



Parent Handbook

2018

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Guiding Principles

Mission

It is the mission of Ambleside school to provide a “living education,” where each child is guided and empowered to author a full and free life, a life rich in relationship to God, self, others, ideas, and all of creation. Thus, our primary concern is the kind of student each child is becoming, not the mastery of particular data or technique, for we are confident that the student who masters the art of learning will attain his full potential for mastering data and technique. Students who master the art of relating well to God, self, others, ideas, and creation will attain the fullness of life for which they were created. Such an education will conform to Ambleside’s Fundamental Pedagogical Convictions, the Ambleside Commitment, Ambleside’s Statement of Faith (the Nicene Creed and the Ambleside Charter), and the Ambleside Code of Personal Conduct. (See Appendix A and B).

While the primary commitment of Ambleside School is to the Ambleside School children and their families, its mission extends beyond that of simply being a local school. Ambleside School seeks to be a vehicle for the training and equipping of parents and teachers who seek to benefit from the insights of Charlotte Mason as they are given living expression at Ambleside. To this end, Ambleside School of Kensington (ASK) partners with Ambleside Schools International (ASI).

In order to fulfill this mission, Ambleside seeks the consistent application of the pedagogical insights of the British educator, Charlotte Mason (1840-1923). Charlotte Mason did not claim to be an innovator, but rather a compiler of the timeless, practical insights into the nature of children and education, which have guided the practice of great teachers throughout the ages. Through the teacher training college she founded, the hundreds of schools which adopted her methods, and the voluminous publications of the Parents National Education Union, thousands of students were shaped by her ideas. To better understand these ideas, upon which Ambleside is founded, parents are strongly encouraged to read [For the Children’s Sake](#), by Susan Macaulay, and [The Story of Charlotte Mason](#), by Essex Cholmondley and are required to read [Charlotte Mason Reviewed](#), by Jenny King. All are available online. In addition, parents are invited to participate in the Charlotte Mason study groups which are periodically offered by the school.

Our Faith

While Ambleside is neither affiliated with nor committed to any particular religious denomination, it is committed to bearing witness to the person and principles of Jesus Christ, as expressed in the New Testament, the Nicene Creed, and the Ambleside Charter. Ambleside staff and faculty are required to affirm the doctrine and live according to the norms of conduct expressed in these documents. (See Appendix A.)

While Ambleside School has a definite commitment to the person and principles of Jesus, it is not required that all Ambleside families fully share these beliefs, only that they agree to be respectful of the Ambleside institutional commitment to them. Parents should expect that their children will be taught in accordance with these beliefs and teachings. Further, Ambleside does not seek to suppress the theological differences of her member families. Rather, it seeks to cultivate an atmosphere where mutual understanding and agreeable disagreement are cultivated, respectfully recognizing that the primary responsibility for the spiritual education of children lies with the parents.

Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students

The Ambleside School of Kensington admits students of any race, colour, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Ambleside's Fundamental Pedagogical Convictions

A Non-Competitive, Stimulating Atmosphere

Administration, faculty and students are held to the highest standard in their way of relating to one another. In an atmosphere of sincerity and truth, students are free to learn for the pleasure of learning. Students do not compete with their peers for rank, grades or prizes. Learning is the focus, not besting a classmate. Great ideas, great works of literature, great works of art, the glory of the created world, and the common experiences of life are placed before the students to study and discuss. Students are stimulated to observe, explore and understand.

The Discipline of Habit

While recognizing that students have various levels of gifting, it is the expectation of Ambleside administration and faculty that every student will develop the habits necessary for producing work of the highest quality and that all Ambleside students will grow to the fullness of their God-given potential.

At Ambleside, we consider the process of student work to be as important as the end product. Rather than developing persons who are able to study well for the next exam, we are interested in helping students develop a life of study. We ask the questions: Did she attend? Did he put forth effort? And was she thorough? We believe school is not just an institution to get through, but rather a place to develop habits that will serve children the rest of their lives.

Education as Vital, Dynamic, Living

Real learning occurs when the learner wonders, asks why and how. Thus, it is essential that the teacher cultivate an atmosphere that is rich in great ideas, thus stimulating thought. The teacher must seek to place the very best books before her students, books rich in content and ideas, putting them into relationship with the finest authors. Through the use of "living books" students interact with scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, historians, artists, poets, and explorers.

The Infinite Dignity and Potential of Each Child

Because children are created in God's image, they are born with a great potential for a fruitful life full of varied interests and relationships. At Ambleside, children are not identified or limited by their strengths or weaknesses. All children participate in a broad, rigorous curriculum—all children calculate, solve, attend, explore, ponder, recite, paint and sing. The expectation that prevails within the school is that all students will learn and grow to their full potential as persons and attain their vast inheritance.

The Priority of the Relational Life

Children live in relationship with God, self, others, creation, and the world of ideas. These relationships are cultivated in the educational process through a broad, challenging curriculum and a faculty that seeks to relate to students, parents, and one another in accordance with the principles of Jesus Christ.

The Importance of Delight and of Struggle

Children will naturally delight in the feast of great ideas set before them. They will savor them and grow in the ability to enjoy and celebrate their relations with persons, ideas, and creation. But they will also at times struggle. Struggle is as essential to the learning process as delight. Children must learn to labor with problems not yet grasped, to remain on task when uncertain of the outcome, to struggle to completion when mind and hand are tired, to experience the rewards and negative consequences of their actions. There will be no growth in character without the struggle.

Children are to be continuously engaged with inspirational ideas and meaningful work. The classroom is not a place for entertainment and indulgence, any more than it is a place for meaningless drudgery. Such practices encourage passivity and detract from the deep satisfactions that come with growing knowledge and fruitful labor.

Ambleside Commitment

Based upon its mission, faith, and pedagogical convictions, Ambleside School makes the following commitments to its students and their parents:

To maintain an optimal atmosphere for the cultivating of the hearts and minds of students.

- Ambleside will be characterized by:
 - Reverence for God, confidence in His loving presence, and a commitment to obedience, according to the principles of Jesus Christ.
 - Kindness and respect for all with the proper submission to authority.
 - Learning and growth in a multitude of spheres, intellectual, spiritual, physical and relational.
 - Ideas that engage the mind.
 - Work that is fruitful, satisfying, and harmonizes into a daily rhythm.
 - Neatness, beauty, and general good order.
- Ambleside will not be characterized by:
 - Exclusive relationships or cliques.
 - Sarcasm, base humor, or demeaning language.
 - Artificial incentives (stars, candy, grades, awards, etc.) and manipulative techniques (shame, wrongly expressed anger, excessive praise, and other forms of emotional manipulation).
 - Labeling students in a way that limits or creates a false sense of inferiority or superiority.
 - Trivial work, meaningless tasks, or superficial amusements.

To foster good habits in regards to work, thought, self, and others.

- Ambleside will hold students to a high standard in their academic work.
 - All students will be supported in the habit of doing good work (work that is completed punctually, accurate, neat, and demonstrates a high level of academic thought, mastery, and skillfulness).
 - If a student's work indicates lack of carefulness, focus, or effort, then teachers will use inspirational ideas and natural consequences to motivate the student towards the formation of the necessary habits.
 - If a student's work indicates lack of comprehension, then teachers will be available after school to provide additional assistance.
 - If regular after-school work proves insufficient to bring the student to needed mastery, then the teacher and administration will work with student and parents to develop and implement a plan to foster the necessary habits, skills and knowledge.

- Ambleside will hold students to a high standard of self-management and inter-personal relationships.
 - All students will be supported in mastering the habits of:
 - Focused attention
 - Self control of speech, hands, and posture
 - Kindness and respect towards others
 - Appropriate submission to authority (teachers, administrators, and school policies - including the dress code)
 - If any student fails in one of the above, then Ambleside staff will use inspirational ideas and natural consequences as the primary means for promoting student growth.
 - If a severe lapse or a persistent pattern of lesser failures occurs, then the teacher and administration will work with student and parents to develop and implement a plan to foster the necessary personal and interpersonal habits.

To engage and nurture the students’ minds through a rigorous and rich curriculum.

- The Ambleside curriculum consists of “living books”, the best books, written in fine literary style by the best minds, rather than traditional text books.
- The Ambleside curriculum provides a broad array of foods for the mind, including: Bible, Mathematics, Science, History, literature, Music, Art, a second language, grammar, Nature study, Picture study, Composer study, leadership, poetry, handwork, drama, and physical exercise.
- At Ambleside, students are given the opportunity to grow in knowledge and skill through worthy work and worthy thought.

Ambleside Parents’ Commitment

Parents have been given the primary care and oversight of their children through their office as parents. Enrolling their children at Ambleside means parents’ give consent to work together with qualified educators (that have been approved by Ambleside International) and able administration for the growth and development of individual children. Parents, teachers, and administration working in cooperation provide relational support and accountability for the child to raise him/her beyond “his nature” to maturity. Based upon these principles of cooperation and authority, parents make the following commitments:

To be punctual:

- At arrival and dismissal times
- At parent/teacher meetings
- In fulfilling financial commitments

To foster healthy communication with teachers, administration, Board members, and other parents:

- Talk directly to the person with whom you have a concern or conflict, not about the person to others
- Seek to get a full account of an incident from teachers or administration, acknowledging that a child’s retelling of an incident is only one perspective of the incident
- Follow the grievance policy in a timely manner as outlined in the Ambleside Parents’ Handbook
- Be inclusive in social events such as birthday parties and also in peer relationships as outlined in the Ambleside Parents’ Handbook

To support the intellectual growth of your child:

- Ensure students spend a minimum of 30 minutes each day in after-school reading (family read aloud or individual reading)

- Ensure students complete homework assignments thoroughly
- Review and discuss with your child the weekly assessments in math, spelling, and dictation
- Take the initiative to inquire of teachers concerning your child's progress
- Develop a plan with the teacher to overcome areas of academic weakness and implement the home requirements of this plan

To support the work of Ambleside:

- Make efforts to attend Meetings, Parent Teacher Conferences, and school programs.
- Uphold school policy (dress code, attendance, homework, etc.)
- Volunteer through PVA

Governance: Ambleside School Board

Ambleside School of Kensington Board Membership

- The Ambleside School Board in this start-up phase is composed of one member (managing director) and the principal who serves *ex officio*.

Leadership: Authority and Responsibilities

Ambleside Principal

Job Description – Founder and Principle

The job of the Principal of Ambleside School of Kensington is to guide and inspire the faculty, students and families of the school in the areas of academics, programs and relationships. The Principal is to consistently insure the quality of an Ambleside education for all students, working to see that all students grow both academically and relationally. The Principal's role in supporting teachers includes providing proper training and continued development regarding the ASI curriculum and Charlotte Mason philosophy. The Principal is to also provide guidance and inspiration to the parents and families of Ambleside students as parents work to learn and implement appropriate areas of the Charlotte Mason philosophy in the home environment. Finally, the Principal oversees all school operations.

Position Overview

An Ambleside school Principal is first and foremost a lover of Jesus Christ, children and knowledge. Within this relational context, the Principal is responsible to set and maintain a positive (high-joy), inspirational, and peacefully authoritative atmosphere throughout the school. The Principal is to train, support and shepherd teachers in providing a "living education". Through ASI-provided mentoring and resources, school observation visits and feedback, personal study and practice, the Principal is to become highly competent in leading and promulgating the Ambleside method and to acquaint him/herself thoroughly with the ASI Principal's Manual and curriculum for all grades, holding all teachers, staff and students to ASI's rigorous standards. In a broad sense, the Principal is the school's primary spokesperson and represents the school on and off campus and acts on behalf of the school by professionally and warmly interacting with all students, parents, teachers, staff, visitors and the community at large.

School Administrator

The job of the School Administrator supports teachers and the principal by ensuring the efficient day to day operations of the school, including communications with parents and logistics for school programs.

Cultivating Mature Students

We believe:

- That *character* is an achievement, the one practical achievement possible to us for ourselves and for our children.
- That all real advances, in family or individual or nation, is along the lines of character.
- That, therefore, to direct and assist the evolution of character is the chief office of education.
- That the Holy Spirit is the one true educator.¹

The two great privileges of an Ambleside teacher are:

- The cultivation of a rich, relational, and disciplined student mind, grounded in the mind of Christ Jesus.
- The cultivation of student character (the cognitive, emotional, and relational habits of a well-lived life), grounded in the love of Christ Jesus.

A High Standard of Attitude and Behavior

Whether conscious or unconscious, all behavior flows from an initial idea. Such ideas lead to the formation of a habit. And, habit leads to the establishment of a character. Thus, it is essential that teachers support students not only in maintaining a concrete standard of behavior, but by engaging the underlying ideas, attitudes, and habits that lead to concrete behavior. Ambleside is committed to this kind of formation of heart and mind but cannot succeed without the cooperation of parents and students.

It is particularly important that teachers and parents' support/expect students to consistently display the habits of **respectful submission** to appropriate authority and **diligent effort** in completing assigned tasks.

Students are expected to submit to school policy and to teacher authority. At all times, students are to be respectful of teachers and other learners. Any student who is lax in these areas is to be engaged in a wise, supportive manner that maintains a high standard and maximizes the possibility of healthy compliance (not neurotic nor merely external compliance). Teachers will be quick to engage parents in support of student growth.

At Ambleside, every student is expected to put forth effort, to give full attention, and to carefully complete all assigned tasks. Administration and faculty are committed to giving each student the opportunity to be an active participant in the learning process by calling upon each student to read, demonstrate, and discuss daily. Students executing their assignments in a haphazard manner will be required to do them a second time. Students who fail to adequately master assigned tasks may be required to stay after school to receive additional help.

The expectations for students at Ambleside are thoughtfully determined in order to create an optimal environment for each child's growth. While there will be much delight, each child will, and should, experience some degree of discomfort during the school year. Comfort is not the foremost goal, for growth is highly correlated with struggle. Allowing the child to experience discomfort, not as a thing to be avoided, but as an opportunity for growth, will result in a more productive and fruitful year.

¹ Mason, Charlotte, Parents and Children, p. 233

Respect for Persons

All students are to treat others with kindness, respect, and generosity. This is to manifest itself not only in the classroom, but also on the playground, at the lunch table, on the bus and anywhere else the students find themselves relating to one another. Students are to be sensitive to each other's uniqueness, respecting differences.

Cliques, favoritism, "best friends," and other forms of exclusivity at school are to be avoided. There is plenty of time outside of the school day when more intimate relationships may be nurtured. Our aim is to be inclusive rather than exclusive in our relationships. Manners, courtesies, and gracious treatment should be maintained at all times among the school family. As with academic behavior, if these instructions are not followed there will be engaged in an optimal growth-inducing manner, soliciting parent support when necessary.

In respecting other school families, it is important that parents communicate with each other regarding television, movies, and video games when children are invited into the home. The levels of discretion concerning these media are indeed varied. What some parents deem graphic or inappropriate in violence, relationships, language, or humor, others do not. Therefore, to continue to demonstrate respect for others, please communicate about these choices.

Respect for Property

Students are expected to show appropriate regard for all school property. The building and furnishings belong to Ambleside School of Kensington, the school wishes to care for and maintain the schoolyard, books, desks, and other physical property so that a pleasant environment is maintained. Students should avoid running and horseplay inside the building, leaning on walls, marking in or bending backward the spines of books, and scraping or scratching furniture. We take great pride in our Ambleside books as we buy them directly from America. These books are a minimum of R400.00 each. Students will be fined for damage to any books, materials or property that has not been determined to be normal wear.

Dress and Hair Style

Students should remove jackets, coats, and hats upon arriving at school and store them on the shelf or hook that has been allocated to each individual child.

Ambleside School of Kensington does have a formal school uniform. Navy blue golf shirt and lime green golf shirt, lime green long sleeved golf shirt, navy blue skorts for girls, navy blue shorts for boys, navy blue Drimac or navy fleece jacket, navy blue long sleeve t-shirt, navy blue leggings, navy blue jeans, white socks, white takkies, school navy blue scarf and beanie.

The school wants to minimize the social competition and distraction which results from an excessive focus on what a student is wearing. Ambleside administrators and teachers reserve the right to forbid any form of adornment that draws attention to the child's appearance, distracts from the goal of education, or is considered damaging to the school's atmosphere. Students' bangs/fringes should be trimmed so as not to cover the eyes. Girl's hair must be tied neatly out of their faces with navy blue or white bands. Boys are to obtain a regular short to medium barber's haircut. All coloring of hair is strictly prohibited.

Upon initial failure to comply with the dress code, a written notification of parents will be sent home. Should subsequent violations occur, parents will be contacted and required to bring appropriate uniform dress to school before the student will be readmitted to class.

On Fridays during Chapel in summer all children need to be wearing their navy blue golf shirts. In winter their lime green golf shirts.

Responsibility for Responding to Student Weakness

The vast majority of discipline problems are dealt with at the classroom level. The teacher's office is one in authority, and he or she is under the obligation to maintain a classroom atmosphere where each student can learn and grow in an optimal way. The principal and school administrator, support the teacher in his/her role and become involved in the following cases:

- A serious offense (See Level 3 and Level 4 Offenses below).
- A student becomes disruptive, uncooperative, or is emotionally distressed such that the attention of another authority is needed.
- A lesser offense has become habitual and the added authority of the principal would be helpful in facilitating student growth.

A teacher typically does not report to parents any correction that is a part of dealing with routine weakness in the classroom, unless the offense is very serious (see Level 3 and Level 4 Offenses below), was highly disruptive to the class, or has become habitual. In these cases, the teacher will contact the parents by phone, and if necessary a conference will be set with the parents in order to gain additional support for the student's growth.

Above all, the school needs the parental support when confronting student weakness. The parental relationship is essential in bringing up the child to be self-governed and positive in his/her relationships with himself, others, and authority. Parents are asked to assist in this process by peacefully but firmly confronting their student's weakness, developing a strategy for the replacement of bad habits with good, and consistently following through on the strategy.

Response to Student Weakness

Level of Offense

For purposes of clarity, Ambleside classifies damaging behavior as follows:

- Level One Offenses include talking in class, mischief, impulsive disobedience, eating at inappropriate times, pranks, inattention, sloppy work, impulsive/disruptive body movements, impulsive speech that is hurtful or demeaning to another, etc.
- Level Two Offenses include a pattern of impulsive disobedience, prevaricating, speech that is profane, speech that is intentionally hurtful or demeaning, less serious acts of aggression such as pushing, tripping, or punching in the arm, etc.
- Level Three Offenses include deliberate/defiant disobedience, refusal to do assigned work, deliberate deception, talk which is sexually perverse, graphically violent or sadistic, threatening talk, stealing, leaving campus, destruction of property, more serious acts of aggression such as throwing multiple punches or striking with an object, etc.
- Level Four Offenses include any act of violence which has the potential to do permanent harm, vandalism of the school facilities, violation of civil or criminal laws, use of illegal drugs, possession of illegal drugs, sexual immorality, and threatening harm with a firearm or other weapon.

Consequences for Offenses

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
Handled by classroom teacher*	Handled by classroom teacher*	Immediate referral to the principal	Immediate referral to the principal
Single offenses elicit teacher correction.	Single offenses elicit teacher correction.	Probable suspension for the remainder of the day	Immediate suspension and probable expulsion
Repeated offenses elicit parent involvement and a strategy for new habit formation.	Repeated offenses elicit parent involvement and a strategy for new habit formation.	Parents are contacted and consulted as to response.	Parents are contacted for an immediate meeting with the principal.
		Multiple offenses with lack of repentance will result in expulsion.	Multiple offenses will result in expulsion.

*In cases of a pattern of offenses, the teacher should seek principal's counsel and involvement.

Policies for Student Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from Ambleside for the following:

- Any Level Four offense.
- Repeated Level Three offenses or lack of repentance for a Level Three offense.
- A pervasive pattern of Level Two offenses which seriously undermines the school atmosphere and for which the student is unrepentant.
- A pattern of excessive absence from school.
- An unwillingness to dutifully engage the academic work.
- A determination by teacher and principal that Ambleside is unable to meet the academic and/or personal needs of the student.

Any student guilty of a Level Four Offense or a Level Three Offense for which he/she is unrepentant is subject to the possibility of immediate expulsion at the recommendation of Ambleside's principal.

In all other cases, when a student is in danger of dismissal, the principal and teacher will schedule a meeting with parents and student. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Clearly communicate that the student is in danger of dismissal.
- Clearly identify the behaviors that must change if the student is to remain at Ambleside.
- Develop a strategy for supporting the student in positive change.

The student's teacher and the principal will diligently seek to support the student in his weakness and will be in regular contact with his/her parents, notifying them of progress or lack of progress. After a minimum of four weeks, if the principal deems that there has been insufficient progress towards the needed change and that the student's continued presence at Ambleside is a disservice to the student himself or to the other students at Ambleside, the principal will recommend that the student be dismissed.

Should a student be dismissed, the principal and a member of the Ambleside staff will meet with the parents of the student and request that he/she be withdrawn from the school. If the parents are unwilling to voluntarily withdraw their student, then the student will be formally dismissed from Ambleside.

Policies regarding Weapons

While on school property or at any school function (including school organized transportation), no student and/or parent shall intentionally possess a firearm, a sharp edged knife, or any other weapon, unless specifically authorized to do so by the school principal. The school principal will only authorize possession of an unloaded firearm, a sharp edged knife, or any other weapon for specific educational purposes (e.g. sharp knives used for dissecting science specimens or an unloaded musket for a history lesson).

Should a student violate this policy for the first time and without malice the student shall be suspended from school for the remainder of the school day. The principal shall meet with the student and the student's parents to explain the seriousness of the offense and to notify them that the consequence of a second offense may result in immediate expulsion from Ambleside.

While on school property or at any school function (including school organized transportation), no student shall ever knowingly have in their possession a loaded firearm. At the Principal's discretion, the student may be expelled for such an offense (regardless of whether or not it is the first offense).

While on school property or at any school function (including school organized transportation), no student shall ever use or threaten to use a firearm, sharp edged knife, or other weapon for the purpose of causing alarm or personal injury to self or to any person or to damage school property. The consequence for such offense is immediate expulsion (regardless of whether or not it is the first offense) and SAPS will be notified.

Any student at school, at a school function, or traveling to/from a school function, who discovers an unauthorized firearm, sharp-edged knife, or any other weapon is obligated to immediately inform the school administration. Failure to do so is a serious offense.

Dealing with Controversial Ideas

Diverse Theological Ideas

Parents and students will come from a variety of theological traditions, including non-Christian. Teachers should foster understanding by being respectful of different views and by focusing on the text. The focus is never to be upon what a particular teacher or student believes but rather on what an author states. (i.e. the Thomas a Kempis' understanding of the virtue of poverty or Calvin's understanding of predestination). In cases, where texts are open to varying interpretations (i.e. Jesus' statement that "Unless you eat my body and drink my blood you shall not have life within you"); teachers should point out that deeply committed followers of Jesus have, throughout the centuries, understood such texts differently.

Evolution vs. Creationism

Students will encounter the evolution vs. creation debate at a young age. Teachers should make students aware that there are three views regarding the creation of the various species of the plant and animal kingdom:

- a. Evolution without God –over a very long period of time animal species changed from one species to another through chance mutation and survival of the fittest.
- b. Old earth creation – God created the universe, every animal and plant, and did so over a long period of time (hundreds of millions of years), perhaps evolving one species into another through a process of intelligent design.
- c. Young earth creation – God created the universe, every animal and plant, and did so in a short period of time (usually six days).

Teachers should acknowledge that there are deeply committed, thoughtful followers of Jesus who believe in young earth creation and equally committed thoughtful followers of Jesus who believe in an old earth creation. Students should be taught to respectfully disagree and yet still be open to learning from a scientist, who is a secular evolutionist.

Consolidation and Evaluation of Student Learning

Students are expected to pay attention and demonstrate effort every school day. All students are active participants in the learning process and are called upon to narrate and discuss each day's readings and presentations. They are also expected to produce written narrations, compositions, drawings, diagrams, maps, and charts, all of which demonstrate and deepen knowledge. This work is kept in student notebooks and copybooks, which are accessible to the parents at any time. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to arrange for review of this material. Teachers evaluate the students daily in areas of comprehension, skill, and habit development. Knowing that learning is a process that manifests itself in a product, teachers are attentive to both individual student growth and the achievement of expected mastery. Teachers communicate to the parents regarding their child in the following ways:

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held three times a year to inform the parents concerning their child's progress. Parents are expected to share in a dialogue regarding how Ambleside staff can best assist their child to progress and mature. During the week before conference day, parents are to reserve a conference time by signing up on pages posted on the classroom doors. Unless by special request of the teacher, students **do not** attend the Parent/Teacher Conference, and parents are expected to make arrangements for their children to be at a location other than Ambleside.

Reports of Growth

Reports of Growth are issued twice a year. Each Report is divided into two major sections. The first section provides a detailed assessment of the quality of the student relationship to self, others, ideas, and work, noting both the student's strengths and areas where growth is to be encouraged. The second section provides a personal narrative for each subject studied, detailing the student's progress. Parents are asked to sign and return the Report of Growth within one week of their going out mid-year. After school is dismissed at the year's end, copies are made of the final report and originals are sent home to parents for their keeping.

Consolidation

Consolidation is given near the end of each semester. It is administered each morning for an entire week. Students are given broad questions covering aspects of the semester's study in each subject. Younger students dictate their answers, which are transcribed for them; older students write their answers. During Consolidation Week assessment of disciplinary subjects may include solving equations and reproducing maps, tables, nature study specimens, and works of art. There is to be no extra study or review in anticipation of Consolidation Week. Each student's work is to reflect what the student has truly learned during the course of a term's studies. Consolidation Week results and the work itself are returned to the parents approximately two weeks after Consolidation Week to give parents and students an opportunity to review the results.

We do not work with percentages!

Students Repeating Grade Level

If in the judgment of the classroom teacher and the principal, a student lacks the necessary emotional or academic maturity to successfully proceed to the next grade and repeating a grade is in the best interest of the student; the parents will be required to re-enroll their student at the same grade level should either of the following occur:

- a. A student fails two core courses (reading or literature, Mathematics, Science, and History).
- b. A student is absent for more than ten days in a given year.

Even if neither of the above circumstances applies; but, in the judgment of the classroom teacher and the principal, a student lacks the necessary emotional or academic maturity to successfully proceed to the next grade and it is in the best interest of the child; the parents will be encouraged to re-enroll their student at the same grade level.

Parent Concerns and Grievances

As a community, it is important that the principal, teachers, and parents all work to maintain a positive, affirming, encouraging atmosphere. The expression of negative feelings and even supposedly “constructive” criticism can do much to undermine any school’s atmosphere. The principal and administration of Ambleside do not seek to suppress the expression of any parent concern or grievance. However, we ask that any such concern or grievance be handled in a healthy, constructive manner. Thus, the principal requests that the process outlined below is followed for concerns within the community. Parents are encouraged to keep grievance discussions within the confines of this process.

1. Parents and staff are always directed to go to the responsible person (be that teacher, principal, staff or parent) first.
2. If a parent’s concerns have not been alleviated after consulting with the responsible person, he or she may then seek a meeting with the principal.
3. If the concerned parent wishes to question the principal and he/she be unable to resolve the parent’s concern to his/her satisfaction, the parent may then make a formal “Statement of Concern” with the Ambleside School, principal and staff.
4. Upon reaching a decision, the principal will communicate its decision to the concerned party.

Student Health and Medication Policies

Immunizations and the Family Information Form

The Health department requires that all students attending school must have a complete and current immunization record on file at the school office. Completed immunizations records are due to the school office on or before the first day of school.

Parents must complete Ambleside’s Family Information Form which includes emergency contact information and return it to the school office at the beginning of school.

Administering Medication

Before any prescription or non-prescription medications can be administered, a written request must be received from the health care provider or the parent must come to the school to administer medication to their own child. This request should contain the name of the medication, purpose of the medication, the frequency and amount of dosage. Any medicine, prescription or non-prescription, to be administered at school must be hand delivered by the parent or guardian to the teacher, be in the original container, and be properly labeled with the student's name, name of medicine and directions for time and dosage. Medicine must be signed in on the form and Medication must be prescribed by a medical professional licensed to practice. Please complete the Medication Permission Request Form (Appendix C) available in the school office in the event your child/ren should need medications while at school.

When the period for administering the medication expires, the medication must be picked up by the parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult. Substances such as vitamins, herbal preparations, etc. will not be given during school hours. At all times, medication will be secured in the school office in a locked cabinet or locked closet.

Please notify the school if your child/ren suffers from serious allergies and/or chronic illness.

Daily Schedule and Routines

Attendance

Attendance is taken each day and reported on each student's report. Students are not to be absent except in cases of illness, injury, family emergency, or the rare special family event (i.e. wedding). Family trips should be planned to coincide with school holidays, but not parent-teacher conference days. Vacations taken outside of scheduled school breaks are disruptive to students, classes, and teachers. *If a student is to be absent, please notify the office that day.* A student who is absent for more than ten days in a given year may be required to repeat the school year.

Drop off and pick-up times and procedures

Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grade 1,2 and 3 should arrive at school by 7:45. Students may arrive as early as 7:00 a.m. (Please do not drop off students before 7:00 a.m.) It is essential that school start on time, and parents are expected to ensure that children arrive at school on time. A record of late arrivals is maintained and reported on each student's report card. A pattern of excessive tardiness will result in the student missing break or being required to stay after school.

School closes every day at 16:00.

See times in Prospectus.

Student pick-up procedure

Parents and caregivers are required to come into the school to collect students from the teacher. Please sign the afternoon register with the relevant teacher.

Parking

Please be considerate and patient with one another. Parents, please do not park on Langermann Drive to get out and wait for your child(ren) as this will stop the flow of traffic on Langermann Drive. When you drop off and collect your child, please park to the far right end of the parking area.

After-school plans with other families should be made before pickup to ensure an orderly and timely collection of your child (ren). Also, for safety, keep your own child (ren) either in the car or at your side.

Lunches (See School Prospectus)

It is each student's responsibility to come to school with a packed lunch. Students who forget their lunch will not be allowed to call home for it or have it delivered. Better to miss lunch one day and to develop the habit of responsibility. Parents should help children develop the habit of being responsible for their lunches and should not make an extra trip to deliver lunches. Fast food lunches are not acceptable; neither are soft drinks or candy permitted. Some ideas for a healthy lunchbox snack: fruits, yogurt, raw veggies, nuts, crackers, biscuits, biltong. Also no juice allowed. Please send enough water with your child. Please keep in mind that a nutritious lunch will benefit your child in many ways throughout the school day. The habit of sharing meals among students is not allowed as each family packs what they feel is best for their child's diet, and it is important to acknowledge food allergies.

The Parent Volunteers of Ambleside (PVA)

The volunteer work of parents is essential for the life of Ambleside, and all are invited to serve. At Ambleside, the work of school volunteers is coordinated by the Parent Volunteers of Ambleside under the leadership of the PVA Coordinator(s) who are parent volunteers that work in collaboration with the principal and staff of Ambleside school. In order for Ambleside to provide children with an optimal education at a reasonable price, volunteers are needed to provide a broad range of assistance.

Throughout the school year, students are involved in a number of special events which take them beyond the school walls or the normal school hours. In most cases, the principal, or her designee, presides over the event and works with a team of volunteers to carry it out. Some examples of Ambleside events include:

Parent participation and service include (but not limited to):

- School Life
 - Scribes for Consolidation Week at mid-semester 1 and 2
 - Teacher Appreciation Activities
- Community Relationships
 - Back to School tea
 - Host Families for Incoming Families
 - Ambleside Prayer Time
- Events
 - Spring Fete
 - Carols Evening

Periodic Student Activities

Shakespeare Festival

The school year culminates with the Shakespeare Festival, a school-wide production of plays by Shakespeare, music, food, and other festivities. Ambleside students perform in the festival, which celebrates the efforts of the students and represents the accomplishments of the year. The Festival is the product of the work of many people, and is an opportunity for all to lend a hand. It is a delightful and unique presentation of our school and our students, meant to be shared with friends and relatives, and the community.

Field Studies

Field studies are what are commonly known as field trips. These excursions are intended to take learning outside of the classroom; therefore, the expectations for students are to be the same as when students are in class. To ensure that the student relationships are encouraging and supportive to one another, students will be:

- assigned to seats on the bus or in vehicles
- not allowed to eat or drink on the bus or in vehicles
- not allowed to play with electronic games, iPods, etc.
- not allowed to bring toys of any kind

To ensure the field studies do not become a practice in consumerism, the students will not be allowed to:

- purchase items at the gift shop
- bring extra money for additional treats

Holidays and Special Days at Ambleside

Holidays are joyful occasions for families and friends, and it is important to set these days apart from the norm. Yet, at the same time, it is important that the task of education not be lost in the celebration of every holiday. During lunch time or recess, teachers' and students' birthdays can be celebrated at school with a sweet treat for each child in the class and candles. Please do not bring "goodie bags" or gifts. A cupcake is sufficient. Teachers should be notified in advance of such a celebration. If an after school party is planned, please include the whole class or all of one gender as to not be exclusive in relationships with school friends. Any exchange of holiday cards/gifts/flowers must be done outside of school hours and off the school premises.

School fees

The school fees are the cost imposed by a school and paid by the parents to entitle their children to the education experience promised according to the mission of the school. School fees are a rate established to partially meet estimated and anticipated costs of fulfilling the mission of Ambleside School of Kensington. It is a factor in the shared responsibility of all parents to pay for the cost of services provided.

Students MAY NOT begin attending classes nor will any records, such as Reports of Growth, be released, unless school fee payments are current according to the payment plan selected by each family.

School fees Rate

The school fees, due date, and payment options will be set by the middle of second term for the upcoming school year by the Accountant of the school. It will take into account the “cost to educate” the students attending the school, including costs for teachers and administrative salaries, supplies, equipment, curriculum, facilities costs, student activities and other administrative costs necessary to provide the high quality education promised to parents and students.

School fees Responsibility

The school fee is solely the obligation of the student’s parents and/or legal guardian. Anyone else who chooses to make a contribution toward those costs is performing a gratuitous act by making a charitable gift.

Application and Registration fees

The application fee is a one-time, non-refundable per-family fee due at time of application. The registration fee is due once parents and the principal are mutually in agreement on acceptance of the student into the school.

School fee Payment Options

Prior to the re-enrollment deadline, the principal will meet to determine the school fee rate, due date and payment options for the upcoming year. Each school year, at the time of reenrollment, families are to designate their preferred payment option and to sign the school fee and Fee Policy Agreement when the enrollment fee is paid.

Families paying their school fees on an annual basis can do so before the 6th of February (with discount). Families who choose to pay school fees in two payments per year or in monthly installments must coordinate payments with the school accountant.

No Refund Policy/No Waiver Policy

Ambleside School of Kensington is committed to providing a high quality education. In order to fulfill its mission, annual commitments are made to hire teachers and purchase curriculum, supplies and equipment. These costs to the school do not decrease when a child is withdrawn. Therefore, Ambleside School of Kensington has a strict **NO REFUND, NO WAIVER** policy for school fees and fees. If a child is withdrawn at any time for any reason, or if a child is expelled, no refund on school fees and fees paid and no waiver on school fees and fees owed will be granted. This policy applies to the full school year’s school fees and fees, including those scheduled for payment through debit order. This applies before or after school opens or throughout the school year. Transcripts and/or school records will not be released for any child until all school fees and fees are paid in full. Lastly, all school fees and related fees are due on or before the payment deadline. **In cases of withdrawal or expulsion, no refunds of previously paid school fees and fees and no waivers of future bank debit orders will be given.**

Miscellaneous

Preparation for the New School Year

- **Tuition.** Students **MAY NOT begin attending classes** unless school fees payments are current according to the payment plan selected by each family. See school fees and Scholarship policies above.
- **Immunizations.** Students **MAY NOT begin attending classes** at any school public or private without providing either a copy of student's immunization records or an affidavit of exemption from immunization.
- **Student Records.** In the case of new students, a signed request for student records must be returned with application.

Ambleside Meetings

Ambleside meetings are held throughout the school year. These meetings provide families the opportunity to get to know each other in the more informal setting of a shared meal. Ambleside meetings allow for the following:

- the building of relationships within the Ambleside community
- the highlighting of upcoming school events, such as information mornings, plays and other school activities
- an opportunity for instruction in the Charlotte Mason/Ambleside philosophy of education and other topics related to parenting
- an opportunity for students to share their work, recitations, and music with the school family

Both parents and children are highly encouraged to attend Ambleside Meetings. For these meetings, childcare is available for younger children and activities are planned for school age children. Please check your school calendar for specific dates, and watch the newsletter for any additional information.

School Office

The school office can become a very busy place. In order to meet the needs of students, parents, and others, we ask that the following considerations be made:

- The phone should be used for emergencies only. After school arrangements are to be made prior to the start of school, not during the day. When students arrive at school, they should know how they are getting home that afternoon.
- Use of the copier is not allowed without the permission of an Ambleside staff member.
- Only the Ambleside staff is to assist with first aid, medication or supplies.

Lost and Found

Ambleside School does not have a Lost and Found. If the owner of a found article is easily identified, the item will be returned. Otherwise it will be disposed of. It is important that students learn to be responsible for their possessions. Please take care to mark lunch boxes and outer garments with the student's name.

Lifelong Health and Fitness

We believe that physical fitness is an important part of life. Because education includes the relationship with ourselves, we encourage proper stewardship of our physical bodies.

For younger students, Ambleside places a priority on free play, and ample time for such play is provided each day. Included in the school fees is our Motor skills development program and Athletics program which will run from Monday to Wednesday for all grades in the school.

Tutoring Opportunities

Teachers offer after-school help at times, as needed, for groups and individuals.

Family Reading

Because of its multiple benefits, reading aloud as a family is encouraged in the school community. This is emphasized in the requirement that students in Pre-K – grade7 read 30 minutes each night. Please refer to the Ambleside School Reading List, included in your handbook, for titles of living books to enjoy in your family reading time.

Appendix A

The Nicene Creed

(The most widely used ancient statement of orthodox Christian faith)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son.]* With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

*A latter addition by the western church, this phrase is not accepted by Eastern Orthodox churches and affirmation of it is not required.

Charter of Ambleside School of Kensington

(Used with permission of St. Martins in the Field, London, England)

- We believe in and proclaim both the mystery that is God, whom we partly know and partly do not know, and the human need to worship.
- We believe in and proclaim the person of Jesus Christ who distinctively reveals the nature of God and the meaning and purpose of life, and who calls us to follow Him through the death of the cross to the place of the Resurrection.
- We trust in the Holy Spirit who prompts liberty, beauty, truth, love, and joy against the waywardness of human nature.
- We are committed to using the Bible in a way that takes account of all truth and relates it to the real experiences, both good and bad, that people have of life.
- We are committed to exploring the meaning of the Kingdom of God and to making connections between what we profess and the way in which we live and work.
- We acknowledge the destructive power of human sinfulness, and we welcome gratefully the forgiveness that God offers to those who are prepared to turn to the truth.
- We are committed to taking all people seriously wherever they might be at their particular point of understanding, while at the same time sharing with them whatever insights may have been gained by our relationship with God.
- We are committed to identifying and affirming what is good and identifying and opposing what is evil, and living as best we can.

Appendix B: Ambleside Code of Personal Conduct

Ambleside School of Kensington is committed to fostering a way of life consistent with the moral norms taught by Jesus Christ and declared in the Scriptures. Adult example has a profound effect on the formation of the hearts of children. Failure on the part of faculty or staff to maintain the standards of conduct expressed in this document is grounds for dismissal. Failure on the part of a student will result in disciplinary action with the possibility of the student being required to withdraw from the school. It is not the place of Ambleside staff to be “checking up” on parents, but should a parent’s repeated violation of the Ambleside Code of Personal Conduct become scandalous to the children of the Ambleside community (i.e. a parent consistently arrives intoxicated at Ambleside events), the parent may be required to withdraw his/her student from Ambleside.

At Ambleside, we believe that an optimal way of life requires that we:

- Demonstrate consistent care for all persons, treating all with kindness, respect, and generosity; never engaging in any behavior (including verbal) which would be damaging, disrespectful or demeaning of another person, child or adult.
- Be diligent in fulfilling all tasks related to one’s responsibilities, maintaining a high quality of work, honesty and integrity.
- Be careful and gracious in speech, avoiding any profane speech and never making a public statement (in any medium, including e-mail) regarding the school or any member of the Ambleside community which can be considered injurious to the reputation of another person or the school.
- Handle all concerns and grievances in a constructive manner. (See Procedures for Dealing with Concerns and Grievances).
- Avoid all illegal activities including illegal drug use, theft, vandalism and fraudulent activity.
- Avoid activities destructive to relationships such as outbursts of rage, violence, stealing, lying or cheating.
- Be moderate and appropriate in the consumption of alcohol, avoiding drunkenness and never giving alcohol or tobacco products to a minor. (This is not to preclude parents serving with meals limited amounts of wine or beer to their **own** children.)
- Protect the dignity of human sexuality and the virtue of chastity
 - By avoiding all forms of lewd speech including base jokes, sexual innuendo, and inappropriate sexually explicit talk.
 - By never viewing, possessing, distributing or fostering the use of pornographic material including but not limited to print, video and audio.
 - By never advocating or participating in immoral sexual activity (defined as any form of touching or nudity for the purpose of evoking sexual arousal apart from the context of marriage between one man and one woman).

By never engaging in any physical contact or verbal expression with another person (adult or child) which could be interpreted as being an inappropriate display of affection and thus emotionally abusive, confusing

Appendix C: Medication Permission Request Form

According to the policies of Ambleside School of Kensington, students are not allowed to carry medication on their person, including non-prescription medication. (The only exception is that, by physician direction, a student may be allowed to carry and self-administer inhaler medication and/or an EpiPen). Medication will be maintained and dispensed by appointed school staff. The following steps must be taken before a student is allowed to take medication at school:

1. Parent/guardian must collect a form from the office and needs to be completed and signed by the parent. Without a signed consent form, parents may/must come to school to administer medication to their child.
2. Parent/guardian must bring the medication in the original prescription bottle, properly labeled by a registered pharmacist as prescribed by law. Non-prescription medications must be in the original container and labeled with the student's name.
3. Please notify the school if your child/ren suffers from serious allergies and/or chronic illness.

I hereby acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the Parent Handbook 2018 and by signing below I am agreeing to the terms and conditions of Ambleside Primary School of Kensington.

Father/Guardian's full name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Mother/Guardian's full name _____

Signature _____

Date _____