

Guiding Principles

Mission

It is the mission of the Ambleside administration and faculty to provide what Charlotte Mason called 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. The student who masters the art of relating well to God, self, others, ideas, and creation will attain the fullness of life for which she was created. Our mission is fulfilled through a consistent application of our Fundamental Convictions as applied to education.

Our Faith

We begin with the conviction that the fullness of God’s plan for humanity is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. He is both the example and the source of living a full and free life. The commandments to love God and to love one another are fundamental in the outworking of a fully human life. This conviction is given expression in the Ambleside Charter.

Fundamental Convictions

1. A Non-Competitive, Stimulating Atmosphere

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. Real life is placed before the students to study and discuss. Students are stimulated to observe, explore, and understand.

2. The Discipline of Habit

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.

3. Education as Vital, Dynamic, Living

Real learning occurs when the learner wonders, asks why and how. And it needs to happen in an atmosphere that stimulates thought, in an atmosphere rich with ideas. Our objective is to place the very best books before our 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.

4. The Infinite Dignity and Potential of Each Child

Because children are born in God's image, they are therefore born with great potential for a fruitful and full life of 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.

5. 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.

6. 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. We consider the struggle to be as essential to the learning process as the 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. Foremost among the enemies of the delight and the struggle necessary for the cultivation of a learner are entertainment and indulgence. In the classroom, entertainment and indulgence both encourage passivity. To grow, a student must be strenuously engaged in the work of learning. Thus, Ambleside teachers, while often creative in their presentations, make no effort to entertain their students. Ambleside teachers, while being loving, will not be indulgent.

Charter of Ambleside School of Ocala*

- 1} 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.
- 2} 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.
- 3} We trust in the Holy Spirit who prompts liberty, beauty, truth, love, and joy against the waywardness of human nature.
- 4} 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.
- 5} 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.
- 6} 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.
- 7} 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.
- 8} We are committed to identifying and affirming what is good and identifying and opposing what is evil, and living as best we can in the mess in the middle.

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Ambleside Statement of Faith

While Ambleside School of Ocala is neither affiliated with nor, as an institution, 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 Code of Personal Conduct. All Ambleside School Board members, employees, faculty and staff are required to affirm the doctrine and live according to the norms of conduct expressed in these documents.

While Ambleside School of Ocala has a definite commitment to the person and principles of Jesus Christ (as expressed in the Charter of Ambleside School of Ocala), it recognizes a broad range of orthodox Christian denominational differences and thus, it does not require that all Ambleside affiliates share identical theological convictions, only that their statements of faith accord with historic Christian orthodoxy as expressed in the Nicene Creed. Additionally, it is required that all Ambleside affiliates adopt the Ambleside Code of Professional Conduct and hold board members and staff to adherence of it.

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 worshipped 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.

Ambleside Code of Professional Conduct

Adult leadership has a profound effect in the lives of students. In addition to upholding the Ambleside Charter, Guiding Principles, Statement of Faith, and the Nicene Creed, all Ambleside personnel and administrators are expected to maintain a high standard of professional conduct and are obligated to promote and protect the health, safety, and welfare of all students. Therefore, all personnel and administrators of Ambleside School *must*:

- 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, disparaging comments, sexual innuendo, base jokes, and inappropriate sexually explicit talk.
- 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.
- In good faith, report alleged employee or administrator misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student by strictly following the Procedure for Reporting Educator Misconduct (on page 2 of this document).
- Never make 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. (Except when following procedure to report cases of professional misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.)*
- Never view, possess, distribute or foster the use of pornographic material including but not limited to print, video and audio.
- Never advocate or participate 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).
- Never engage 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 or scandalous.

Failure on the part of any Ambleside employee or Board member to maintain the Ambleside Code of Professional Conduct is grounds for dismissal.

* Florida Statute 39.203 provides immunity from liability when a person, acting in good faith reports an instance of child abuse, abandonment or neglect. Neither can a person acting in good faith to report an instance of child abuse, abandonment or neglect be subjected to disciplinary actions on such grounds by the employing entity. Furthermore, Florida Statute 768.095 provides employer immunity from liability for disclosing employee information, or its consequence, unless it can be shown by clear and convincing evidence that the disclosure was knowingly false or in violation of any civil right of the employee.

Procedure for Reporting Educator Misconduct

Personnel and/or administrators who fail to report abuse or misconduct that effects the health, safety or welfare of a student will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action whether in the form of a written reprimand, suspension without pay, or termination of employment.

- Report allegations or suspicion of misconduct by a classroom teacher, paraprofessional, substitute teacher, librarian, or other Ambleside staff member to the Ambleside School Executive Director.
- Report allegations or suspicions of misconduct by the Ambleside School Executive Director, administration or any Board member to the Ambleside Schools International Executive Director.
- Document the activities or details of the event.
- Secure evidence, if applicable. (Examples include victim or witness statements, arrest reports or court documents, newspaper articles, computer evidence, video or audio tapes, text messages or cell phone records, photographs, grade books or calendars, gifts/items, statements, arrest report(s), court documents, local investigative reports, termination or disciplinary documents, letter of resignation, administrative disciplinary action documents, and class rosters).
- Please note that legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by **Florida certified educators** must be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services.
- The Executive Director shall file in writing with the department all legally sufficient complaints within 30 days after the date on which the complaint comes to the attention of the school.

Contacts for Reporting Purposes:

Shari Ausley, Executive Director Ambleside School of Ocala 1521 SE 36 th Ave. Ste. 1 Ocala, Florida 34471	Bill St. Cyr, Executive Director Ambleside Schools International P.O. Box 2976 Fredericksburg, TX 78624	Florida Dept. of Education Office of Professional Practices Services 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 224-E Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
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