

# **ABC-Stewart Montessori School**

## **2024-2025 Family Handbook**





## **ABC-STEWART MONTESSORI SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

ABC-Stewart School seeks to educate and prepare each child to make life's journey as an independent, responsible citizen of the world.

ABC-Stewart School provides a program of individualized learning that optimizes the intellectual, social, and emotional development of each child. Children attend from age two through the sixth grade. Children are guided by degreed and certified teachers who embrace the Montessori philosophy established by Maria Montessori and espoused by the American Montessori Society.

### **OUR WORK**

ABC-Stewart School, founded in 1969, is a 501-c3 non-profit, committed to providing an enduring and affordable educational alternative for area families and children. At ABC-Stewart School, we work in a collaborative partnership with parents, faculty and children, to combine the innovative Montessori philosophy and its resulting pedagogy with experiential learning. This transformational approach to education allows our students to become joyful learners of high academic prowess, and encourages their development into caring, respectful, responsible, curious and compassionate individuals. ABC-Stewart is a progressive school for children ages 2 to 12 years of age. Children are guided by the combination of degreed, certified and experienced teachers who embrace Montessori Philosophy.

As we have been for the past 55 years, ABC-Stewart School is committed to individualized instruction, appealing to each child's unique traits, and focusing first on what Maria Montessori recognized as a child's natural tendency to be a curious, self-motivated, and eager learner. Students are provided a rich and diverse curriculum, steeped in intercultural experiences, and grounded in developmentally appropriate practices.

## **INDIANA ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

Our Montessori curriculum also aligns with the Indiana Learning Standards and allows children the opportunity to explore, observe, socialize with other children, problem solve, and experiment in a structured yet choice based environment. The learning environment encourages children to ask questions, make conclusions, and develop independence. Large group activities, small group activities, and mixed-age groupings will stimulate a child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Scope and Sequence - Throughout the year, children will develop skills while learning about themes meaningful to their lives. We also conduct ongoing curriculum based assessment to inform both our individual and group instruction. Anecdotal notes and checklists are two of the tools we use. Starting in 1<sup>st</sup> Year and into 6<sup>th</sup> Year, students will participate in the Iowa Assessments, which are scored on a national scale.

ABC-Stewart School follows a three-year rotating curriculum. The 2024-2025 school year will concentrate on Year Two. The rotation in curriculum is as follows:

- Year One
  - Early Man to Greece
  - Simple Machines
  - Chemistry/Physics
  - Nutrition
  - Body Organs
  - Electricity/Magnets
  
- Year Two
  - Middle Ages to Modern Times
  - Botany
  - Zoology
  - Biology
  - Life Sciences
  
- Year Three
  - American History
  - Earth Science
  - Astronomy/Space
  - Bones/Muscle

We will share your child's accomplishments and needs of growth with you two times a year, fall and spring, in our parent teacher conferences. Iowa Assessment scores will be shared during your scheduled spring conference. If at any other time of the year you would like to talk about your child's growth and development, we would be more than happy to schedule an informal conference time as well.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The ABC-Stewart School Board of Trustees is made up of not less than five Trustee-Members. Trustee-Members, as such, receive no salaries, free tuition, or other forms of compensation for their services as Board members. The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the policies, procedures, and standards within which the business of the corporation is conducted. Parents are considered Parent-Members. The Board of Trustees is composed of community members outside of the school, parents of alumni children, school alumni, and parents of currently enrolled children. At no time can the board be composed of a current-parent majority.

## **ABC-STEWART EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The ABC-Stewart School Executive Committee is a group of parent volunteers working together to create a community that supports the guiding principles of ABC-Stewart School. Parent volunteers assist each year with forming a variety of sub committee's that help support our school in fundraising, planning school events, field trips, and the growth of ABC-Stewart School. Families of ABC-Stewart students may request to join the Executive Committee by contacting Rae McQueary.

## **COMMUNICATION**

In a partnership, communication must be two-way. ABC-Stewart School makes every effort to be effective in our communication with families, and electronic communication seems to be the most effective form of communication for parents and staff. **It is the family's responsibility to make sure that administration has the most updated email and contact information, and that ABC-Stewart School emails do not go to a spam folder. Occasionally your work network may block our email system or your personal email settings may restrict receiving group emails. If you are not receiving school emails, please email Rachael Nolan: [Rachaelnolan@abcstewart.com](mailto:Rachaelnolan@abcstewart.com). Parents are also responsible for making sure that ABC-Stewart School has accurate**

**emergency contact information, and parental authority information.** If you haven't filled out the emergency contact information for the current school year, please contact the school office via email at [office@abcstewart.com](mailto:office@abcstewart.com) and a new form will be sent to you. ABC-Stewart School parents' emails and addresses are made available to families for ease of communication between family, friends, etc. However, parents are not permitted to use this information for commercial solicitation of any sort.

For questions related to your child's classroom or progress in school, first consult their specific classroom teachers. The staff email list has been shared at Parent Orientation Night. If you did not receive this information, please reach out and it will be provided to you. For general questions or comments related to tuition, school calendar, or attendance, please contact the school office via email at [office@abcstewart.com](mailto:office@abcstewart.com) or by phone at (812) 342-3029. Email is preferred. For questions related to any administrative issue, or questions that have not been answered to your satisfaction, please contact the administration and the appropriate person will respond.

#### **Administration:**

- **Head of School: Stefanie Stafford:**  
[stefaniestafford@abcstewart.com](mailto:stefaniestafford@abcstewart.com)
- **Administrator: Rae McQueary:**  
[raemcqueary.admin@abcstewart.com](mailto:raemcqueary.admin@abcstewart.com)
- **Office: [Office@abcstewart.com](mailto:Office@abcstewart.com)**

#### **Office Staff:**

- **Administrative Assistant: Rachael Nolan:**  
[rachaelnolan@abcstewart.com](mailto:rachaelnolan@abcstewart.com)
- **Accounting: Crystal Anderson:**  
[crystalanderson@abcstewart.com](mailto:crystalanderson@abcstewart.com)

#### **Board President and Founder:**

- **Merry Carmichael: [merrystewartabc@gmail.com](mailto:merrystewartabc@gmail.com)**

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN EVENTS**

ABC-Stewart School conducts events throughout the year to familiarize parents with ABC-Stewart School's operating policies, the Montessori philosophy, child development, and the ABC-Stewart classrooms. Families are strongly encouraged to attend any and all parent meetings.

## **OBSERVATION AND CONFERENCES**

Observation is one of the pillars of Montessori education. Every Montessori teacher incorporates daily observation to give a scientific foundation to their work. They step back and observe without judgment, to follow the child, to recognize the child's needs and assist the child in finding their strengths and capabilities. Conferences are held in the fall and spring (mandatory attendance). Conference reports are sent to all parents/guardians. Any meetings outside of conferences will need to be requested and scheduled with your child's teachers and the Head of School.

## **ADMISSIONS**

ABC-Stewart School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender or gender identity, religion, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation, in the administration of its educational programs, admission policies, financial assistance program, and staff hiring. **Each child is required to apply for admissions each school year.** Please contact the school administrator for admissions questions and assistance with enrollment.

**ABC-Stewart School requires a two-month (60 days) notice to receive tuition reimbursement.** If you fail to inform the school of your child's unenrollment, you will forfeit tuition already paid and be held liable for any outstanding balance. Failure to adhere to this debt will result in actions by our school lawyer.

## **Preschool:**

- **Seedlings and Saplings (Toddler) Program:**

ABC-Stewart School accepts children who are 24 months old for the Seedling & Saplings (Toddler) Program. Children in this program are not required to be toilet-trained.

- **Children's Garden and Horizons:**

Children must be toilet-trained and nearing their third birthday, to be considered for enrollment in the Primary classrooms. Montessori preschool classrooms are composed of mixed age groups. The Montessori 3-6 curriculum consists of three-year cycles, and parents should plan for a minimum of three-year attendance once their child is enrolled. Children must be toilet trained to enroll in ABC-Stewart School's Primary program. Children need to acquire the self-help skills to remove their own clothing and wash their hands afterwards (given child-size equipment or stools for aid.)

## **Elementary:**

ABC-Stewart School enrolls children from 1<sup>st</sup> Year to 6<sup>th</sup> Year into our elementary program. Returning students from our preschool program have priority in our elementary program. Students applying from outside of our school will be assessed prior to placement. A signed tuition contract with deposit is required to guarantee a position for your child.

Full disclosure of a medical impairment, psychological diagnosis, severe food allergies, and/or learning disability is required of parents when making an application to the school. The school will then assess whether the teaching faculty and learning environments can best meet the needs of the student. All admissions will be limited to the maximum number of children allowed by the Indiana State Requirements.

## **FINANCIAL**

Tuition payments may be made annually, bi-annually, or monthly. Monthly payments include an additional \$30 fee per month. If you would like to change your payment plan at any time, it is your responsibility to contact Crystal Anderson at [crystalanderson@abcstewart.com](mailto:crystalanderson@abcstewart.com). It is your responsibility to make payments by the due date listed on your invoice. A late fee of \$30 will be added to your account fifteen days past the due date. An additional \$30 will be added each month until the payment has been made. If your tuition is more than 60 days late, enrollment will be suspended until your account is in good standing. **Important: It is your responsibility to keep all invoices and receipts for your records.**

Tuition deposits for the upcoming school year are required to hold a student's spot. A current Fee Schedule is posted on the website. Tuition is reviewed each year to ensure fiscal responsibility and good management policy.

Changing tuition plans during the school year is disruptive to budgets and accounting. Please be sure to select the plan you wish to maintain throughout the year.

All Splendid and Extended fees will be invoiced separately, approximately once per month.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

In keeping with our non-profit status and our mission to provide an affordable educational alternative, a limited amount of financial aid is set aside for families whose financial circumstances make it impossible to send their children to ABC-Stewart School without some assistance. This amount is determined each year based on the financial position of the school. Inquiries are to be directed to our Administrator, Rae McQueary. Financial aid cannot be guaranteed from one year to the next.

## **FUNDRAISING AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

ABC-Stewart School relies on its families to help keep tuition affordable. By participating in fundraising events, volunteering time, donating goods and services, or making monetary donations, parents enable ABC-Stewart School to keep tuition competitive while providing an outstanding educational environment for children. Because ABC-Stewart School is a 501c3, donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

The Annual Fund is a yearly fundraising effort to supplement ABC-Stewart School's annual operating budget. As a 501c3 non-profit organization, it is crucial that we obtain 100% participation from our current families during our Annual Fund Drive. Without 100% participation from our constituency, we may be unable to obtain larger grants and gifts from corporations and foundations. We do not require children, parents, or faculty to sell anything, but we require participation in the Annual Fund. Your gift is deeply appreciated, regardless of the amount. Similar to other private schools, the Annual Fund contributions bridge the gap between the cost of tuition and the actual cost of educating each child. Board volunteers and parents work together to solicit the participation of all members of the ABC-Stewart School community in the Annual Fund drive. Proceeds from the Annual Fund Drive support the purchase and replacement of classroom materials and furnishings, and support the teachers in their annual professional development requirements.

Each family unit is required to volunteer a minimum of 10 hours per school year. This is an important resource as it allows us to offer extra curricular activities for our students, as well as collaborate to help maintain our school grounds.

Ways to help volunteer are, but not limited to:

- Gardening
- Licensed trades
- Grading
- Substitute teaching
- Committee involvement
- Fundraising
- Chaperoning
- Event volunteer
- Classroom Reader
- PTO involvement\*\*
- Classroom/event photography

\*\*Follow this link to join the PTO: [PTO Sign-up Form](#)

We understand the busy lives of many of our families. If you are unable to commit to the required 10 hours per school year, you may opt to buy out of this commitment for \$250 per school year. As a nonprofit school that relies on heavy parent involvement, these funds will help fill the gap.

**Kroger Plus Card:** our organization will receive a quarterly donation from Kroger based on our members spending at Kroger stores. Visit [www.kroger.com/communityrewards](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards) and select ABC-Stewart School to be linked to your Kroger card for community rewards.

\*\*We are always looking for new ways to fundraise. If you have any ideas you would like to share, please contact the administration.\*\*



## **DRESS CODE & PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

**School wide:** While we take every precaution to keep children clean and tidy, children should come to school in clothes that can get dirty and wet. Play shoes, not dress shoes, should be worn unless specified otherwise for special occasions.

**Toys, watches, and jewelry (small post-earrings are acceptable for those with pierced ears) are not permitted by any age group.**

Clothing or accessories of sentimental or high monetary value are not permitted. Children elementary age and younger are not mature enough to manage the responsibility or distraction of bringing or wearing valuables to school. If they do, the school will not be held responsible for loss, misplacement, damage or breakage.

**Dramatic-play clothing is not permitted.** They create a distraction and often children will act-out behaviors that are not appropriate for the classroom or playground as a result. We will provide a change of clothes to a child who has worn something that is creating a disturbance in the classroom.

Umbrellas are a safety hazard and are not permitted to be left with the child.

Elementary children are encouraged to wear shorts, slacks, or jeans. Elementary children often work on the floor and engage in activities that require lots of body movement. Slacks, shorts and jeans make this easier and less distracting.

Preschool parents, please adhere to your child's classroom handbook in addition to the rules and protocols listed above.

## **ORIENTATION PERIOD**

At the beginning of the school year, an orientation period is utilized to orient children to the school day schedule, the ground rules, and routines of the program. You will receive specific instructions from the school administrator regarding your child's orientation schedule or start date.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Good school attendance is necessary for success in school. If there are problems that may limit your child's ability to attend school, please be sure to contact the office. Our attendance policy is the standard for Bartholomew County.

### **Kindergarten - Sixth Year**

- **If your child is absent, please contact the office by 8:30 am.**  
Email is the preferred method of communication.
  - [office@abcstewart.com](mailto:office@abcstewart.com)
  - 812-342-3029
- **If your child misses more than five days of school in a semester because of illness, you may be asked to provide a statement from your doctor.**
- Your child will be responsible for making up any work missed. If assignments are requested for an extended absence, they will be accommodated when possible.

## **TARDIES**

It is imperative that children arrive at school on time. When a child is late, it interrupts the flow of the classroom and makes the late child feel uncomfortable and rushed. Tardiness disrupts your child's education and the education of other students. While we understand life happens, please make it a priority to bring your child to school on time. If a student arrives after their scheduled traffic line, please bring them to the office so they can be escorted to their classroom with minimal disruption. Parents should notify the office by email ahead of time if possible, when a child will be late.

## **TRAFFIC**

Drop Off and Pick Up:

Once the traffic line begins at your child's scheduled traffic time, we ask that all children, including toddlers, participate in the traffic line. Those dropping off children will drive into the ABC-Stewart School parking lot at the entrance sign. Please note: the parking lot is ONE WAY, with the

entrance at the west end and the exit at the east end. **The exit is a two lane exit. If you are turning right, please stay to the right of the exit, if you are turning left, please stay to the left of the exit.** Please refer to the traffic map for directions on where your child's traffic line will take place.

### **Traffic Times:**

Drop off and pick up times are in place to ensure a safe and efficient arrival and dismissal for all students. Please follow your child's classroom drop off and pick up times. We have multiple traffic lines to accommodate the preschool and elementary. Please do not arrive early or late to enter the traffic line. **Late arrivals for traffic will have to park and walk into the building. Do not park in the traffic line area. Please park in a parking spot and walk your child to their classroom. You must make contact with a staff member before you leave your child.**

All children that remain after traffic will be checked into Splendid/Extended Days. Splendid and Extended Days are open from 7:30-5:30, Monday-Friday. Any pick up after 5:30 will be billed \$3 per minute. If you arrive after the above traffic times, please park, and come into the building to drop off or pick up.

#### **Stewart**

Drop off: 7:58-8:08  
Pick Up: 3:15-3:25

#### **Children's Garden**

Drop off: 8:15-8:25  
Half Day Pick Up: 11:00-11:10  
Full Day Pick Up: 2:45-2:55

#### **Horizons**

Drop Off: 8:30-8:40  
Half Day Pick Up: 11:15-11:25  
Full Day Pick Up: 3:00-3:10

#### **Seedlings & Saplings**

Drop Off: 8:50-9:00  
Pick Up\*: 11:30-11:40

\*Seedlings and Saplings do not have a pick up traffic line. Parents must park and walk inside to retrieve their children.

All children that remain after traffic will be checked into Splendid/Extended Days. If you arrive after the above traffic times, please park, and come into the building to drop off or pick up.

**Please acquaint all caregivers with drop off and pick up procedures and rules before the school year begins.**

## **HEALTH**

### **When to keep your child home:**

- **Fever: temperature of 100 degrees or more. No return until the temperature is under 100 degrees *without* medication for the last 24 hours.**
- **Vomiting: vomiting 2 or more times in 24 hours**
- **Diarrhea: 2 or more episodes of diarrhea in the last 24 hours**
- **Eyes: thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or pink eye (conjunctivitis). No return until 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment, or until eyes have been clear for 24 hours.**
- **Lice: no return until the student has been treated\*\***
- **Skin: unknown rashes or skin lesions (open sores)**

**\*\*LICE POLICY** - Head lice are occasionally a problem in any school. ABC-Stewart School has a no-nit policy regarding head lice. If your child has contracted head lice, they may not return to school until they are nit free.

***\*\*If your child is diagnosed with strep throat, staph infections, mono, conjunctivitis, fifth's disease, chicken pox, ringworm, or any other communicable condition, please report this to the office as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [office@abcstewart.com](mailto:office@abcstewart.com)***

### **Medications:**

**All medications must be brought to school by a parent or guardian in the original container. Prescription medications must also have a doctor's prescription emailed to [office@abcstewart.com](mailto:office@abcstewart.com). In order to administer any medications, a form must be filled out and signed by the parent or guardian. The school does not have Tylenol or Advil to administer to students. Children are not permitted to bring medication (prescription or over the counter medicine), vitamins, sunscreens, and skin lotions, without written documentation from a doctor or a parent/guardian. Additionally, school personnel are not allowed to administer any type of**

OTC or prescription medication without parental/guardian consent or a doctor's order.

Children may not attend school with a fever controlled by medication. Children diagnosed with an infection requiring medication must have permission from a doctor to return, if they are returning in less than 72 hours following administration of medication. Any contagious disease or illness, or communicable condition (head lice or bed bugs) should also be reported to school personnel without delay. Confidentiality is always respected. **If a student is absent from school, they may not attend extracurricular activities that day.**

\*\*Epi-pens must be kept at school at all times. This requires that families obtain **duplicate Epi-pens**. Staff are trained in the administration of such medication.

### **IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

ABC-Stewart School follows the standards and recommendations of The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the American Academy of Pediatrics. These organizations recommend vaccinations from birth through adulthood to provide a lifetime of protection against many diseases and infections. Immunizations have had an enormous impact on improving the health of children in the United States.

Vaccination is one of the best ways parents can protect infants, children, and teens from potentially harmful diseases. Vaccine-preventable diseases can be very serious, may require hospitalization, and can even be deadly – especially in infants and young children, particularly those with compromised immune systems.

## **BIRTHDAY POLICY**

Since classroom birthday's happen frequently, **we do not accept outside treats for our birthday celebrations.** Added sugar does not prepare the mind and body adequately for learning. In the Montessori environment, we celebrate the child by shining a light on each trip they have made around the sun. The Montessori birthday celebration focuses on concepts related to the passage of time while honoring the child.

**Preschool:** Each preschool classroom celebrates the child's birthday with the walk around the sun. Please refer to your child's classroom handbook for specific details on birthday celebrations.

**Elementary:** Our elementary students celebrate their trip around the sun by preparing and presenting a special sharing. The sharing topic can be a hobby they enjoy, travels they have experienced, or something they feel passionate about. Each child's sharing date is assigned at the beginning of the school year. Due to the amount of birthdays to celebrate in our school, we are unable to assign sharing dates on or near each birthday. Therefore, all dates are assigned at random.

Each student is encouraged to invite their family to be a part of the celebration. We welcome the child's family to join us for the sharing and lunch on their child's sharing day. You may pack a lunch or bring a special lunch for you and your child from their favorite restaurant.

## **DISCIPLINE, ABUSE & NEGLECT POLICY**

The goal in a Montessori classroom is to elicit self-discipline in children. By consistent reinforcement of ground rules, within a structured environment that allows for free choice, children learn to monitor and regulate their own behaviors. This freedom within limits is of long-lasting benefit to children, who in more conventional settings, may be given little opportunity to learn self-regulation.

While self-discipline is the goal, occasionally there are children who need more teacher-directed interventions, or perhaps, professional intervention. These might include strategies such as:

- Limiting choices
- Preferential or designated seating
- Behavior modification plans
- Assigned work plans
- Professional evaluations, assessments, and therapeutic treatment measures

When children are having difficulty, communication and cooperation from parents is crucial. Parents are required to be available for conferences and to seek professional assistance for their child when requested by the Administration. In extreme cases of behaviors that infringe upon the rights and safety of other children and adults in the classroom, parents will be required to remove their child from ABC-Stewart School.

Biting does occur occasionally, particularly with the younger children. Biting in the toddler classroom can be a form of behavioral expression. It is handled in a developmentally appropriate way by the staff. Conflict resolution, emotional vocabulary and empathy development are used as tools with the children. Should biting occur in this classroom, parents will be notified by teachers with strategies to support the children involved. However, in the primary (3 to 6) classroom, we treat biting as a more serious offense, and in order to reinforce this safety standard for the children involved, parents are telephoned and required to take the child home for the day. This has proven to be an effective and impactful deterrent. Corporal punishment is never used.

\*\*As required by the Indiana State Health and Family Services, any suspected case of child abuse or neglect will be reported immediately to the proper authorities. Such reports may be made anonymously, and school personnel are not required to disclose such a report to parents.

## **CELL PHONE/SMART WATCHES/TABLETS/CHROMEBOOKS POLICY**

We recognize that cell phones have become a common tool for communication. However, they can also be a major distraction to the learning environment and are vulnerable to theft. Students are allowed to carry cell phones to school once they enter upper elementary. However, we ask that you allow your child to carry a cell phone only if absolutely necessary. Phones must be turned off and stored during the school day. Phones may not be used to talk, take pictures, play games, record, or text during school hours, including recesses or After Care. Smart watches are permitted but must be turned on School Mode. If the watch becomes a distraction, it will be confiscated and parents must retrieve it from the Head of School. If a student needs to speak to a parent/guardian at any time during the day, teachers help facilitate communication. If a student violates the cell phone policy, the following consequences will apply:

- First Infraction – Verbal warning.
- Second Infraction - Students will have their cell phone taken away and returned at the end of the day.
- Third Infraction - Students will have their cell phone taken until a parent/guardian retrieves it from the school office.

## **SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING**

Bullying (verbal, physical or cyber bullying) is considered a serious offense, and whether it is perpetrated by a child or an adult, it will not be tolerated at ABC-Stewart School. Incidents such as these are extremely rare due to our dedication to the Montessori philosophy of peace and respect towards one another. **Bullying is differentiated from typical growing pains and friendship issues that are a normal part of growing up. Children are learning how to navigate their social interactions and our expectations have to take this into consideration. Bullying is defined as more purposeful, pervasive, and targeted behavior.** It is the policy of ABC-Stewart that all students, employees, and parents deserve an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined below, is prohibited.

Bullying includes cyber bullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or adults. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; causing discomfort or humiliation; or interfering with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

- Teasing
- Social Exclusion
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public or private humiliation
- Destruction of property

Cyber bullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication. Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
- Substantially interferes with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits
- Disrupts the orderly operation of the school

Bullying and Harassment also includes:

- Retaliation against a student or employee
- Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
- Incitement or Coercion

Reporting an act of bullying or harassment begins with the teacher, if the complaint is from a student. Other reports from staff or parents should be made first to the Administration.

**Weapons of any kind, or toy replicas of weapons, must never be brought to school and doing so will be considered a serious offense, subject to suspension or expulsion of the student. Threats of violence are also considered a serious offense. Because of the unfortunate climate of violence in schools nationally, parents should discuss the consequences of this in advance with their children, so that the expectation is understood.**

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Parents questioning actions taken by the school may do the following:

1. In classroom matters, contact the teacher to discuss the problem.
2. If the teacher meeting does not resolve the problem, the teacher and parents can meet with the Head of School.
3. If the problem is not classroom related, the parents may contact the Administrator.
4. If none of the above procedures are satisfactory, parents may appeal the school decision and request a conference with the Board of Trustees or their designee after discussion with the Administration.
5. During this conference either party may have present individuals relative to factors involved.
6. The other party will be notified in advance if such persons are present.
7. The Board of Trustees or designee will advise parents in writing of the decision regarding the grievance within fourteen days after the appeal conference.

**Social Media** like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and others are powerful communication tools. However, they can also be used in inappropriate ways to malign or judge circumstances out of context, and thus becoming a weapon against individuals and organizations. Therefore, Social Media should never be used as a way to air grievances. We require that parents follow the Grievance Procedure above, which is outlined to complement ABC-Stewart's Parent School Partnership Agreement. These procedures will assist parents in addressing concerns in a way that preserves their signed agreement with the school, and the integrity of all parties.

## **SEVERE WEATHER OR SCHOOL EMERGENCIES**

In the event of severe weather or other school emergency closings, the following protocol will be implemented:

- Parents/Custodial Guardians will receive an email alert as well as a Remind Alert
- A message will be sent to all local radio stations and local news channels
- A message will be posted to our Facebook page

# ABC-Stewart School 2024-2025 FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

**ABC-Stewart School must receive one signature from EACH parent/guardian by Wednesday, September 4th.** For families with two parents/guardians, BOTH parents/guardians must read, sign, and return signature forms for these documents.

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_,

have read and understand the Family Handbook in its entirety.

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student(s)'s Name(s):