

## Parent/School Covenant

### THE ACADEMY and our Parents: Establishing and Maintaining the Partnership

It is the philosophy of THE ACADEMY that we enroll families, not just students. Parents, legal guardians, grandparents, and all other family members play an integral role in every child's education. In addition to requiring the school and its parents to sign a legal contract each year for a student's enrollment in the school, THE ACADEMY has found it helpful for the school and parents to enter into a "covenant," a pact by which we articulate the reasonable expectations we have of each other, to confirm and clarify a partnership between the school and the parents of its students. In what follows we describe the details of this partnership.

#### **Involvement in the school**

The staff members of THE ACADEMY agree to provide high quality education for students, in full accordance with our mission. In addition to academic and athletic education, we strive to teach students responsibility, respect, discipline, and other important life skills. Our teachers and coaches are professionals trained in their disciplines.

By enrolling their child at THE ACADEMY, parents agree to read, understand, and endorse school mission and policies. No school can succeed in fulfilling its mission unless parents are also committed to it. Please read the *Student and Parent Handbook* and discuss with your child the philosophy and policies contained in it. Maintain regular contact with your child's teachers, coaches, and advisor. Show your support and encouragement by participation in school activities and attendance at school events, especially those in which your child has a role to play.

#### **Communication**

THE ACADEMY agrees to keep you informed of your child's progress in all areas. Teachers, advisors, and athletic coaches provide written reports each term. Teachers give midterm reports, and we will contact you promptly if your son/daughter is having academic or disciplinary difficulties. In addition to the formal reporting of grades and comments and early warning notices as needed, the school welcomes informal communications between teachers and parents. Feel free to call or to e-mail for updates at any time. We will try to return calls and e-mails within 24 hours. Our staff members are all available and open to communication from parents and families at any time.

Parents agree to treat all THE ACADEMY staff with respect. The *quid pro quo* of the partnership with parents is that we expect our parents to treat our teachers as professionals who know what to teach and how to teach it, just as we expect our teachers to treat parents as experts about their own children, experts who have something crucial to contribute in our work with the student.

#### **Supporting the student**

Parents and THE ACADEMY staff all have responsibilities to your child as a student at this school. Professionals in the field routinely counsel parents that young people need

three essential building blocks: support, encouragement, and structure (i.e., clear boundary lines and significant consequences for crossing the line). Periodically, assess the extent to which you are giving your child these three foundations (and ask your child and his or her teachers for their assessments about how you are doing on the parenting side). THE ACADEMY agrees to provide these building blocks and to uphold the values and ideals stated in our Mission Statement and Student and Parent Handbook.

Parents' responsibilities in the development of their child's moral values include modeling integrity and civility, listening, supervising, and supporting consequences for dubious behavior. Be a role model when it comes to honesty and civil behavior at all times, but especially in behavior towards others at the school, on the sidelines at athletic events, and in conversations with and about the adults at school. Parents who fail to be civil and/or become disruptive in their relationships with the school place that relationship in jeopardy, including the possibility of the school insisting that they withdraw their child from the school. Engage your child in conversations around events that have moral overtones. Encourage participation in events that promote high standards (e.g., service) and actively discourage participation in events that can lead to immoral, unwise, or illegal behavior (e.g., do not permit children to have unsupervised parties or to partake in drug, alcohol, or tobacco use). Do not fear opposing bad choices, even if you made them yourself in your youth. Admit you were immature when you made the bad choice. Help your child to capitalize upon successes, and even more importantly, to learn from setbacks and failures as a part of life. Attempting to ameliorate or cover up mistakes on the part of your child is a disservice to your child and to the school.

### **Academic or disciplinary difficulties**

THE ACADEMY agrees to assist students having academic difficulties and keep parents informed. Students having academic difficulties put the school's special services into motion. Any teacher or administrator can request a support meeting for any student, at which the student's teachers, coaches, and advisor meet with the school's academic leaders to determine the causes for academic difficulties and to design a plan to work on them. When appropriate, the school arranges testing and tutorials.

When a student has disciplinary difficulties, the school agrees to investigate thoroughly and adjudicate fairly. The school authorities will inform parents at the earliest appropriate juncture about any disciplinary event and its consequences. Students may be accompanied by their advisors to any disciplinary proceeding or conversation (but may not be represented by parents or legal counsel). If the event is serious enough, a 3-way conference with the parent and child and school authorities may be required. The school handles these situations *in loco parentis*, attempting to balance consistent discipline within the school with the needs of the individual child.

Parents agree to trust that THE ACADEMY will respond to academic and disciplinary problems fairly and appropriately. They will support the policies and decisions of the school.

### **THE ACADEMY governance structure**

It is the responsibility of parents to understand the structure of THE ACADEMY and its board of trustees. As an independent school, THE ACADEMY is governed by a self-

perpetuating board of trustees, whose job it is to secure the future of the school. It does so by setting basic policies, hiring, supporting, and evaluating the head of school, undertaking strategic planning, evaluating the performance of the school, and leading in financial support of the school. The board entrusts all the daily operations of the school to the head of school, who supervises and evaluates all programs and personnel and is the final arbiter of any disputes that may arise, including those of parent issues or student disciplinary issues. The board does not sit in review of administrative decisions, so the head of school is the court of last resort for any problem. For matters large and small, the proper channel to raise an issue or register a complaint is to go the most direct level first i.e., to the teacher, coach, or staff member most closely related to the issue and capable of addressing it. If not satisfied at that juncture, a parent should seek out the next level (department head, division head, or other administrator). If all else fails, one should then go to the head of school. We also invite parents to contact any staff member for quick responses to questions or needs. We suggest avoiding the assumption that what you hear from your child, or in the parking lot, is a completely accurate rendition of any event.

### **Financial responsibilities of parents**

Parents agree to make timely tuition payments. It is also important that parents commit to the annual giving, fundraisers, and capital campaigns. We also accept in-kind gifts of time, service, materials, equipment, or whatever else they may be able to offer. While contributions to the annual fund and fundraisers are not mandatory, they are crucial for an independent school. It costs the school thousands of dollars more than we charge in tuition to educate each child, and therefore we are absolutely dependent upon the generosity of parents and patrons to make up that difference. Please be respectful and responsive when you are called upon for a gift. The average THE ACADEMY School Parent gift is \$630, but we are thankful of course for gifts at any level. Additionally, the fundraisers are major events for our school. We need parent volunteers to help us plan and orchestrate these events and all parents to participate. You will find that these evenings are entertaining and spirited.

If we all work together with honesty, respect and sincerity it will benefit the student and all parties involved. Children prosper when the people who care for them are united. We look forward to working with you.

I/We have read and understand the agreements contained in the Parent/School Covenant

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_