



August 25, 2010

All Parents
American Heritage School
2010-2011 Academic Year

Summary of Updated Policies and Reminders 2010-2011

Dear Parents,

Welcome to American Heritage School for another exciting and enriching year! Following is a brief summary of some of the more important updates included in the current 2010-2011 Parent Handbook, as well as some important reminders:

New and Updated Policies

Statement of Religious Instruction (Section 4). This section has been updated to reflect important guidelines that pertain to the School's independent relationship with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("the Church") and the LDS Church Education System ("CES"). We feel strongly about the importance of maintaining an environment where eternal, restored truths—as taught by the LDS Church—and where faith in Jesus Christ and love for the Savior can be felt by each child. Thus, we hold regular devotionals that include prayer, singing of sacred hymns, and expressions of religious belief. We also feel that it is important to maintain a clear distinction between American Heritage School, the Church, and CES. These guidelines are intended to help maintain that distinction.

Honor Code (Section 6.1). This section has been updated to reflect new language used by the Church on its website to describe sexual purity standards in the *For the Strength of Youth* guidelines published by the Church. In addition, the American Heritage School Honor Code Statement, which all students, parents, and faculty are required to acknowledge, has been added to the end of this section.

Mandatory Seventh Grade Entrance Interview for Returning Students (Section 10.7). The previous policy of a mandatory entrance interview with administration for all returning students applying to the Sixth Grade has been modified to require the interview as a condition for admission to the Seventh Grade. Administration will contact families to arrange the interview, which, this year, will happen for students as soon as possible during the first month of school.

School Uniform Policy (Section 12). The School Uniform Policy has been updated to reflect modifications outlined in the attached summary "*American Heritage School Student Uniform Modifications Effective for the 2010/2011 Academic Year.*" Given that some parents purchased shoes prior to receiving these changes in the July seating letters, the new requirements for permissible shoe colors are being phased in this year and thus will not become a uniform requirement until the 2011-2012

school year. Nonetheless, we hope that parents and students will comply this year with the new guidelines for shoes at their earliest convenience. The School's uniform committee, comprised of parents, teachers and administrators, makes an effort each year to improve the uniform functionality and flexibility at all grade levels, while at the same time taking into consideration important factors such as cost, quality, and unity.

Attendance and Punctuality (Section 13.4). This section has been changed to reflect that, beginning in 9th grade, any high school student with an unexcused tardiness of more than 15 minutes will be counted as absent for purposes of the high school attendance policy.

Snow Days (Section 13.12). In place of a faculty calling tree, notification to the school community in the event of any emergency, including school closure for inclement weather, will now be done via the Edline emergency notification system, through which we can send simultaneous e-mail, voice, and text messages to contact numbers and addresses provided by parents. Even if parents are not regular Edline users for curricular purposes, all parents should regularly review and update their emergency notification profile on Edline in order to receive emergency alerts. Simply log-on to Edline and you will see an option to update your emergency notification contacts for voicemail, text-message, and e-mail.

Homework & Grading Policy (Section 14.3). This section has been updated to reflect guidelines given to teachers regarding weekly student progress reports and monthly parent letters. If you do not receive regular communication from a teacher as outlined in this section, please speak directly with the teacher first, and then administration if necessary and appropriate.

Telephones and Cell Phones (Section 15.1). This section has been updated to clarify that students are not permitted to use cell phones on campus beginning one half-hour before, and extending through one half-hour after, school starts and ends, unless for an emergency as directed by a faculty member. This guideline also prohibits student use of cell phones during carpool unless they are in their carpool vehicle. Students needing to communicate with parents during the hours of 7:40 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. (one half-hour before and one half-hour after school) are welcome to use the guest phone in the front office.

Use of AHS Playground Equipment, Toys, and Personal Recess Equipment (Sections 15.9, 15.13). Section 15.9 has been updated to clarify that students may not use AHS playground systems and equipment outside of supervised recess or P.E. times, or during carpool times. Section 15.13 has been updated to clarify that personal recess equipment may be brought from home so long as it is not "dangerous" or "inappropriate" and meets the specifications set forth in Section 15.13.

Field Trip Standards (Section 15.17). This section has been updated to clarify that Utah law makes the driver of the vehicle responsible for booster seats, and the driver would receive a ticket for an infraction of booster seat requirements even if a consenting parent is a passenger in the vehicle and authorizes his/her child (under the age of 8 or less than 57 inches tall) to ride without a booster seat.

Holiday and Activity Plan (Section 15.18). This section has been updated to clarify the school-wide and class-wide holiday celebrations by grade level, and to provide guidelines for those celebrations. Other holidays may be celebrated in homes according to family customs, or in selected classrooms if celebration would support the individual class curriculum.

Food, Drink, Gum (Section 15.19). This section has been updated to clarify that consumption of food and drink by students in classrooms is not permitted unless it is for a scheduled school-wide celebration or otherwise on the school calendar (Harvest; Christmas, Easter; etc.), or unless administrative approval has otherwise been obtained. This includes birthday treats, which we request be taken outside or in rooms with hard-surface floors (lunchroom, celebration room, recreation hall, etc.). Food and drink consumed in the lunchroom or outside do not require administrative approval but may require scheduling. Parent volunteers, especially room mothers responsible for celebrations, are reminded that when food and drink are brought for classroom celebrations, we always appreciate food/drink that, when dropped or spilled, is easily vacuumed and does not require intensive carpet cleaning.

Social Networking (Section 17.23). This section has been added to require that AHS faculty and staff may not initiate or accept social network friend requests with current or former students, including family members of student or alumni, who are under the age of 21. Please review this section carefully for other important information pertaining to responsible use of social networking websites. Please also note that the official American Heritage School Facebook “fan” page, which allows Facebook users to sign up for official newsfeeds and posts from American Heritage School, does not establish personal Facebook “friend” connections for any users on that page.

Service Hours Requirement (Section 20.1). As part of the terms and conditions of enrollment, students and their parents are asked to provide much-needed service to the School. In past years, parents have been required to provide a minimum of 20 hours of service per academic year (household requirement, not per individual parent). The minimum service hour requirement is being increased to 30 hours effective for the 2011-2012 school year (one year from now). We hope that families will choose to offer the new minimum 30 hours this year, even though not technically required for another year. The school depends on parent participation for everything from lunchroom assistance to special event costumes and set design. As in past years, parents who have not completed their service hour commitment by April 1 will be contacted by administration to discuss plans for fulfilling their commitment before the academic year-end, which is a condition for readmission to the school each year. Please do not forget to record your family’s service hours on your family card in the front office.

Important Reminders

Immunization Requirements (Section 10.13). By law, students are not allowed to attend school (private or public) until immunization forms show they are either in compliance with state law, or are in the process of becoming compliant with state law, or are exempt for specific reasons. Copies of the current Utah state immunization requirements are available in the office. Students will be asked not to attend school until their immunization records are complete.

First Aid & Medications (Section 16.7). All medications at the School must be stored, secured, inventoried, and administered by the AHS Health Aid. Also, for students to carry and self-administer medications (including asthma inhalers), a written authorization from both the parent and health-care provider must be completed and submitted to the AHS Health Office. Mrs. Wheeler is the School’s Health Aid and has been trained in procedures necessary to serve as the School’s Health Aid.

Student Drivers (Section 15.22). As a result of agreements with the City of American Fork related to the safety of elementary school students on the School premises and at access points to public roads, student drivers at AHS (all students at the School who have a driver's license or are in training to obtain their license) are restricted to the northwest access road and are required to park in the north parking lot, regardless of whether they have elementary school students in the car with them.

New Board Members, Administrators, and Faculty. Please take an opportunity to introduce yourself to the new board members this year: Dr. Michael Ballam, Dr. Paul Edwards, and Cynthia Gambill (bios included in your handbook, Appendix B). New faculty and staff bios are included on a separate hand-out tonight and also available on the school's website.

Calendar. The official School calendar circulated to you in your seating letters over the summer may change occasionally throughout the year as unforeseen circumstances arise. The most current version of the School calendar is always posted on the School website, which we strongly encourage you to refer to frequently.

Carpool Procedures (Section 15.21) and the First Week of School. Please be aware that historically during the first week of school, many parents elect not to carpool and therefore vehicle traffic before and after school is heavier than normal until families adjust to their carpool groups and routines. Please take a moment to review all of the carpool procedures in Section 15.21 of the Parent Handbook. We are grateful to have the parking facilities and multiple public road access points that we have; however, even with these blessings, we request your continuing patience as we monitor what kinds of traffic flow adjustments are necessary (if any) as we grow. We continue to encourage clockwise traffic flow around the building during carpool times, and we request once again that all patrons refrain from parking in red zones. We have also posted signage on the northwest driveway prohibiting southbound turns down the front driveway of the school during carpool times, which creates problematic counter-clockwise flow against carpool traffic.

Checking Students Out Early. Sometimes families feel the need to call during class to check students out early. We realize that there are many legitimate and unexpected reasons for this; however, it is important that parents understand that the process of interrupting class to inform a teacher of a student who is being checked out early from class is disruptive – and can sometimes happen repeatedly in the same class during the last half-hour of the day. If at all possible, please send your child to school with a note regarding early excusal. The student can then quietly gather his/her things and exit the class at the appropriate time, checking out at the front office on his/her way out.

In-Vehicle Media During School Sponsored Events. With the proliferation of in-vehicle video and gaming technology, including portable personal multi-media and video game devices, we remind you that the School multimedia policy requires administrative pre-approval of all movies (on campus or in vehicles during school sponsored events) and that video games are not permitted on campus or in vehicles during school sponsored events. Regular morning and afternoon carpool are not school sponsored events, but we encourage parents to be sensitive to the considerations underlying the school's multimedia policy even during parent-arranged carpool. See sections 17.6 and 17.7 of the Parent Handbook.

Development & Operating Budget Report. The School's Strategic Plan over the last three years included ambitious goals such as: (1) increase faculty compensation, (2) improve programs and offerings K-12, (3) make the school available to more families in the community through physical expansion, (4) make the school available to more age groups, including adults, through high school and Family Education Center offerings, (5) make the school available at a lower cost to families around the world through distance education, (6) increase the safety and security of the building for the benefit of all families who come here, and (7) achieve full accreditation to help the School and its families become a contributing part of the regional and national education community. On all counts, we have achieved amazing things in each of these areas. The all-in cost of improvements in these areas has been well over \$6 million from the time that we formalized our Strategic Plan in 2007, very little of which has come from tuition receipts.

Clearly, our fundraising efforts over the last three years have been successful, including a higher rate of giving by patrons than ever in the history of the School. Our fundraising success represents a tremendous sacrifice on the part of many donors, and particularly one family without whom American Heritage School would simply not be able to offer what we now offer. In the 2009-2010 year, however, our fundraising results were less than in previous years, in large part because economic conditions continue to be very difficult for homes and businesses.

As we (the Board and Administration) have reviewed our Strategic Plan, and our financial plan for the next five years, we feel a strong sense of urgency to continue providing the same excellence in education that we have provided over the last forty years, but to begin earnestly reducing our expenses and preserving our resources so that we do not spend more each month than we receive in tuition receipts (which was a Board-approved part of our expansion plan over the last three years). Raising tuition has always been a last resort, and will continue to be a last resort. Thus, in the coming year, we will be closely evaluating, reorganizing and restructuring programs and personnel in order to continue to operate on a fiscally sound basis regardless of whether we are ultimately able to continue to obtain donations as we have in the past, and as we continue to hope in the future.

With blessings always come responsibility. Can you help us? We need your help now as much as ever. Tuition at American Heritage School represents only half of the true cost of a seat. Please know that as we honor the sacrifice that all families are making to pay tuition at the school, we will also continue to invite each other, and the larger community, to consider giving to our ongoing annual campaign. **We all drink from wells that we have not dug.**

Thank you for carefully reviewing these reminders, and welcome to American Heritage School! May we celebrate our blessings, and also remember our responsibility that comes with those blessings. The Lord requires "the heart and a willing mind." Let's make American Heritage School better every year, for the sake of every child and parent who is led to become a part of our wonderful mission.

Yours very truly,



Grant Beckwith
Principal