



Family-Student Handbook 2015-2016

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to The American Dream School (ADS) family! This is your guide to ADS's most important policies and procedures. The policies and procedures are designed to ensure that ADS is a safe, caring, and respectful environment, focused on the growth and development of all ADS students.

Please read this entire handbook together with your child. In order to ensure your child's success at ADS, please help us to make sure that your child understands and abides by all of ADS's policies.

At ADS we practice working hard, being respectful and developing character! We know our ADS graduates will do amazing things. We are excited about the infinite possibilities as we create an incredible school together. These are truly exciting times, and we are so glad that you are part of it!

We recognize that these efforts take tremendous discipline and dedication, which can only be done with the joint efforts of families, staff and of course, our students themselves. In our attempts at open communication and access to information we have prepared a handbook regarding the school's structure, attendance, schedule, culture, academics, among other pieces of helpful information. This handbook will serve as a useful resource to answer many questions you may have. Please keep it handy so that you may refer to it when necessary.

We look forward to an exciting and positive year! Once again, welcome to a year promising to be filled with greatness, enthusiasm, love and dedication. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Warm Regards,

Melissa Melkonian
Founder and Principal



CONTACT INFORMATION

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WHO WE ARE

ADS: An Overview

Mission

The American Dream School develops academic excellence in both Spanish and English, preparing students to excel in college and become leaders in their communities.

Vision

We strongly believe in cultivating an environment that is welcoming and encouraging for English language learners (ELL) and immigrant students where learning and language development experience is supported. Our students will graduate from The American Dream School bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. The model of instruction will be designed to achieve academic success in two languages based on models that support language acquisition, both home language and new language acquisition.

ADS's Five Key Elements

- **Dual Language Program:** Students who are native speakers and English language learners will be placed in advisories together. This will allow for students to serve as language models for each other, giving each group of students an opportunity to show mastery in their native language as well as develop their second language. Students will receive an hour and twenty minutes of English language arts as well as an hour and twenty minutes of Spanish language arts daily.
- **Project and Experiential Based Learning:** “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”-Confucius. We believe experience is essential to learning therefore we will focus on explicitly providing students the opportunity to build critical thinking skills through real world experience. Two elements we will include as core components to improve world understanding are field study and Project Based Learning.
- **Culturally Responsive Instruction:** Instruction will focus on including our community members’ cultural experience as part of the driving force in our curriculum. Our cultural considerations will not be limited to native language instruction. We go further by understanding that education is not an easy task for any one person or entity, so we will work to have an environment that resembles that of a “village” where students, teachers, families, and the community will be active participants in the academic life of the school.
- **Data Driven Instruction and Assessment:** Students will be regularly and meaningfully assessed using formative assessment tools and informal observation so teachers will be able to accurately drive their instruction. Every 6 weeks at the end of formal units, students will have a math assessment and a reading assessment, as well as running records in English and in Spanish. The data will be tracked and realistic, quantifiable, and infused goals will be set and infused into the learning objectives.
- **Teacher Development and Support:** Teachers will work in a collective group of four teachers plus one ELL Specialist and one Learning Specialist per grade. The specialists will be the support structure for teachers to reflect and think critically about improving their lessons methodologies and delivery through lesson study. Teachers will be asked to participate in self-reflection and to consider moments of success and difficulty to inform future instruction.

In addition to the 5 Key Elements, The American Dream School will implement the following:

- **June Mini-mester:** This will be an accelerated 2 week course in helping students make gains in becoming English proficient. Students will have an opportunity to take a class with students at the same proficiency level as their peers and hone in on developing in the areas most needed.
- **DREAM Advisory:** The American Dream School will work to establish an advisory program called DREAM. DREAM will stand for Diversity, Respect, Empowerment, Advocacy and Motivation. These are the 5 pillars of our education and students will learn how each of these enhances not only their education but also who they are as citizens and leaders in their community.
- **Teacher Academy:** In order to prepare for the academic school year, our teachers will participate in a two week



intensive teaching academy where we will outline curricular objectives, set goals and establish the foundation for our year long professional development. The focus of this professional development program will be SIOP model lesson planning, practice, and implementation.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE 2015-2016

TEACHERS: We fully commit to ADS in the following ways:

- We will arrive at ADS every day by 7:00 A.M. (Monday – Friday).
- We will remain at ADS until 3:35 P.M. (Monday – Friday).
- We will always teach in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for our students to learn.
- We will always make ourselves available to students, families, and any concerns they might have.
- We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom.

Failure to adhere to these commitments can lead to our removal from ADS.

FAMILIES: We fully commit to ADS in the following ways:

- We will make sure our child arrives at ADS every day by 7:05 A.M. (Monday – Friday). We understand that students have the option of eating breakfast and will arrive at 7:05 A.M. but no later than 7:15 A.M.
- We will make arrangements so our child can remain at ADS until 3:35 P.M. (Monday – Thursday) and 1:15 P.M. on Friday.
- We will always help our child in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for him/her to learn. This also means that we will check our child's homework every night, let him/her call the teacher if there is a problem with the homework, and read with him/her every night.
- We will always make ourselves available to our children, the school, and any concerns they might have. This also means that if our child is going to miss school, we will notify the school as soon as possible, and we will read carefully all the papers that the school sends home to us.
- We will make sure our child follows the ADS dress code.
- We understand that our child must follow the ADS rules so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. We are responsible for supporting our child in behaving appropriately.
- We will have open conversations with our child to ensure there is a family-school connection.

Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause my child to lose various ADS privileges, spend time in Reflection, and other consequences depending on the choices of my child.

STUDENTS: We fully commit to ADS in the following ways:

- I will arrive at ADS every day by 7:15 A.M. (Monday – Friday). I will remain at ADS until 3:35 P.M. (Monday – Thursday) and until 1:15 PM on Friday.
- I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know how and I will do whatever it takes for my fellow students and me to learn. This also means that I will complete all my homework every night;
- I will call my teachers if I have a problem with the homework or a problem with coming to school, and I will raise my hand and ask questions in class if I do not understand something.
- I will always make myself available to my family and teachers and any concerns they might have.
- If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth to my teachers, accept responsibility for my actions, and work to fix my mistake.
- I will always behave so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. This also means that I will always listen to all my ADS teammates and give everyone my respect.
- I will follow the ADS dress code.
- I am responsible for my own behavior, and I will follow the teachers' directions.

Failure to adhere to these commitments can cause me to lose various ADS privileges, spend time in Reflection, and can lead



to other consequences depending on my choices.

SOME OF WHAT EVERY AMERICAN DREAM STUDENT LEARNS DURING WEEK 1

We are committed to reinforcing common standards of character and academic performance to create a sense of team and family. We believe that these ideas serve as a great foundation to be carried beyond the three years at ADS. During the first week of school, every ADS student learns various songs, sayings and acronyms to reinforce our mission. We constantly refer to these throughout their time at ADS. Please review with your child and help reinforce these standards in and out of school.

I – We are destined for greatness.

II- There are no shortcuts.

III – There are no excuses.

IV- STARS (Sit up straight, Track the speaker, Actively participate, Respect the family/team, Show you understand)

V - PETSYS (PLEASE, EXCUSE ME, THANK YOU, SORRY, YOU'RE WELCOME)

AFFIRMATION

We are ADS. We are the future. We are living the dream. We have the power to rise to new heights by working hard, developing character and showing respect. Somos líderes de nuestra comunidad. Somos un equipo. Somos familia. Somos ADS.



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

A key component to the success of ADS is the strong working relationship among parents, teachers, and children. The key to this is constant communication. It is for this reason that all ADS teachers give out their phone numbers and it is also the reason that we have a completely open door policy. All ADS families are welcome to visit the school at any time. In addition to phone conversations, school visits, home visits by staff, ADS also has quarterly conferences between parents, teachers and children.

Below are some additional ways that parents have gotten involved in the past. Please feel free to suggest any other ideas you might have.

Ways Families Can Get Involved

Our families are always asking for ways to get involved. Below are a few ways in which you can do so.

- Chaperone and participate in our community service activities
- Come to our parent workshops led by our Social Worker/Parent Coordinator
- Get involved in parent-literacy activities with your child
- Join our pot-luck dinners
- Attend student in-class performances (in class speeches and presentations, cultural celebrations, and other depending on specific classes)
- Chaperone school trips
- Patrol after-school to ensure safety of all of our children
- Attend parent meetings
- Stop by the school to sit in on classes (no amount of time is too short)
- Invite us to your homes for home visits
- Inform us of community events or activities we should be participating in
- Carpool with other families
- Attend parent-teacher conferences
- And of course we are always available to sample delicious home-cooked meals that your child rants and raves about.
- And if there are additional volunteer opportunities, please feel free to contact Mrs. Melkonian directly.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Enrollment

Every year, beginning in the first week of November, ADS will begin accepting applications for the following year. For the 2015-2016 school year, we will accept applications for 6th and 7th grades. Students who are already enrolled do not need to reapply. Admissions preference will be granted to siblings, then students who live in Community School District 7. Any student who resides in the state of New York is welcome to apply to our school.

Documents Needed by the School

Upon being accepted at ADS, the following documents must be submitted for each student to the Administrative Assistant in order to finalize enrollment:

- Enrollment Form
- Emergency Form (provided two times a year, to be updated if you move)
- Home Language Survey
- Lunch Forms
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Proof of Address (Copy of an Electric Bill or Deed/Lease, , etc)
- Immunization Records/Health Records
- IEP (individualized Educational Plan)/504 Accommodations (if applicable)
- Physical

Who Should I Ask?

At times, you may have questions about ADS. Below is a quick list of common concerns and the staff member you can ask for more information.

Area/Concern/Question About	Staff Member	Email Address
Attendance	Lidia de la Cruz	ldelacruz@theamericandreamschool.org
Calendar	Lidia de la Cruz	ldelacruz@theamericandreamschool.org
Change of Address	Lidia de la Cruz	ldelacruz@theamericandreamschool.org
Change of Telephone Number	Lidia de la Cruz	ldelacruz@theamericandreamschool.org
Discipline	Eddie Jimenez	ejimenez@theamericandreamschool.org
Face-to-Face Letters	Lidia de la Cruz	ldelacruz@theamericandreamschool.org
Family Circumstances	Lauren Carrion	lcarrion@theamericandreamschool.org
Grades	Student's Advisor	Varies
Long-Term Absences	Eddie Jimenez	ejimenez@theamericandreamschool.org
Medication	Eddie Jimenez	ejimenez@theamericandreamschool.org
Metrocards /Transportation	Emely de la Cruz	edelacruz@theamericandreamschool.org
Report Cards	Student's Advisor	Varies
Special Education	Melissa Melkonian	mmelkonian@theamericandreamschool.org
Tutoring	Eddie Jimenez	Ejimenez@theamericandreamschool.com
Uniforms	Eddie Jimenez	Ejimenez@theamericandreamschool.com



Arrival and Dismissal

School Hours

Monday –Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 3:35 p.m.
 Friday 7:00 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Arrival Procedures Students must arrive **no later than 7:00am each morning**. Please do NOT bring your child before 7:00am, since ADS will not be responsible for supervising any children who arrive earlier.

Transportation

We believe that “our children are always ours” and we take their safety seriously even when they are not in the school building. Students are expected to live up to high expectations, even when their families and teachers are not present. We appreciate your support in recognizing that the bus and the subway are important times to think about safety. In the event that there are safety issues with any students traveling to or from school, we will consider any action necessary to keep our children safe. In some cases, we may ask for families to pick up or drop off their children at particular times. We understand this decision might create travel difficulty for you; however, we need every student to adhere to behavior expectations for their own safety as well as the safety of everyone else. Disciplinary actions may occur even though the students are not on school property.

Students living more than 1/2 mile in distance from the school, but less than 1 mile, will receive a Reduced-fare Metro Card for public transportation. Students living greater than 1 mile from the school will receive a Full-fare Metro Card for public transportation. It is each student’s responsibility to hold onto the Metro Card. Parents are expected to pick up or make special arrangements for students remaining after school for Reflection, tutoring, or special activities.

Parents must provide contact information for any person authorized to pick up their child. If the person picking up child is not the parent/legal guardian of the child, he or she must be both a) given explicit written permission to pick up the child **AND** b) be 18 years or older. Please speak to Mrs. Melkonian if you have any concerns.

Uniform

Students at The American Dream School will wear a school uniform. It is as follows:	
Boys	Girls
<p>MONDAY – THURSDAY American Dream School Overlay (Vest or Sweater) Oxford shirt underneath overlay Slacks (Gray) Black belt Black shoes Tie</p> <p>FRIDAY American Dream School Polo with Logo <u>(6 grade-White, 7th grade- Navy Blue)</u> Jeans Sneakers OR Monday-Thursday Uniform</p>	<p>MONDAY - THURSDAY American Dream School Overlay (Vest or Sweater) Oxford shirt underneath overlay Slacks or Skirt (Gray) Black shoes Tie Tights (black) if wearing a skirt Sneakers</p> <p>FRIDAY American Dream School Polo with Logo <u>(6 grade-White, 7th grade- Navy Blue)</u> Jeans Sneakers OR Monday-Thursday Uniform</p>



Attendance

Attendance Philosophy

At ADS we know that attendance can have enormous effects on a student's success in school and life. As a result, we strongly encourage all students to attend school daily and arrive on time. As the old saying goes, "If you're not five minutes early, you're late."

If your child is going to miss school for any reason, please call our Administrative Assistant, as soon as possible at 718.585.3071 EXT-1001. All absences should be followed up the next day with a note signed by a parent, guardian or doctor. ADS staff will call to verify all absences.

If your child is running late or will miss a portion of the day due to a doctor's appointment, please call and inform the office. (We strongly request that you arrange appointments outside of the school schedule or during the latter part of the day). Students who arrive late will receive a late pass. All students will be responsible for any missed work and it is their responsibility to collect and make up the work. If your child is absent or late, you should expect a phone call from someone on the ADS staff.

Since missing class affects academic achievement, repeated absences may be reflected in the student's grades. All absences and lateness are noted on report cards and Dream reports. Students are responsible for all missed assignments and must arrange a way to complete all missed assignments and homework. Students who miss school for both excused and unexcused absences may be asked to make up work or learn missed lessons during lunch and/or after school.

In addition, students who have 10 or more unexcused absences (3 unexcused latenesses equal one unexcused absence) run the risk of missing the June mini-mester **and** not being promoted to the next grade.

Excused Absences

All absences will be reported as unexcused absences unless the school receives the following documentation:

- Doctor's note specifying the excused day for illness;
- Religious holidays;
- Parent note indicating there is a family funeral – the child will be excused only for the day of the funeral unless extenuating circumstances apply;
- Parent note indicating there is a family emergency – emergencies include house fires, house floods, or incidents of violence in the home. Children are expected to be at school as soon as possible after the situation is resolved; or
- Court documents mandating a court appearance – the child will be excused only for the day(s) indicated on the court documents.

Long Term Absences

Long-term absences are only permitted for health-related concerns. If your child is absent for a week or more due to health, please make certain to make arrangements with your child's classroom teacher to pick up long-term assignments. Depending upon the nature of the illness, children will be responsible for keeping up with their class work.

Illness

If your child is going to miss school due to illness, please call the school first thing in the morning to let us know. This should be followed up the next day with a note signed by the doctor in order to be counted as excused. **Absences will be marked as "unexcused" in our attendance system unless we have verified an acceptable reason for missing school.**

Early Dismissal & Appointments



We strongly recommend that you arrange appointments for after school whenever possible. If your child has a medical/dental appointment or a family emergency, which requires you to request an early dismissal, please write a note to the teacher ahead of time. **All students being dismissed early due to appointments or parent pick-up will leave from the office, not from the classroom.** Parents are required to sign-out students from the Main Office for any early dismissal. A child will be dismissed early only to a parent or a properly authorized and identified adult. A letter from you authorizing another adult to pick up your child is required, if you did not previously list that adult as an authorized adult. An early dismissal counts as a tardy and three early dismissals or tardies equal one absence.

Field Lessons

Field lessons are one of the many ways we both provide students with new learning experiences and reward students who are doing the right things. Students must earn field lessons through excellent attendance, effort, completed homework, and behavior. While some field lessons are experiential and open to all, other field lessons will be earned. Students who demonstrate appropriate levels of safe behavior, earned *field lessons maybe taken away from students who do not earn them based on attendance, effort, homework, and behavior. Otherwise, trip attendance will be required.*

Local Field Lessons

No child will be permitted to leave the school for a field lesson if they do not have written permission. Please sign all permission slips in a timely manner. Students will remain at the school, under adult supervision, if written permission was not received, if the child has not satisfied the requirements made by the teacher, or if the child is or has recently demonstrated unsafe behavior.

Chaperones

We welcome parent chaperones on our field lessons throughout the year. Please let your child's homeroom teacher know if you are willing and able to chaperone a particular trip. We will honor volunteers on a first come, first serve basis. Preference will be given to families whose children have the fewest number of absences.

Food Service

Costs

All families must fill out a lunch form in August. All students will receive free lunch IF the lunch form is completed and received by due date established. If students do not turn in a completed lunch form, they will pay full price for lunch, which is \$1.50, and is subject to change as New York City Department of Education policies change.

Meals

Breakfast is optional each morning from Monday – Friday for all students. Breakfast will be served between 7:05 – 7:20am.

Lunch will be provided Monday – Friday for all students at no cost if lunch forms are received. Families are encouraged to send a bag lunch, if your child frequently chooses not to eat the school lunch offered. The school will be unable to assume responsibility for refrigerating or warming lunch brought from home.

In terms of other foods/beverages that are permitted at school, students may bring water, 100% juice, fruits, vegetables and healthy snacks. Students will be allowed to eat/drink snacks during lunch.

Any unhealthy food or beverage options (i.e. cookies, coffee, hot chocolate, donuts, soda, drinks that are not 100% juice, etc.) are not permitted. Lastly, please inform the school if your child has any food allergies. We also ask that you inform the school if your child will not eat the school breakfast and/or lunch on a regular basis.



Student Personal Belongings

Cell Phones, iPods and Toys

Students are not permitted to use any personal electronic devices or toys in school. However, we recognize that it may be important for the child to have a cell phone to get to and from school safely. Students with cell phones will be required to turn the phone completely off (not vibrate) once they enter the school, and store the phone in their backpacks. **If you need to give a message to your child during the school day, please call the school line.**

If students use any electronic devices or toys during inappropriate times during the school day, these items will be confiscated and only returned to parents when they come pick them up.

School Communications

Communicating with Staff and Teachers

We encourage open communication among parents, students, and teachers. To this end, we provide telephone numbers and email addresses for all ADS staff.

Students and parents should feel free to contact staff members for any reason (including clarification of homework). This is also a good chance to get help, if necessary, with homework. In addition, in the event of an emergency, please call Mrs. Melkonian.

Visiting Campus

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, all visitors to the campus, including parents, must present ID to the school safety officer at the entrance of the school and at the ADS Main Office (room 410). All visitors will be given a visitors badge at the security desk on the first floor which is required to be worn at all times.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Immunizations

According to the New York State Public Health, all students need to be appropriately immunized and have a physical examination each year.

New York State law requires that all children entering New York City public schools be immunized against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, 2 Hepatitis A, 3 Hepatitis B, and Varicella.

Before a child can be permitted to enter and attend school (subject to the 14-day initial waiver requirement), parents or guardians must present documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or that their child has received at least one dose of each of the required vaccines and is waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. ADS must receive a certificate of immunization no later than **September 01, 2015**. These requirements can be waived only if a properly signed health or religious exemption is filed with the school.

Illness during School Hours

If a child becomes ill or injured during the school day and is not well enough to stay in class, the parent/guardian will be called to pick the child up. **It is necessary to have updated emergency contact numbers on file in the school office in case no one can be contacted at home.** If the person picking up child is not the parent/legal guardian of the child, s/he must be a) given explicit written permission to pick up the child **and** b) be 18 years or older.

Medication



No medication can be administered or consumed at school unless both a doctor and a parent/guardian have completed the appropriate forms. ADS strongly encourages families to dispense both temporary and maintenance medications outside of school hours. Ask your physician for a medication schedule that will accomplish this. In those few cases where this is not possible, please bring in the medication to the main office.

The medication needs to be in the original container with the appropriate prescription label (including the name of the student, the name of the medicine, the date, the dosage information, and directions for administering the medication) and the appropriate Student Health Authorization for Administration of Medication Form. We store and administer the medicine in a secure location. Please be aware that the medication cannot travel back and forth to school – once it's given to us for your child's use, it must remain with us until it needs to be refilled. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to ask for two separate prescriptions when at the doctor's office with your child. Students are not allowed to have medication (prescription or non-prescription) of any kind in their possession at school and it should not be placed in their book bags. Adults should bring the medication to the nurse. For further information on medication or any health related issues, please contact the main office.

Counseling Services

The social worker at ADS is available to help any student or parent address any social, emotional, or academic issue s/he may be facing. In addition, our social worker helps students work through and cope with personal and school-related challenges. Counseling support is also extended to ADS families in need.

There are several ways by which students/families may be referred for counseling services:

- If a **parent** is interested in having his or her child seen by our social worker please contact the social worker on staff and/or the principal
- **Students** are able to ask directly to speak with the social worker on staff
- A student may also be referred at the recommendation of a **teacher, social worker or principal**

Please understand that we are required to respect the rights and privacy of our students and families and as a result all information and counseling services are confidential and cannot be shared (except instances required by law).



CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

Start/End Dates

The first day of school for all students is Monday, August 24, 2015. The last day of school for all students is Friday, June 24, 2016.

Vacations/Holidays

With a few exceptions, ADS will follow the same holiday schedule as the New York City Department of Education (see calendar for full details).

Snow Closings (Inclement Weather)

In the event of inclement weather, please listen to the radio or television for the announcement closings/delays of NYC Public Schools. Or, check the Department of Education website (<http://schools.nyc.gov>).

If the NYC Department of Education has a **delayed start**, **ADS will also have a delayed start**. If the NYC Department of Education is closed, ADS will be closed. If the NYC Department of Education is open, ADS is open.



July						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

August						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	Fr	Sa
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October						
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		1	2	3		
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Notes:

- Jul 3 Independence Day (obs)
- Aug 5 New Staff First Day
- Aug 6 All Staff Returns (Ramapo)
- Aug 18 Student Diagnostics Day
- Aug 24 First Day of School
- Sep 3 Ramapo Day with 6th Grade Students
- Sep 7 Labor Day **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- Sep 8 **PD Day**, No School for Students
- Sept 9 Students Return (MP1 Starts)
- Oct 12 Columbus Day, **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- Nov 6 **Last day of MP1**
- Nov 9 PD Day, No school for students (Grades Due)
- Nov 10 MP2 Starts
- Nov 24 ADS Family Thanksgiving Lunch
- Nov 25-27 Thanksgiving Break **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- Dec 14-18 Student Diagnostics Week
- Dec 21-Jan 1 Holiday Recess **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- Jan 4 Staff Returns, No School for Students
- Jan 5 Students Return
- Jan 18 MLK, Jr. Day, **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- Jan 19-21 Midterms Week
- Jan 21 **Last day of MP2**
- Jan 22 **Midterm Grading**, No School for Students (Grades Due)
- Jan 25 MP3 Starts
- Feb 15-19 Winter Recess
- Mar 25 Good Friday **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- Mar 31 **Last day of MP3**
- Apr 1 **PD Day**, No school for students (Grades Due)
- Apr 4 MP4 Starts
- Apr 5-7 NYS ELA Test
- Apr 13-15 NYS Math Test
- Apr 25-29 Spring Recess **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- May 2 School Resumes
- May 31-Jun 3 Student Diagnostics Week
- June 5-9 Finals Week
- Jun 9 **Last day of MP4**
- Jun 10 **Finals Grading**, No school for students (Grades Due)
- Jun 13 DREAM Mini-meister begins
- Jun 24 Last day of school for students and staff



ACADEMICS

Grading System

ADS issues report cards on a quarterly basis. The grading scale is based on the students' mastery of the content standard. Family-Teacher Conferences will be held for each report card. Progress reports will be provided to parents at the mid-point of each quarter to update them on their child's academic progress. Progress reports provide a detailed picture of a student's academic performance based on assignments and assessments administered in a given period.

Timing of Quarter System and Key Dates

Standardized Testing

ADS administers the New York State 6th Grade English Language Arts Exam and Math Exam. These exams give teachers information about students so that they can effectively design instruction to meet particular student needs, and clearly demonstrate the academic achievement of students. Once a year, the school will publish the school-wide results of these tests.

Homework

Homework is a fundamental component of ADS' academic program. Your child's academic progress depends on what s/he does at home, not just in school. The guidelines for homework are as follows:

1. Thoroughly complete all homework every night, including weekends, and return on the due date
2. Read for a **minimum** of 20 minutes daily.

Timing of Quarters/Marking Periods

The school year is comprised 4 marking periods. The start/end dates are listed below for your reference:

	First Day of Marking Period	Last Day of Marking Period
Quarter 1	August 24, 2015	November 6, 2015
Quarter 2	November 10, 2015	January 21, 2016
Quarter 3	January 2, 2016	March 31, 2016
Quarter 4	April 4, 2016	June 9, 2016

Progress Reports: Progress reports will be issued at family-teacher conferences 4 times a year during the dates scheduled below. At any time, the family has a right to request a progress report for their child from a particular teacher. It is advised that parents requesting a progress report request one within 5 business days for when they need it by.

Family-Teacher Conferences

* Family night September 11, 2015 from 1-4pm

Quarter 1: October 8, 2015

Quarter 2: December 17, 2015

Quarter 3: March 3 2016

Quarter 4: May 3, 2016

Report cards will be sent home on the following dates:

November 3, 2015

January 29, 2016

April 28, 2016

June 24, 2016

Families are encouraged to check all homework assignments and read with their students and ask questions related to their reading. *If a child is having a problem completing the homework assigned, parents and students are encouraged to call their child's teammates and advisor for assistance.*

Missing/Incomplete Homework: If a student does not complete an assignment or hands in an incomplete assignment, the student will earn a zero on that assignment. We want to teach our students the importance of "sweating the small stuff" from a young age. We will be in touch with any homework concerns that need to be addressed with families.



Promotional Criteria

ADS students must meet grade level standards in the major content areas (Humanities, Spanish, Math, and Project Based Learning) to be promoted to the next grade level. Promotion will be based upon standards established for each subject. Attendance of less than 90% will also serve as a major consideration in the decision to retain a student.

ADS students will be promoted or retained on the recommendation of the classroom teachers, as well as the consultation of the grade level team and the principal. This recommendation will be based upon the following criteria:

- 70% mastery in ALL subject areas
- Attendance
- New York State standardized assessments

Student retention is recommended when considered in the best interest of the student. Retention may be considered at any grade level. The decision to retain will be based on sufficient data gathered over time with the intention of placing the child in the grade level and educational program where he or she will ultimately be the most successful. Students qualifying for special education will also receive consideration on a case-by-case basis in a manner consistent with the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Process for Promotion

Report cards, given quarterly, will indicate whether a student is “at risk for retention” beginning in or after Quarter 2. If a student has been identified as at risk for retention in Quarter 2 or 3, a letter indicating this risk will be sent home with a request for an in-person parent conference. When considering retention, the teaching team will prepare classwork, assessment data, and any other pertinent documents to present to the principal and family at the conference.

The decision regarding promotion and retention will be based on the totality of the circumstances and will be final and binding.

Student Records and Privacy

All parents have received a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) notice upon registering his or her student at ADS. Parents of ADS students may access their child’s file by checking in with the administrative assistant in the Main Office. She will give the parent the file to view in the office, but the file may not leave the office. Students’ end of the year report cards and other items may be withheld if an account balance is left unpaid. ADS will comply with all New York state regulations regarding student privacy. We respect the privacy of all parents and students in regards to student records.

Special Education

A student with identified physical, emotional, learning, or developmental disabilities have the right to placement in the least restrictive environment, and will receive special education services according to his or her written Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Students who received special education services at their previous school will receive services at ADS as so determined in an IEP meeting, which will take place within the first 30 days of school.

If your student has previously received special education services or has been given a Section 504 plan, please make sure to immediately notify the principal. If you believe that your child may be eligible for special education services, please notify the Principal as soon as possible in writing. If you are interested in more information on special education, please contact the Principal.



Student Supplies

All students will be required the following school supplies on the first day of school:

ADS will provide students with special school supplies they will need to use throughout the course of the school day (paint, special paper, etc.).

To be prepared to do their homework, we ask that students have the following items at home:

- Pencils, Loose-leaf paper, Colored pencils, Pencil sharpener, Spanish Dictionary, English Dictionary
 - 5 floppy binders
 - 1 Three ring binder
 - 5 sets of dividers
 - 1 pack of post its (pack of 5)
 - 2 packs of markers
 - 2 packs of colored pencils
 - 1 box of pencils
 - 1 box of pens
 - 1 box of tissues
 - 1 container of hand sanitizer
 - Pencil sharpener
 - 4 packs of loose leaf paper
 - Scissors
 - Glue Stick

CHARACTER AND SCHOOL CULTURE

Character Growth Goals

At ADS, we support students in developing not only strong academic skills, but also strong character. Students will participate regularly in a DREAM Advisory taught by their advisory teacher, and will practice developing the character strengths that has proven to lead to a successful and happy life (including grit, gratitude, curiosity, self-control and optimism).

Every student will also have one important Character Growth Goal to work on every quarter. The goal will be designed as the most important habit your child can further develop that will lead them to be successful in school and life. Since you know your child best, your input will be requested and greatly valued as we create goals throughout the year. Students will be regularly held accountable for meeting this goal, and during Family-Teacher Conferences, your child will be congratulated if they have met the goal and they will then earn their next one.



Rewards and Joy

At ADS, we believe that joy is both a means and an end when it comes to learning. Fun activities will happen throughout the year for students that earn them. These activities could include surprise trips, parties and dances, games, etc. Ways of earning fun activities include:

Perfect attendance, Perfect Homework, Excellent behavior, Honor Roll (All 80's and above), High Honor Roll (All 90s and above).

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

Behavioral Expectations

The American Dream School ensures safety, fairness and will set forth high behavioral expectations for all students. In order for our students to be safe, they must adhere to our code of conduct. Our code of conduct will pro-actively prevent any disruption to learning and hold students accountable for not interfering with the education of their peers. Students must adhere to the following:

1. Respect self, peers, teachers and administrators at all times.
2. Be prepared for school every day and practice academic honesty and integrity.
3. Be on time to school and to all classes every day.
4. Complete all class work and homework ensuring 100% of effort was given.
5. Abide by classroom and school rules at all times.
6. Cooperate with teachers and administrators in the event of a breach of the code of conduct.
7. Always come to school in full uniform.
8. Protect and take care of school property.
9. Always use appropriate language (no profanity).
10. Represent The American Dream School in and outside of school by always being a scholar.

Code of Conduct

Students who do not comply with the code of conduct will receive disciplinary consequences. Dependent on the severity of any given infraction, consequences will be handled accordingly. Each teacher will follow the following hierarchy of consequences for behaviors that do not warrant immediate follow up by the principal (level 1 infraction).

Non-Verbal Warning: Teacher will slightly gesture to a student that he/she is violating the code of conduct.

- **Verbal Warning:** Teacher will speak to the student to remind the student that he/she is violating the code of conduct and that further disruptions will lead to higher consequences
- **Written Warning and Parent Contact:** In order to keep parents informed, all consequences and behavioral strategies will be communicated by phone, email or letter. In return, all parents will be asked to provide a signature for all written communication.
- **Detention:** Teachers will use detentions to facilitate written reflections, missed work, or community service.

In the event that the teacher has exhausted all steps in the hierarchy of consequences, the student will be removed from the classroom and asked to speak with the principal or the director of operations. The student's advisory teacher will participate in this conference. This conference may result in one or more of the following consequences:

- **Parent Conference/Conversations:** Parents may be asked to come in to discuss their child's current performance/behavior to ensure that they are maintaining their Commitment to Excellence Promise and students could be kept on track to success



- **Behavior Contract:** A behavior contract may be developed for students who regularly violate the Code of Conduct and require consistent monitoring to modify their behavior. The behavior contract will clearly describe expected behaviors for the student and a parent or guardian will be required to sign the document
- **Loss of Privileges:** Students who continue to exhibit negative behaviors will face the loss of privileges, including access to recess, field trips, special events and ceremonies.



Level of Infraction	Behavior	Consequences
1A No Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Lateness to school Public display of affection Dress code violation Profanity or abusive language towards peer Using electronic devices in school Rough housing, pushing Cutting class (10 min or more while in school) Throwing objects in class or cafeteria Attempted fighting Misbehavior outside of school (after school hours) (i.e. misconduct on public transportation that is reported back to ADS administration) 	Official Detention
1B Follow warning system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupting classroom (behavior interferes with teaching) Failure to complete assignment Failure to follow directions Disrupting behavior in hallway or common space 	Official Detention
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vandalism (no cost to school) Repeated after school detentions (5 detentions in a month) Disrespect of a teacher or administrator Damaging a person's property Vandalism (costing school money to repair) Profanity used towards teacher or administrator 	Saturday Detention
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical fighting Bullying, cyber bullying, or harassment Theft Possession of stolen property Possession of drugs/alcohol Bring a weapon to school 	Out of School Suspension
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple, severe, and/or high level infractions Sexual Assault Acts of violence 	Long Term Suspension or Expulsion

Additional misbehaviors and possible consequences include, but are not limited to:



Regardless of the type of infractions, all consequences will include opportunities for reflection and reconciliation to maintain connections with learning and the school community. The school will create time and tools to support and document reflection, e.g., verbal reflection protocols for younger students or incident reflection forms that require older students to write what happened, what rules and pillars were violated, and what alternative actions could have been taken. Students will reflect with their advisory teacher to really bring back the accountability.

Due Process for Suspensions and Expulsions:

Parents will be notified of all consequences that involve removing students from class, activities or the school. Students will be told of all charges against them and asked for their side of the story. The Principal, Director of School Culture or other school official shall consider this explanation prior to taking disciplinary action. For some minor infractions parents may be merely notified and/or a conference requested to assist in resolving the situation.

When the school proposes suspending a student, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately or as soon as possible by telephone. Written notification will also be sent to parents/guardians. The written notice will include the reason(s) for the proposed suspension, the proposed duration of the suspension and whether the proposed suspension will be in-school or out-of-school. The written notice will also advise the parent/guardian that he/she will have the opportunity to request a conference with the Principal. At the conference, the student, the student's advisor, and parent/guardian will be given an opportunity to explain the situation, to present his/her own evidence and listen to evidence presented against his/her. If the consequence is suspension, written notification issued after the conference, if one was had. The written notice and conference shall be in the parent/guardian's dominant language. This will all be documented in our student information system.

- **Suspension:** The Principal may impose short-term suspension (5 days or less) for a level 4 or level 5 infraction. If necessary, the student will be immediately removed from the class or the school. The parent/guardian will also be notified immediately both via telephone and in writing. The written notice will include the reason(s) for the proposed suspension, the proposed duration of the suspension and whether the proposed suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.
- **Long-Term Suspension:** When the school proposes a long-term suspension (6 days or more), the parent/guardian will be notified immediately or as soon as possible by telephone and in writing. The written notice will include the reason(s) for the proposed suspension, the proposed duration of the suspension and whether the proposed suspension will be in-school or out-of-school. Parents will be required to have a conference with the principal.
- **Expulsion:** An expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from the school. In the case of conduct which in the school's judgment warrants expulsion, the student may be subjected to a short or long-term suspension first. If the Principal decides that an infraction warrants expulsion, a hearing as described above will be held. Based on that hearing, the Principal will make the final decision. That decision may be appealed to the Board. If the school expels a student, the school will cooperate with any school to which the student seeks to enroll, including providing the receiving school with all relevant information regarding the student's academic performance and student records, upon request of the school or parent/guardian.



Students with Disabilities Discipline:

The school's disciplinary policy, as regards any student with a disability, will be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), its implementing regulations and applicable New York State law respecting students with disabilities. The school will cooperate with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the student's district of residence as necessary to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Generally, a student with, or suspected of having, a disability may be disciplined in the same manner as his/her non-disabled peers as set forth above. When a student is suspended for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, additional safeguards are in place. The school will work with the CSE to establish a date for a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) to ensure that the student's behavior was not tied to or was a manifestation of his/her disability.

A student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to an infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for consideration of a change in the guidelines. This may result in another Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to explore other BIP options.

If a student does not currently have an IEP, but prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action the school has a basis of knowledge that a disability exists, the student's family may request that the student be disciplined in accordance with these provisions.

Dress Code

The American Dream School has a primary objective of developing a community of learners, dedicated to the highest standards of academics. It is a visible signature of our school to the larger community, an indicator of our unity and of our pride of purpose. Students come to school having a clean-cut and professional image will not be distracted from the purpose of attending school: to get an education. We truly believe that uniforms promote learning. Therefore, school uniforms are expected to fit the student appropriately and be cleaned on a regular basis. Students will understand that principles learned in DREAM advisory transfer to the very notion of how one carries him/herself at school and in public.

The following dress code guidelines apply to all students:

1. Students are to wear The American Dream School uniform every day.
2. Uniforms must be neat and clean (presentable) everyday.
3. All American Dream School shirts are to be tucked in and worn appropriately.
4. All pants must fit around the waist. Boys must wear a black belt every day. Belts should be of appropriate size and nature, i.e., no large-faced images or symbols which may pose as a distraction.
5. Pants may not be excessively baggy and may not cover the shoes.



6. Girls may not wear skirts that are inappropriately short (above the center of their knee) or that have inappropriately long slits (above their knees).
7. Students may not wear hats, caps, du-rags, or other head coverings in the school (except in the case of religious observance)

Students at The American Dream School will wear a school uniform. It is as follows:	
Boys	Girls
<u>MONDAY – THURSDAY</u> American Dream School Overlay (Vest or Sweater) Oxford shirt underneath overlay Slacks (Gray) Black belt Black shoes Tie	<u>MONDAY - THURSDAY</u> American Dream School Overlay (Vest or Sweater) Oxford shirt with logo Slacks or Skirt (Gray) Black shoes Tie Tights (Black) if wearing a skirt Black shoes
<u>FRIDAY</u> American Dream School Polo with Logo (6-White, 7 th Navy) Jeans Sneakers OR Monday-Thursdays Uniform	<u>FRIDAY</u> American Dream School Polo with Logo (6-White, 7 th Navy) Jeans Sneakers OR Monday-Thursdays Uniform

Uniform Infractions

All students are expected to comply with our uniform policy. Students who do not come to school in complete uniform will face the following consequences:

1st Offense:



- Student will receive a detention and a phone call home.

2nd Offense:

- Parents/ Guardians will be called to discuss the Dress Code and problem-solve strategies to aid the family in complying.
- Parents/ guardians will be asked to bring an appropriate change of clothes. If they are unable to do so, students will be required to wear a clean uniform from the reserve closet at the school, if such a uniform is available.
- Student will have a conference with advisor regarding finding strategies to help him/her come to school in full uniform
- Detention. This will be logged into our student information system.
- Official letter in file: Letter will be mailed home and placed in students record.

3rd Consecutive Offense:

- Saturday Detention. This will be logged into our student information system.

Special Education Discipline

In the case of a special education student, or a student who receives 504 accommodations, ADS will ensure that it makes the necessary adjustments to comply with the mandates of state and federal law, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, regarding the discipline of students with disabilities. Prior to recommending expulsion for a Section 504 or special education student, the Principal will convene a review committee to determine: whether the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his or her disability; whether the student was appropriately placed and receiving the appropriate services at the time of the misconduct; and/or whether behavior intervention strategies were in effect and consistent with the student's IEP or 504 plan. If it is determined that the student's misconduct was not a manifestation of his or her disability, that the student was appropriately placed and received appropriate services at the time of the misconduct, and that appropriate behavior intervention strategies were in effect and consistent with the student's IEP, the student may be expelled according to the ADS procedures.

Complaints or Disagreements

If you have a concern about a school policy, academic grade, discipline decision, or anything else, we encourage you to contact the appropriate staff member at ADS by telephone. All staff members are committed to responding promptly to parent/guardian concerns. If an issue is not resolved promptly or satisfactorily, please contact the Principal to discuss the matter further.



Parents may also file a complaint in writing to the principal who has been appointed by the Board of Trustees to review complaints. After reviewing the complaint, the principal will respond either in writing, telephone, or in person depending on the circumstance. If after presenting your complaint to the Principal, you determine that your complaint has not been adequately addressed, you may also contact the Chair of ADS Board of Trustees. Should you still have additional concerns you may appeal to the school's authorizer and then up to the Board of Regents of the state of New York, which shall investigate and respond.