenses should be immediately reported to the Director of Student Support.

Harassment

The term harassment consists of knowingly pursuing a pattern of conduct, which serves no lawful purpose, with the intention to annoy, seriously alarm, or terrorize another person. The conduct must be such that it would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress.

Bullying

The term bullying means any repeated and pervasive written, verbal or electronic expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more persons in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at school activities or sanctioned events. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, hazing, person's race, color, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of: placing a person in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the person's property; physically harming a person or damaging a person's property; or, insulting or demeaning any person or group of persons in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission, the education of any student, or the employment of any person.

Harassment and bullying in all forms, including but not limited to the following will invoke an appropriate response and consequence:

Parent/Guardian Harassment

Under normal circumstances, a student is not to be deprived of a public education on grounds relating to the attitude of parents or guardians; nevertheless, it is recognized that a situation could arise in which the uncooperative or disruptive attitude of parents/guardians might so diminish the effectiveness of the school in acting in loco parentis (in place of parents) that continued enrollment of the student could be morally impossible. Such situations include, but are not limited to:

- Any parent, guardian or other person who insults or abuses any faculty/staff or administrator at any time on school premises, or at some place in which the faculty/staff or administrator is required to be at that place in connection with assigned school activities.
- Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age or disability. Harassment would include verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of one's race, color, religion, gender, national origin,

age, or disability, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates and that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with and individuals work/study performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

- Harassment may constitute a form of employment discrimination when:
 - Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or status as a student;
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by individuals used as the basis for a decision affecting the individual's employment or status as a student;
 - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with and employee's work performance;
 - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment.

Sexual Harassment means any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Disability Harassment is defined as intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student/employee based on disability that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student/employee's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the district.

Racial Harassment consists of physical or verbal conduct relating to an individual's race.

Hazing means committing an act against a student/employee, or coercing a student/employee into committing an act, that creates a risk of harm to a person, in order for that student/employee to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose.

For a complete copy of the Student Discipline and Suspension Policy and the school's Bullying Plan/Policy, please visit the school website or contact the office.

Student Discipline

School staff accepts responsibility for maintaining an environment of respectful conduct and establishing programs that promote positive relationships among students and staff. Student behavior should reflect self-respect and consideration for the rights, feelings, and property of others. School staff will consistently address student misbehavior and will inform parents of any issues involving their child. The school is also committed to remaining proactive and supportive as student behavior and safety is addressed daily. School administrators are the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at their discretion. For a complete copy of the Student Discipline and Suspension Policy, please visit the school website.

Family Involvement/Volunteers

All parents and community volunteers must pass a background check (every two years) prior to working with students or attending classroom trips. Information concerning background checks and person authorized to volunteer or work with students will be kept on file in the office and should be verified by teachers. Teachers should encourage parental participation and provide opportunities for and keep records of volunteer hours. Such information should be regularly provided to school administration or the community outreach coordinator. For a complete copy of the Wellness Policy, please visit the school website or contact the office

School Advisory Councils

The School Advisory Council (SAC) and School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) are intended to assist the school administration with school-based decision making and to involve parents in their children's education. The School Advisory Councils are comprised of parents, school administration, school staff, and community members. Persons interested in serving as a member of either council should contact the Executive Director at the start of school year.