



# **Student & Parent Handbook**

2018 - 2019

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## Preface

### **Audience**

The American Academy Student & Parent Handbook is intended to provide information about The American Academy's policies and procedures to TAA students and parents.

### **Mission Statement**

The American Academy helps students succeed by providing a system of high quality education services and human support

## Accreditation

### **Accrediting Body**

The American Academy is accredited by AdvancEd.

## Admissions Policies

### **Program scope**

The American Academy is a full-time or part-time, credit- and diploma-granting private online high school serving students of all ages in grades 9-12.

### **Non-discrimination policy**

The American Academy does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

### **Student Status**

Students may be classified as diploma-seeking, credit-seeking, or credit enhancement. In addition to submitting official transcripts of previous work for credit and the requirement to fulfill the published diploma requirements, diploma-seeking students will be included in the student: counselor ratio and will have access to college and career counseling services.

Students will be classified as Diploma-Seeking: if a student is taking classes and meeting the graduation requirements to earn a High School Diploma through The American Academy, Credit- Seeking: if a student chooses to take classes with The American Academy for the purpose of transferring credit back to their high school, and Credit-Enhancement if a student is taking a class or classes that are not offered at their current high school or do not fit into the student's regular class schedule.

### **Enrollment Windows**

The American Academy accepts student enrollments 24x7x365 through its online registration

system. In order to enroll a student must follow the steps below:

1. Access The American Academy website and select “Enroll.” Then fill out the enrollment form provided to specify what your program intentions are.
2. If you are a diploma seeker you will need to order a “Transcript Evaluation” located under “Additional Products” on the left hand side of the website. Once the Transcript Evaluation is complete students will follow the list of required classes, provided by our counselor, and purchase these classes to begin.
3. If you are seeking credit recovery or credit enhancement, select “Course Catalog” and choose the courses you would like to purchase.
4. Once the order is placed and payment is received, Student Services will give you access to your classes and provide a welcome email with instructions to begin.

## **Enrollment Procedure**

The following enrollment forms must be completed and agreements accepted by students wishing to enroll in The American Academy:

- Online Student Enrollment Form
- Terms of Use

These forms must be completed by the student and submitted to TAA before the student will receive access to courses.

## **Technology Requirements**

In order to participate in The American Academy, students must have reliable access to a computer with internet access. Google Chrome is the recommended browser as it is the most compatible with our site. A list of technical specifications will be made available to students prior to enrollment and will be available on our website.

## **Email**

Each student must have an email account to be used for academic purposes within The American Academy prior to enrollment in the school. Students agree to notify the school within 24 hours of any changes to the primary email address.

## **Age Restrictions**

The American Academy is open to students of all ages. TAA provides coursework for grades 9-12. The school Principal will evaluate admission of students who have not completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **Non-English Native Language Speakers**

TAA does not currently provided ELL curriculum. All instructional content and instructional interactions are provided in English, with the exception of World Languages courses.

Placement tests will be required of all students who live outside of the United States and have not demonstrated the ability to successfully engage in English-language course work. Ability to successfully engage can also be determined by previously completing course work at a U.S. institution.

Students who have English reading and writing skills in question may be placed into TAA's English 9 Q1 course. Their ability to learn, comprehend and communicate in English will be assessed through this course. If it is determined that a student's skills are not at a level to be successful, the student's tuition for the course will be refunded.

## **Special Education**

As a private school program, TAA does not administer or provide for the administration of special education services. Students who are in need of special education services in order to be successful in their schoolwork are encouraged to obtain services through their local school districts.

TAA does honor accommodations that are listed on a student's current IEP or 504 plans. Copies of current IEP's should be sent to student services.

## **Expelled/ Suspended Students**

TAA reserves the right to deny enrollment to students who are currently under suspension or expulsion.

## **Criminal Background**

TAA complies with state and federal regulations regarding student privacy. However, for the safety of all students, TAA reserves the right to ask students to disclose whether they have been convicted of a crime and the nature of the offense. If the TAA principal deems that admitting the student would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the other students or the staff, the principal may deny the student admission to the School.

## **Appeals Process**

Students who have been denied admission to The American Academy may appeal the decision. Students who wish to appeal the School's decision must inform the TAA principal in writing.

## **Graduation Requirements: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Transfer Students**

Diploma-seeking students who transfer into TAA must meet all TAA diploma requirements published at the time the student begins course work at TAA. Transfer students must provide or authorize transfer of official transcripts for all previous high school work at least three months prior to their intended graduation date.

## **Graduation Requirements**

To earn a diploma from TAA, diploma candidates must earn at least 20.0 credits in the subject areas listed below:

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Credits Required</b>
<b>English Required:</b> English 9,10,11	3.0
<b>Math Required:</b> Algebra I, Geometry	2.0
<b>Science Required:</b> Earth Science, Biology	2.0
<b>Social Studies Required:</b> World Civilizations, U.S. History	2.5
<b>Health &amp; PE</b>	2.0
<b>The Arts</b>	1.0
<b>Career &amp; Technical Education</b>	1.0
<b>Educational Technology</b>	0.5
<b>Financial Math</b>	0.5
<b>Electives</b>	5.5
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>20</b>

## **College Bound Recommendations**

Students who are intending to apply to a four-year university should consider using elective course credits to meet the minimum entrance requirements. Check with the higher education institute for requirements as they may vary by institution and program.

## **Residency Requirement**

The residency requirement for TAA may be met by achieving:

1. 2.00 credits at The American Academy
2. Score 9th grade or above in Reading and Math on the STAR Assessment and achieve a minimum .25 credit (TAA 410 - Portfolio Project).

## **Transfer Credits**

Students may transfer in credits from any accredited institution. TAA reserves the right to refuse transfer credits from non-accredited institutions.

## **Accelerated Graduation**

Although courses take, on average, 30 hours per quarter credit to complete, TAA recognizes that the actual time it takes a student to complete a course can vary dramatically based on the individual student's abilities and environmental factors. Therefore, TAA does not impose a minimum or maximum time for completing courses or the TAA program, however a course will become inactive after 6 months.

Students who need more than 6 months to complete a course must contact student services to find out about re-activation options.

## **Diploma Authorization**

Students who graduate from The American Academy will earn a diploma from The American Academy, a private school accredited by the Northwest association of accredited schools.

## **Academic Operations**

### **Final Exams**

All final exams must be taken with a proctor. To have a proctor approved by TAA students must submit the person's name, occupation, phone number and email address. This information needs to be submitted online through the student's dashboard. Proctors need to belong to one of the following groups:

Public Employee-schools, law enforcement, libraries, public agencies  
Professional Services Employee - private schools or testing center, medical, law, real estate.

The email address provided must be from the proctor's place of employment for verification. A personal email address may be used following approval.

### **Academic Calendar**

The American Academy is an open-entry, open-exit school. The academic year is calculated to begin Tuesday after Labor Day and goes through the Friday before Labor Day.

The School will be closed on weekends and federal holidays, including:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and day after
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day

The American Academy is not a faith-based institution, but it respects the religious beliefs and practices of the administrative and instructional staff. Instructional and administrative staff will be granted leave for religious holidays. Instructional staff will give the principal and students at least one week's notice of their unavailability during those holidays.

### **Course Registration**

Students may select and register themselves for courses; however, if students would like assistance, TAA provides Enrollment Counselors to assist them in the enrollment and course registration process.

## **Course Catalog**

TAA courses with their associated credits, required materials, and descriptions are published in the course catalog on the TAA website.

## **Tuition and Fees**

A current schedule of tuition and fees for courses and services, such as enrollment and transcript verification, are available to current and prospective students on The American Academy's website.

## **Course Load**

Based on best practices, The American Academy recommends that students take no more than 3 to 4 courses at a time. However, The American Academy does not prohibit students from taking more or fewer courses simultaneously and has no maximum or minimum annual credit requirement. If students wish to take more than 4 classes at one time they will need to receive approval from the Principal. Please contact Student Services to pursue this request.

## **Credit for Courses**

Credit for coursework completed at TAA can be earned in several ways: percentage/letter grade; pass/fail; credit/no credit; or satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

- Unless a course is specifically designated as a pass/fail, credit/no credit, or satisfactory/unsatisfactory credit course, credit is assigned by percentage/letter grade.
- To earn percentage/letter grade credit for a course at The American Academy, students must earn at least 60% of the total points possible in the course. Any course-specific departures from this policy are clearly stated in the course syllabus and supersede this policy.

## **Withdrawing from a Course**

Students can withdraw from a course at any point without GPA penalty. If a student withdraws from a course within 10 business days of the start class, they will be issued credit for the full amount of the course tuition to apply toward another course or they will be issued a refund via their original payment method if the request is made in writing.

## **Grading Policy**

Grading policies are established by individual instructors and are in compliance with state and school guidelines. Grading information and other course-specific information are provided online within each course.

## **Grading Deadlines**

Teachers have three business days from the date of assignment submission to grade students work.

## Grading Appeals Process

Students wishing to appeal a grade in a course must follow the appeals process, including:

- Submit a written request for a detailed copy of the student's gradebook from the course instructor.
- Identify in writing any assignments that he/she would like re-evaluated.
- Explain in writing why the student believes the grade on each of the identified assignments should be revised.
- Submit identifications and explanations to the course instructor.

Instructors will respond to the student's questions in writing. The instructor reserves the right to assign a grade that is either higher or lower than the original grade. If the student is not satisfied, he/she may request an evaluation of the identified assignments by another instructor of the School's choice. The student must submit all of the documentation from the process described above. The School's designated evaluator's decision will be final.

## Grade Scale/Grade Point Value

The following grade scale will be used to determine letter grades and associated point values for all TAA courses:

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Values
93-100%	A	4.0
90-92.9%	A-	3.7
87-89.9%	B+	3.3
83-86.9%	B	3.0
80-82.9%	B-	2.7
77-79.9%	C+	2.3
73-76.9%	C	2.0
70-72.9%	C-	1.7
67-69.9%	D+	1.3
60-66.9%	D	1.0
0-59.9%	NC	0.00

## Grade Point Average (GPA)

The grade point average for TAA students are calculated as follows:

1. Each student's grade point average is the sum of the point values of all the grades received for all of the courses attempted divided by the sum of the credits for all courses attempted.
2. The grade point value is calculated by multiplying the numerical value of the mark/grade earned by the number of credits assigned to the course.

3. The minimal passing mark is D- (1.0).
4. Pass/Fail and Credit/No Credit marks may be used as agreed upon by the instructor and school administrator. These non-numbered marks will be clearly identified and excluded from the calculation of grade point average.

## **Class Standing**

Class (academic) standing depends upon the number of credits a student has earned.

<b>Credits Earned</b>	<b>Class Standing</b>
<b>0-5.0</b>	Freshman
<b>5.25-10.0</b>	Sophomore
<b>10.25-15.0</b>	Junior
<b>15.25-20.0</b>	Senior

Students will remain in the calculated class until he or she earns the required credits to advance to the next class.

## **Transcripts**

Transcripts requested by students will be forwarded to colleges, educational institutions, and/or employers as requested by the student, provided there are no unpaid fees, fines, or monthly payments. Transcript requests must be made online. Click “Additional Products” and then choose “Transcript Mailing” and follow the instructions. Fees must be paid at time of service. Transcripts only include courses that have had the final grade submitted. Final Grades are submitted three business days after the Final Exam has been taken.

### **Official Transcripts**

Official transcripts will be mailed directly to the institution or employer requested by the student. To complete this process a student can select “Additional Products” and then choose “Transcript Mailing.” There is a \$5 fee per transcript.

### **Unofficial Transcripts**

Unofficial transcripts contain all of the information contained on an official transcript. The American Academy updates unofficial transcripts upon course completion. These transcripts are available on-demand at no cost in electronic format through the student portal.

### **Official Diploma and Display Cover**

Upon completion of courses, provided there are no unpaid fees, fines, or monthly payments, students have the option of purchasing a diploma certificate. The bundle includes: diploma certificate in a display cover. Please anticipate a standard time of 3-4 weeks for the diploma to arrive once the student has graduated and purchased the bundle.

## **National Standardized Achievement Testing**

Because the following standardized achievement and proficiency tests are often important to college admissions, TAA will post links to the College Board and ACT information in the College

Prep Section of the website:

- PLAN
- ACT
- PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)
- PSSS (Preliminary SAT Scoring Service)
- SAT
- AP
- CLEP

The American Academy's ACT/College Board school code is **450480**.

## **Academic Honesty**

The American Academy has a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. Cheating (giving or receiving information) and plagiarism on class work will result in a zero grade for the assignment. Students will not have the opportunity to complete an additional assignment to make up lost points.

The following procedure governs identification and discipline for instances of academic dishonesty:

1. Instructor notifies student in writing that he or she has identified an instance in which the work's authorship is in question and requests that the student respond in writing within 3 school days. Instructor copies principal on the email.
2. Instructor sends principal an email identifying the alleged infraction and providing evidence to support the allegation. Evidence can include links to websites that have been plagiarized, references to "collaboration catchers" embedded in quizzes/exams, time and date stamps on assignments, inconsistency in quality of work, comprehension of concepts, verbal print, etc.
3. Principal contacts student and parent/guardian if the student is a minor.
4. Principal makes a decision based on the evidence presented and informs instructor and student via email of the decision.
5. Student is placed on internal academic watch. Incident is reported to students' other instructors. Student's work is routinely run through plagiarism-identification software.

Additional disciplinary action may be taken.

## **Academic Freedom/Student Rights**

In addition to other rights established by law, each student served by or in behalf of common school district shall possess the following substantive rights, and no school district shall limit these rights except for good and sufficient cause:

- No student shall be unlawfully denied an equal educational opportunity or be unlawfully discriminated against because of national origin, race, religion, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, previous arrest, previous incarceration, or

a physical, mental or sensory handicap.

- All students possess the constitutional right to freedom of speech and press, the constitutional right to peaceably assemble (see Freedom of Assembly) and to petition the government and its representatives for a redress of grievances, the constitutional right to the free exercise of religion and to have their schools free from sectarian control or influence, subject to reasonable limitations upon the time, place, and manner of exercising such right.
- All students possess the constitutional right to be secure in their persons, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures.
- All students shall have the right to be free from unlawful interference in their pursuit of an education while in the custody of a common school district.
- No student shall be deprived of the right to an equal educational opportunity in whole or in part by a school district without due process of law.
- The foregoing enumeration of rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage other rights set forth in the constitution and the laws of the state of Utah or the rights retained by the people.

## **Student Privacy**

TAA has done due diligence to protect students' personal information and to guard against cyber predators by using a password protected learning management system, password protecting and securing all computers on which student data is stored, and locking cabinets in which student records are kept.

## **School Operations**

### **Registration Process**

Information about the TAA enrollment and registration process and timeline is available on the TAA website.

### **Change of Student Information**

Students should inform the TAA administration of changes in address, telephone number, email, parent contact(s), or any other important directory information within two school days of the change.

### **Withdrawal**

To withdraw a student from TAA, students or parents/guardians of non-emancipated minors should notify the school office in writing. All requests for transfer of student records will be initiated by the school into which the student will be enrolled. However, records will not be transferred until all School fees have been paid current.

## Student Privacy

The American Academy, in compliance with Federal Laws 93-308 and 93-568, presents these facts for the information of parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and students.

1. TAA, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits parents and/or guardians or students to do the following:
  - a. Inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Under state public disclosure law, the School must acknowledge the request in writing within five (5) working days, and unless the documents are presented at that time, an estimate will be provided as to when they will be available within the 45-day response period. Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or eligible student should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected;
  - b. Request amendment of the student's education records that the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's rights to privacy. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record to be amended as well as specify why the information in question is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's rights to privacy. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student, the School will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student of the decision and advise them of the right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing;
  - c. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility;
  - d. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education under Section 99.64 concerning alleged failures by TAA to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education

600 Independence Avenue,  
SW Washington, DC 20202-4605

Students of majority age (over 18) will have parental rights regarding issues related to their educational program.

### **Disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information**

Personally identifiable information (otherwise known as directory information) contained within a student's educational records will not be made public if specifically requested by the student.

### **Attendance**

The American Academy does not mandate attendance on certain dates or at specific times. Student attendance in courses will be tracked to facilitate support of student learning. The following attendance guidelines will guide contact with absentee students:

- If a student has not logged into the course for one or more consecutive weeks, the email associated with the student will receive notification. If students are under the age of 18 parents should add their email to the student's account.

### **Student Code of Conduct (Overview)**

The American Academy believes the school should reflect the desires and expectations held by our community for our students and that the school must provide an environment that ensures the safety and wellbeing of students. For this reason, the following guidelines regarding online interaction have been put in place:

### **Virtual Classroom Conduct**

In order for a virtual classroom session to be educationally effective for students, all students should abide by a standard set of rules. The following rules govern student conduct in the virtual classroom:

- Students' written and oral communications must be free of vulgar, belittling, or offensive language.
- Students must abide by rules established by the course instructor.
- Students must comply with usage instructions communicated orally or in writing by the instructor.

Students who violate the virtual classroom rules of conduct will be warned by the instructor to correct their behavior. If the student doesn't comply with the instructor's instructions, he/she will be removed from the virtual classroom for the rest of the session.

If a student has been removed from a virtual classroom three times within a month, the student will receive read-only privileges in the virtual classroom for the rest of the semester or until the instructor deems it appropriate to restore write privileges to the student.

## **Use of Language and Images**

Students must not use vulgar, obscene, abusive, or demeaning language, writing, pictures, signs, or acts in written or oral communications, including email, discussion board, listserv, virtual classroom, student websites, or in photographs. Students are prohibited from posting content from or links to suggestive, lewd, or otherwise inappropriate websites.

## **Personal Respect**

TAA instructors, administrators, and students know that personal respect is the foundation of learning. Language, comments, or images that show a lack of respect for individuals or groups will lead directly to disciplinary action.

## **Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying**

The American Academy has a zero tolerance policy towards intimidation, harassment, bullying, and/or fighting. Intimidation, harassment, bullying, fighting and racial and/or sexual harassment are violent acts against others.

TAA will promptly and thoroughly investigate reports of harassment and bullying. If it is determined that either has occurred, the School will act appropriately within the discipline codes of the School.

## **Harassment**

No one should be subjected to harassment at school for any reason. Therefore, it is the policy of The American Academy that all students will deal with all persons in ways which convey respect and dignity. Harassment in the form of name-calling, taunting, gestures, intimidation, conduct, jokes, pictures, slurs, or ridicules are prohibited. Such conduct referencing or directed at an individual or group that demeans that person/group on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, creed, age, disability or other extraneous factors is prohibited and shall be grounds for disciplinary action

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment includes all unwanted, uninvited, and non-reciprocal sexual attention as well as the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school or work environment. This can include:

- sexual jokes, pictures, or teasing
- pressure for dates or sex
- sexually demeaning comments
- threats, demands or suggestions that favors will be granted in exchange for sex or tolerance of sexual advances

## **Discipline**

### **Discipline Philosophy**

Discipline should be thought of as a learning experience with behavior modification as its

objective. Unwanted behaviors are modified easiest when the school and parents work together as a team. In addition, any consequences that are used to modify unwanted behaviors should be: supported at home, imposed immediately, be firm, fair, consistent, and progressive.

## **Discipline Process**

1. The most effective discipline is taught and dealt with before problems arise. It is a learning process that should be instructor-directed. This being said, when applicable, internal interventions will be utilized prior to referring students to the principal.
2. If a warning is ignored and the behavior continues, the student will be referred to the principal and excluded from the online classroom. The instructor will email the principal a referral that states the nature of the problem.
3. Within one school day of receipt of the referral, the student will write out an explanation of what caused him/her to be excluded from the online classroom and will develop a three-step plan to resolve the problem.
4. If the student is a minor, the administration will contact the student's parent by the parent's preferred method of contact (phone or email). If the parent receives contact by email, he or she must reply to the email acknowledging receipt of the email.
5. If the student has been blocked from course access, access will not be restored until the instructor has read and agreed to the student's plan.
6. If the student doesn't follow through with the agreed-upon plan he/she will be referred to the principal again.
7. With each additional referral, the student will be assigned a consequence or a disciplinary step to be determined based on the student's behavior.

It should be noted that there are instances where this process may be altered. Behaviors such as: violence toward others, bullying, harassment, intimidation, disrespect toward instructors, non-compliance, and other behaviors that a staff member deems as disruptive to an orderly learning environment may result in an automatic referral to the principal.

## **Readmission**

A student, who has been long-term, suspended or expelled from The American Academy and wishes to be considered for entrance or readmission to TAA must appeal to the TAA principal.

## **Appeals Process**

A parent or a student has a right to appeal disciplinary action. If an appeal is desired, the school office must receive a letter within 10 school business days (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) with an official request for an appeal hearing.