

The logo for ATLAS Public Schools features the word "ATLAS" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is a dark blue color with a 3D effect, showing yellow and orange highlights on the top and sides, and a light grey shadow on the bottom. Below "ATLAS" is the text "PUBLIC SCHOOLS" in a smaller, dark blue, all-caps, sans-serif font.

ATLAS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Family Handbook

2024-2025

Dear families,

Thank you for choosing Atlas Elementary! Our leadership team, teachers, and staff understand the importance of selecting the right school to nurture and support your child's growth and development as they navigate their childhood years. We are excited to partner with you to create a fantastic school community intentionally designed to set each of our students on a path toward success.

We believe each student's potential is best realized within a safe, supportive, and positive learning environment. We believe the rights of all students must be respected at all times while acknowledging there is a corresponding responsibility for students to respect school behavioral expectations.

We acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to be responsible for their children – to guide and encourage them to conduct themselves respectfully and appropriately at school. We invite parents/guardians to participate as active members of our school community. Educational success for all students cannot be achieved without family partnerships. You are the most essential part of your child's education. To best serve your child's educational needs, we must build a solid relationship.

We designed the policies and procedures in this handbook to help our school run efficiently and effectively so that we will have a successful year. This information has been carefully prepared to familiarize you with the school's operational procedures and to help you become an integral part of the Atlas family. Please read this handbook carefully and thoroughly. The student's right to learn and the teacher's right to teach form the basis for the regulations included in this handbook.

At Atlas, we believe in a collaborative school that draws on all stakeholders' strengths as we strive to improve student outcomes. Our students and families deserve the very best, and we are thrilled to have you join us in this journey. Our team looks forward to a year full of joy and discovery!

In partnership,

The Atlas Team

ATLAS ELEMENTARY



PHONE
(314) 437-4898



LOCATION
400 S. 18th St.
St. Louis, MO 63103



EMAIL
info@atlaspublic.org



WEBSITE
www.atlaspublic.org



Please Note:

This handbook provides guidance and guidelines for students and their parents. However, in every instance in which there is a governing board policy, the board policy always governs and supersedes any statement in this handbook. We will periodically make revisions to the handbook, and the updated version will be available on our website at www.atlaspublic.org.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Atlas Public Schools is committed to maintaining a workplace and educational environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, services, activities, and facilities. In accordance with law, the school strictly prohibits discrimination and harassment against employees, students or others on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, age, veteran status, veteran status, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. Atlas Public Schools is an equal-opportunity employer.

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Who We Are

Our Vision

At Atlas, we envision a time when all students in St. Louis have the skills and habits needed for success in the 21st century, and where St. Louis is heralded as a model of a flourishing, diverse, and empowered community. We believe that high-quality public schools will be the catalyst for community transformation, resulting in a thriving city.

Our Mission

The mission of Atlas Public Schools is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with authentic, real-world experiences so all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond.

Our Values

Atlas community members are kind, respectful, show integrity, demonstrate excellence, and are stewards of the community. These values serve as the foundation of all that we do, and we do our best to live them out daily. We also appreciate that it's not easy to always model our values - especially in times of challenge - and we rely on each other to help us see and understand when our values are not being upheld. As we teach our children, we approach challenges with an inquiry mindset by asking questions, seeking to understand, and collaborating to find a solution.

- **Kindness:** We treat others the way we want to be treated. We are friendly, generous, and considerate and choose to be kind, not only when it's easy, but when it's hard.
- **Integrity:** We do the right thing, even when nobody's watching. We are honest, keep our commitments, and take responsibility for our actions.
- **Respect:** We are proud of who we are and respect ourselves. We treat others with consideration and understanding, respect their point of view, and treat them fairly.
- **Excellence:** We have a growth mindset and learn from our mistakes to grow stronger. We focus on achieving our goals, and when we reach them, we raise the bar even higher.
- **Stewardship:** We are change-makers. We are empowered to be active citizens and work to make a difference in our community.



Foundational Beliefs

The following beliefs serve as the pillars of our school. Each pillar is upheld in every element of our school design, and manifests in our work with students, families, educators, and the community. These beliefs help guide our actions, reinforce what matters most, and communicate broadly who we are.

We Celebrate Diversity & Practice Equity

We believe there are real and lasting benefits to representing varied perspectives and cultures within a school community. For this reason, we are diverse by design with a schoolwide approach that reflects and actively includes the rich socio-economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds of students and families.

We Learn Through Meaningful, Real-World Experiences

We seek to instill a true love of learning in each of our students that lasts well beyond their elementary school experience. At Atlas, we believe that students learn best when they are engaged in experiences that are relevant and allow them to apply their prior knowledge in meaningful ways. By grounding the learning in real-world topics and authentic experiences, we give students the opportunity to work collaboratively, think critically, and be problem solvers.

We Acknowledge the Power of Excellent Educators

We know and value the role educators play in our students' trajectory and believe there is a direct correlation between teacher quality and the overall success of our students. We must recruit, develop, and retain excellent educators equipped with the resources, structure, and creative autonomy needed to support all students.

We Hold High Expectations While Instilling a Growth Mindset

At Atlas, we know all kids are capable of rigorous work, which is why we set high expectations and lofty goals for each of our students. We also understand there will still be times when our students will undoubtedly struggle. This is why we work to instill a growth mindset in our students. We will never lower the bar when a student does not reach their goal. Instead, we work as a team to provide the personalized instruction each child needs to thrive.

We Build Community Through Partnerships

Our most significant partners are our families. They play an active role in their child's learning, and staff will build long-term relationships to ensure students develop personally and academically. We will also establish strong relationships with local organizations so our students engage with the city as a living classroom, our families receive support to thrive, and we learn alongside others to iterate on and contribute to best practices in 21st-century learning.

Expanded Definition of Student Success

Atlas' curriculum, teaching methods, and services are designed specifically to meet the educational needs of our children. Atlas believes, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that all students are capable of excellence and can learn at high levels when supported properly. Atlas aims to develop students who are creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, collaborative team players, and academically exceptional scholars. In order to ensure that all students realize these graduate aims, we put supports and structures in place that are tailored to meet the individual needs of each student. Below are Atlas' Graduate Aims:

- **Creative and Critical Thinkers:** Our graduates think outside of the box. They see every opportunity as a learning experience and approach vexing challenges with perseverance and creativity.
- **Lifelong Learners:** Our graduates have a true passion for learning. They are insatiably curious and question everything. Our graduates are self-aware and can identify both their strengths, and areas for growth. They are highly motivated and have the ability, and desire, to self-direct their learning. They have a growth mindset and work hard. They show academic grit and do not give up. Our students are ambitious goal-setters and know how to stay organized in order to achieve their goals.
- **Culturally Competent Citizens:** Our graduates know why diversity is important and why it makes the world a better place. Our graduates know who they are and what makes them unique. Students use culture as a vehicle for learning.
- **Well-Rounded Individuals:** Our graduates are well-rounded individuals and have interests and passions both inside and out of the classroom. When our students graduate they are responsible decision makers, socially and self-aware, have strong relationship skills, and are good at self-management.
- **Collaborative Team Players:** Our graduates are collaborators. They are able to work together in a group as equals to reach a common goal. They have the ability to delegate tasks, communicate effectively, and produce quality outcomes with other individuals.
- **Academically Exceptional Scholars:** Our graduates excel academically, and leave us performing on or above grade level. They are on a trajectory to thrive in middle school, high school, college or in the career of their choice.



Atlas Team Members

Colby Heckendorn	Executive Director	colby.heckendorn@atlaspublic.org
Genevieve Backer	Chief of Staff	genevieve.backer@atlaspublic.org
Katie O'Sullivan	Chief Communications & Development Officer	katie.osullivan@atlaspublic.org
Erin Heckendorn	Head of Instructional Operations	erin.heckendorn@atlaspublic.org
Jenny Humphrey	Head of Curriculum & Instruction	jenny.humphrey@atlaspublic.org
Tierrus Nance	Head of School	tierrus.nance@atlaspublic.org
Heather Fitzsimmons	Director of Support Services	heather.fitzsimmons@atlaspublic.org
Rosalind Hollins-Lewis	Assistant Head of School	rosalind.hollinslewis@atlaspublic.org
Hannah Stout	Director of Early Literacy	hannah.stout@atlaspublic.org
Demetrius Upchurch	Director of New Teacher Development	demetrius.upchurch@atlaspublic.org
Derron Cason	Dean of Culture	derron.cason@atlaspublic.org
Josh Manian	Assistant Math Dean	josh.manian@atlaspublic.org
Jeff Hood	Director of Facilities	jeff.hood@atlaspublic.org
Michael Jonagan	Director of Beyond School Programming	michael.jonagan@atlaspublic.org
Emily Meininger	Director of Social Work	emily.meininger@atlaspublic.org
Oliver Clark	Director of Family & Community Engagement	oliver.clark@atlaspublic.org
Kristine Terrance	Director of Creative Services	kristine.terrance@atlaspublic.org
Shannon Privott-Walter	Student Success Coordinator	shannon.privott-walter@atlaspublic.org
Andrew Moore	School Culture Coordinator	andrew.moore@atlaspublic.org
Iris Jackson	School Culture Coordinator	iris.jackson@atlaspublic.org
Jessica Williams	Medical Assistant	jessica.williams@atlaspublic.org
Keesha Buckner	Office Manager	keesha.buckner@atlaspublic.org
Beth Buck	Special Education Teacher	beth.buck@atlaspublic.org
Kaley Truman	Special Education Teacher	kaley.truman@atlaspublic.org
Monica Gammon	Special Education Teacher	monica.gammon@atlaspublic.org
Dorie Ranheim	Kindergarten Math Teacher	dorie.ranheim@atlaspublic.org
Amber Shaffette	1st Grade Math Teacher	amber.shaffette@atlaspublic.org
Erika Byrd	2nd Grade Math Teacher	erika.byrd@atlaspublic.org
Grace Thomason	3rd Grade Math Teacher	grace.thomason@atlaspublic.org
Carina Maurer-Batjer	4th Grade Math Teacher	carina.maurerbatjer@atlaspublic.org
Carolyn Bryant	Visual Arts Teacher	carolyn.bryant@atlaspublic.org
Gloria Mitchell	Performing Arts Teacher	gloria.mitchell@atlaspublic.org
Grace Pauly	Physical Education Teacher	grace.pauly@atlaspublic.org
Lindsey Munnely	Preschool Teacher	lindsey.munnely@atlaspublic.org
Grace Zachary	Preschool Teacher	grace.zachary@atlaspublic.org
Emmalea Young	Kindergarten Teacher	emmalea.young@atlaspublic.org

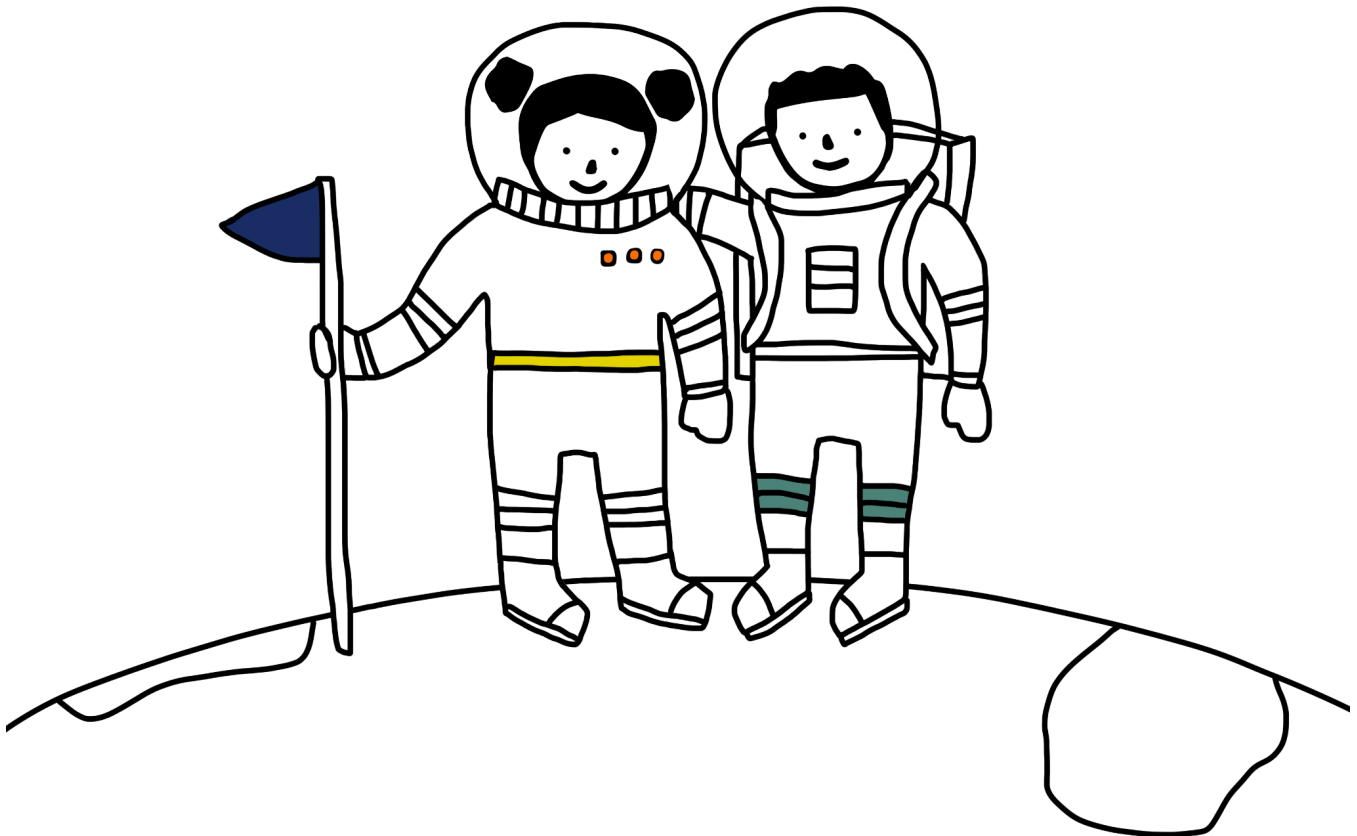
Barbara Gammage	Kindergarten Teacher	barbara.gammage@atlaspublic.org
Kelly Valentine	Kindergarten Teacher	kelly.valentine@atlaspublic.org
Megan Paul	Kindergarten Teacher	megan.paul@atlaspublic.org
Manirah Agans	First Grade Teacher	manirah.agans@atlaspublic.org
Allison Feldmann	First Grade Teacher	allison.feldmann@atlaspublic.org
Stephanie Heaps	First Grade Teacher	stephanie.heaps@atlaspublic.org
Penny Dutton-Gamble	First Grade Teacher	penny.dutton-gamble@atlaspublic.org
Matt Candelario	Second Grade Teacher	matt.candelario@atlaspublic.org
Noah Rosen	Second Grade Teacher	noah.rosen@atlaspublic.org
Maggie Aschbacher	Second Grade Teacher	maggie.aschbacher@atlaspublic.org
Kimber Griffin	Third Grade Teacher	kimber.griffin@atlaspublic.org
Hannah Palmer	Third Grade Teacher	hannah.palmer@atlaspublic.org
Michael Loaiza	Third Grade Teacher	michael.loaiza@atlaspublic.org
Riley Dodson	Fourth Grade Teacher	riley.dodson@atlaspublic.org
Kimberley Preston	Fourth Grade Teacher	kimberley.preston@atlaspublic.org
Dezara Miles	Resident Teacher	dezara.miles@atlaspublic.org
Jason Flores	Resident Teacher	jason.flores@atlaspublic.org
Nia Tracy	Resident Teacher	nia.tracy@atlaspublic.org
Atum Jones	Resident Teacher	atum.jones@atlaspublic.org
Amarachi Onyema	Resident Teacher	amarachi.onyema@atlaspublic.org
Kit Edwards	Resident Teacher	kit.edwards@atlaspublic.org
Desiree Redus	Associate Teacher	desiree.redus@atlaspublic.org
Andi Fritz	Associate Teacher	andi.fritz@atlaspublic.org
Darius Hunt	Associate Teacher	darius.hunt@atlaspublic.org
Ashley Dunlap	Associate Teacher	ashley.dunlap@atlaspublic.org
Karrissa Jamsa	Associate Teacher	karrissa.jamsa@atlaspublic.org
Maura Jackson	Associate Teacher	maura.jackson@atlaspublic.org
Darian Hunt	Associate Teacher	darian.hunt@atlaspublic.org
Katie McElroy	Associate Teacher	katie.mcelroy@atlaspublic.org
Grace Gobbi	Associate Teacher	grace.gobbi@atlaspublic.org
Jordan Hollins-Lewis	Associate Teacher	jordan.hollins-lewis@atlaspublic.org
Dwayne Upchurch	Associate Teacher	dwayne.upchurch@atlaspublic.org
Melissa Henson	Associate Teacher	melissa.henson@atlaspublic.org
Matt Roberts	Building Support Specialist	matt.roberts@atlaspublic.org
Kelley Powell	Building Support Specialist	kelley.powell@atlaspublic.org
Justin Morgan	Building Support Specialist	justin.morgan@atlaspublic.org

Board Meetings

Community members are welcome to attend regular Board of Directors meetings, which are open to the public and held virtually via Zoom. Meetings are generally scheduled for the fourth Thursday of the month and begin at 5:00 p.m. Atlas' Board of Directors may also conduct executive session meetings, which are closed to the public in compliance with Missouri Sunshine Laws. Closed meetings are usually restricted to student, personnel, property, or legal matters. Agendas for board meetings are prepared by the executive director in consultation with the president of the school board. After board approval, copies of the minutes of each board meeting are available on Atlas' website - www.atlaspublic.org.

Atlas Board of Directors

Russ Kirk	President	russ.kirk@atlaspublic.org
Nancy Wild	Secretary	nancy.wild@atlaspublic.org
Scott Malin	Treasurer	scott.malin@atlaspublic.org
Alice Dickherber	Member	alice.dickherber@atlaspublic.org
Kwofe Coleman	Member	kwofe.coleman@atlaspublic.org
Mark Minden	Member	mark.minden@atlaspublic.org
Lorna Sanchez McClellen	Member	lorna.sanchez@atlaspublic.org
Victor Thomas	Member	victor.thomas@atlaspublic.org



Educational Model

At Atlas, we place students at the center of learning by providing relevant, rigorous, and meaningful learning opportunities. We believe that elementary students need a balance of structured instruction, particularly within literacy and mathematics, as well as time to explore and learn interdisciplinary concepts through hands-on, real-world experiences. At Atlas, we have created a detailed graduate profile. We want our students to become creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, collaborative team players, and academically exceptional scholars. To accomplish this, we have adopted three research-based curriculums: EL Education, CKLA Skills, and Bridges in Mathematics. Our core values of kindness, respect, integrity, excellence, and stewardship are woven throughout each of our curricular programs.

Literacy

Atlas' literacy program fosters voracious, lifelong readers and writers. We are deeply rooted in our commitment to ensuring students find true joy in the study of literacy, and acquire a deep appreciation for great books, new information, diverse perspectives, and the power to express ideas of their own. Our literacy program is designed to cultivate a critical curiosity in our students, and expand their knowledge of the world through asking questions, reading, writing and discussion. In all grade levels, we use EL's Module Lessons because they encourage deep, content-based learning and provide all students with rigorous, on-grade-level reading and writing instruction. During Module Lessons, children develop vocabulary, writing abilities, comprehension strategies, verbal reasoning and background knowledge.

We believe that in order for students to love reading and writing, they must become strong, fluent readers and writers. For Foundational Reading Skills in kindergarten through second grade, we use CKLA Skills because it is a research-backed program that follows a coherent scope and sequence for teaching sound-spelling patterns. CKLA Skills has a strong phonological awareness component, provides students with explicit and systematic instruction in decoding and encoding, and has engaging decodable readers that are aligned to the scope and sequence. Careful assessment practices allow our teachers to focus on where each child is in their word recognition trajectory and tailor lessons to meet their individual needs. In grades 3-5, children engage in a Structured Literacy Block, which includes the following elements: decoding complex multisyllabic words; vocabulary instruction with an emphasis on morphology; close reading of a high volume of complex, grade-level texts; and structured writing instruction at the sentence and paragraph levels.

Mathematics

Atlas' math program prepares students for middle school, high school, and beyond. For students to thrive, they must be able to make sense of the world through a mathematical lens. Rigorous math instruction at Atlas pursues conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application with equal intensity. Atlas' Math Vision aligns with the Missouri Learning Standards, provides coherence across grades, and links to major topics within grades. We want our students to enjoy math and see themselves as mathematicians who have the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to solve complex problems.

The Bridges in Mathematics program consists of two parts: Number Corner and Math Lessons. Number Corner is a skill-building program revolving around the classroom calendar. It provides daily practice designed to introduce, reinforce, and extend skills and concepts related to the critical areas of study at each grade level. Math Lessons focuses on developing students' deep understanding of mathematical concepts, proficiency with key skills, and ability to solve complex and novel problems. This instructional block features a combination of whole-group, small-group, and independent activities that are problem centers.

Lab

Lab at Atlas supports and extends student learning. In addition to projects related to literacy and mathematics content, students also engage in hands-on science learning through the MySci Curriculum. Lab is also a time when students participate in discussions and work that deepens the learning from expeditions that they have taken. These lessons ensure all students get to play and explore, become immersed in oral language and content knowledge, and practice skills and habits of character they need—both to live joyfully and to be fully successful and proficient. Lab highlights our interdisciplinary and project-based approach to teaching and learning, and gives students the opportunity to learn through authentic, real-world experiences rooted in the local context of St. Louis.

Visual & Performing Arts

The arts program at Atlas provides students with a well-rounded curriculum, offering an exploration of drama, music, and visual arts. During their time at Atlas, students begin to develop a rich understanding and appreciation of the performing and fine arts. Research has shown that concentrated study in the arts is essential to developing creativity, synergistic thinking, empathy, expression, and the ability to view the world through multiple perspectives. Whether students are learning individual skills or are applying skills to enhance a collaborative ensemble, the arts demand perseverance, diligence, flexible thinking, and innovation. Atlas' visual and performing arts program is connected to the learning in our literacy classes and extends the learning for our students. Students participate in arts-related excursions or field trips, where they often get to meet and interact with professionals in the arts or view professional performances and art galleries.

Physical Education

Our physical education program is designed to promote a healthy and active lifestyle for our students. Through various engaging activities and games, we aim to develop their physical fitness, coordination, and teamwork skills. Our program emphasizes the importance of regular exercise, good sportsmanship, and respect for others. Students will participate in activities such as running, jumping, throwing, catching, and team sports. We believe that physical education plays a vital role in a child's overall development, and we are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all students to thrive and enjoy the benefits of an active lifestyle.

Technology

Technology skills and digital literacy are integral to any student's education in the 21st century. Students utilize technology to bolster their creativity and innovative capacity, and progressively develop an understanding of how to use technology effectively to communicate, collaborate, and conduct research. Beginning in kindergarten, students use iPads, the Internet, and other multimedia devices as learning and communication tools to better understand the world around them. Learning goals include basic computer fluency, creating multimedia projects, demonstrating basic Internet research skills, and online collaborations.

Co-Teaching Approach

At Atlas, we believe all students should receive the personalized instruction they need to thrive. To set our kids up for success, each of our classrooms is co-taught by two educators. This allows for more flexible grouping to support our students and meet their individual needs effectively. Below are a few specific scenarios of what this will look like at different times throughout the day:

- Both teachers co-teaching the same lesson with all students working on a similar project
- One teacher supports two or three students while the other teacher leads the larger group

- The class is split into two groups of roughly thirteen students, and each group is taught by one of the teachers
- One teacher leads a whole group lesson while the other teacher circulates the room, offering support where needed
- Both teachers pull either individual students or small groups while all other students work on an independent assignment

Our co-teacher model allows for more flexibility and enables our teachers to personalize instruction and ensure all students are actively engaged in learning. We're able to provide both enrichment and remediation within the classroom and do so in a way that maintains the dignity of all students. It also allows us to support our students with special needs in an environment that is more inclusive and without stigma.

English Language Development

A core part of Atlas' mission is to meet the educational needs of all students in an environment that fosters an appreciation and understanding of other languages and cultures. To support all multilingual learners (MLLs), Atlas Public Schools complies with federal and state mandates regarding MLL education, re-designation of MLL students, and equal access to the curriculum for multilingual learners.

Special Education Program

We strive to meet the needs of all students, including, but not limited to, those with disabilities and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). We are open to all students and will not discriminate on the basis of disability. Additionally, we follow all state and federal laws regarding students with disabilities and the development, implementation, and monitoring of Individualized Education Plans and 504 plans. If you believe your student may have a disability, please direct your concerns to your child's teacher, the Director of Social Work, or the Director of Support Services. Verbal requests are allowed, but we recommend that you make your request in writing. Your child may be eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or under the Individuals with Disabilities In Education Act to receive special services. School staff (i.e. teacher, social worker, head of school) may also request that your child be tested to determine if they have a disability and if specialized instruction is needed. All Special Education services will be coordinated through our Director of Support Services. We partner with Miriam Learning Center (www.miriamstl.org) for related service delivery, evaluations, resource sharing, and guidance.

If a student has previously been identified and is eligible for services under IDEA, please share documentation, including prior evaluations and the most recent IEP or 504 Plan, at your earliest convenience.

Inclusion & Differentiation

An inclusive education is essential to the culture of Atlas Elementary. Inclusion is about how we develop and design our classrooms, programs, and activities so that all students learn and participate together. We are proud to embrace a variety of learning styles, and it is our responsibility to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students in an appropriate manner. Our educators have a shared sense of responsibility for the success of all students. To this end, educators meet students where they are so everyone has access to the learning environment. Inclusion fosters not only a physical presence, but also meaningful participation in one's education. We collaborate with families because they are an essential part of their child's education. The various supports and services we provide ensure students receive the accommodations and modifications needed to access high-quality instruction alongside their peers whenever appropriate.

Personalized Learning

Personalized Learning is a key pillar of Atlas' philosophy, and it begins with knowing each individual child. We get to know each student's strengths and areas for growth, as well as their interests, passions, and ambitions. From there, we create a learning environment where students' individual needs are met and their collective potential is tapped. Teachers use effective differentiation strategies such as flexible grouping and ongoing assessments to inform their instruction.

Virtual Learning Opportunity

The Missouri Course Access Program (MOCAP) offers students equal access to a wide range of high-quality courses and interactive online learning that is neither time nor place dependent. Because virtual instruction can be an effective education option for some students, there may be courses available through MOCAP that are of interest to your family. Please contact Heather Fitzsimmons, Director of Support Services, for more information about virtual learning opportunities. Additional information can also be found online on Atlas' website at www.atlaspublic.org or www.mocap.mo.gov.

Building a Safe & Supportive Learning Environment

Equity

A focus on equity is essential in creating a safe and supportive learning environment at Atlas Elementary. At Atlas, equity means every child receives exactly what they need to be successful in the school environment, even if that varies across lines of difference, so each individual student has an equal chance to thrive. By providing equitable outputs of time, resources, and positive experiences for students, we work toward accomplishing educational equity so a child's outcome (i.e. well-being, academic proficiency, college graduation rate, future income) is not predetermined by race, socio-economic status, or any other factor.

Working toward equity involves:

- Discovering and cultivating the unique gifts, talents, and interests that every human possesses;
- Ensuring equally high outcomes for all participants in our educational system; removing the predictability of success or failures that currently correlates with any social or cultural factor;
- Interrupting inequitable practices, examining biases, and creating inclusive multicultural school environments for adults and children.

Equity work is critical, but not easy. Sometimes, the process can feel difficult, bring up tough conversations, and push us to grow in new ways. We expect our children, staff, and families to approach equity work with an open mind, to ask questions, and to seek to understand better the reasoning behind how equity plays into our decisions

Family Partnership

At Atlas, we believe that families are essential partners in their child's education. We actively seek to involve families in various aspects of school life and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement. By establishing and nurturing these family partnership initiatives, we aim to create a strong sense of community and shared responsibility. We recognize that when families are actively involved in their child's education, students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Together, we can empower our students to reach their full potential and create a positive impact on their educational journey.

Here is a detailed explanation of our family partnership initiatives:

1. **Open Communication Channels:** We prioritize open and transparent communication with families. We maintain regular channels of communication, such as classdojo, class newsletters, emails, and a dedicated school website, to keep families informed about school activities, events, and important announcements. We also encourage families to reach out to us with any questions, concerns, or feedback they may have.
2. **Welcoming Environment:** We strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for families. Our school organizes an open house at the beginning of each academic year to introduce families to the school community, staff, and curriculum. We value the diversity of our families and promote cultural awareness and appreciation through events and celebrations.
3. **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** We conduct regular parent-teacher conferences to provide opportunities for in-depth discussions about each child's progress. These conferences allow teachers to share academic updates, highlight strengths, and discuss areas for growth. They also provide parents with the chance to ask questions, share insights about their child, and collaborate with teachers on strategies for support.
4. **Family Workshops and Events:** We organize workshops and events specifically designed to engage families in their child's learning journey. These workshops cover a range of topics such as supporting

literacy development, fostering positive behavior, and understanding the responsive classroom approach. We also host family fun events, where families can participate in interactive activities and strengthen their connections with the school community.

5. Parent Education Resources: We provide families with resources and materials to support their child's learning at home. These resources may include suggested reading lists, high quality apps and tips for promoting a positive learning environment. We also share information about local community resources and services that may be beneficial to families.
6. Family Council: Is a dedicated group composed of families, teachers, and school staff who come together regularly to discuss matters that directly impact our students and their educational experience. Its primary purpose is to provide a platform for open communication, cooperation, and involvement between the school and families. At Atlas, the Family Council serves as a vital bridge between the home and the school, ensuring that parents have an active voice, offering insights, feedback, and suggestions on various matters, including extracurricular activities, fundraising initiatives, and community outreach. The Director of Family and Community Engagement serves as the primary point of contact for Family Council-related activities.

Educating Missouri's Homeless Children

The McKinney-Vento Act guarantees homeless children and youth an education equal to what they would receive if they were not homeless.

Who is Homeless?

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth include individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes the following situations:

1. Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing or economic hardship
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters
4. Abandoned in hospitals
5. Living in a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation
6. Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings

The McKinney-Vento Act also recognizes unaccompanied youth who are homeless. According to the act, an unaccompanied youth is a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian.

Which School Can a Homeless Child Attend?

There are two choices for a student in a homeless situation - The school of origin and the school of residency. The school of origin is the school the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled. The school of residency is the school serving the area where the child or youth is currently physically dwelling. When determining the school of best interest, a homeless child or youth should remain in the school of origin (to the extent feasible) unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian or to the wishes of the unaccompanied youth.

Enrollment

The McKinney-Vento Act requires the immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth providing Atlas has available seats in the appropriate grade. These children must be allowed to attend school even if they are unable to produce previous academic records, immunization and medical records, proof of residency,

birth certificates, or other documentation that is usually required. Families who are in transition have 30 days after the start of the school year to provide immunization records or an exemption card. However, if Atlas is full when a student experiencing homelessness attempts to apply or enroll, Atlas will place homeless children and youth on the waitlist in a prioritized position.

Transportation

School districts and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must provide transportation for homeless children and youth to the school of best interest. Districts must also provide transportation during the resolution of any pending disputes. While disputes over enrollment, school selection or eligibility are being resolved, students must be transported to the school of choice of the parent or the unaccompanied youth.

The Homeless Liaison

The school's homeless liaison plays a vital role in ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll and succeed in school. The McKinney-Vento Act requires that every school district appoint a homeless liaison who serves as the link between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and social-service providers.

If you would like more information or need assistance, please contact Emily Meininger, Atlas Homeless Liaison at emily.meininger@atlaspublic.org or (314) 928-6657.

To speak with Missouri's Homeless Liaison, call (573) 522-8763.

Responsive Classroom

At Atlas Elementary, we believe in fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued, respected, and supported. Our approach is rooted in the principles of *Responsive Classroom*, which is an evidence-based approach to teaching that focuses on the strong link between academic success and social-emotional learning. Responsive Classroom emphasizes social-emotional learning, academic excellence, and the development of strong character traits. Our commitment will guide us in creating a positive, inclusive, and engaging environment for all our students, families, and staff members.

Below are the correct six guiding principles of Responsive Classroom:

1. **Positive Community:** Creating a positive and inclusive community is at the heart of the Responsive Classroom approach. It emphasizes building strong relationships, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting mutual respect and kindness among students, teachers, and families.
2. **Engaging Academics:** Responsive Classroom focuses on making learning engaging, meaningful, and relevant to students' lives. It encourages teachers to use a variety of instructional strategies, hands-on activities, and real-life connections to promote active learning and deeper understanding.
3. **Effective Classroom Management:** The approach emphasizes the importance of establishing clear expectations, routines, and consistent consequences. Responsive Classroom provides teachers with proactive strategies to prevent behavior issues, address misbehavior constructively, and create a positive and orderly learning environment.
4. **Developmentally Responsive Teaching:** This principle recognizes that students have diverse needs and learn at different rates. Responsive Classroom encourages teachers to differentiate instruction, provide appropriate challenges, and support individual growth by understanding and responding to each student's strengths, interests, and learning styles.

5. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Responsive Classroom highlights the significance of explicitly teaching social and emotional skills alongside academic content. It promotes the development of students' self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities to foster their overall well-being and academic success.
6. Collaborative Problem Solving: The final principle of Responsive Classroom emphasizes teaching students how to resolve conflicts, make responsible decisions, and work collaboratively. It encourages the use of problem-solving discussions and restorative practices to address conflicts and restore relationships, promoting a positive and supportive learning community.

Responding to Challenging Behaviors

At Atlas, our top priority is ensuring the emotional and physical safety of our community members. This commitment extends to classrooms, school grounds, and field trips. Atlas complies with all state and federal safety statutes, including RSMO 160.261 and the Missouri Safe Schools Act. Teachers proactively teach conflict resolution, set clear expectations, reinforce positive behavior, and redirect misbehavior. When addressing misbehavior, we focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment, while staying within legal guidelines. Staff use logical consequences and prioritize teaching replacement behaviors, ensuring all students' dignity through a restorative approach to discipline.

When behavior is disruptive or unsafe, we consider various factors to determine appropriate consequences, such as context, recurrence, intent, disability impacts, and existing behavior plans. Atlas adheres to state and federal laws regarding student discipline and interventions.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school. Corporal punishment is any form of physical punishment administered by an adult to the body of a child for the purpose of discipline, reformation of attitudes or behaviors deemed unacceptable.

Likewise, parents/guardians are prohibited from displaying any form of corporal or physical punishment toward a student while on school premises. Should this occur, Atlas may be required by law to contact the Children's Division of the Department of Social Services in an attempt to serve the best interest of the child. Atlas faculty, staff, and administrators are legally obligated to report to the Children's Division when they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a child.

Bullying Policy

Atlas Elementary is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students, staff, and community members. We believe that every individual deserves respect and dignity, and that bullying in any form is unacceptable. This policy outlines our approach to preventing and addressing bullying in our schools and community.

Definition of Bullying:

"Bullying" means intimidation, unwanted aggressive behavior, or harassment that is repetitive or is substantially likely to be repeated and causes a reasonable student to fear for his or her physical safety or property; substantially interferes with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of any student without exception; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Bullying may consist of physical actions, including gestures, or oral, cyberbullying, electronic, or written communication, and any threat of retaliation for reporting of such acts. Social exclusion is when a child feels alone or left out because of the manipulation of their peer relationships and social status. Bullying of students is prohibited on school property, at any school

function, or on a school bus. "Cyberbullying" means bullying as defined in this subsection through the transmission of a communication including, but not limited to, a message, text, sound, or image by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager.

Prevention of Bullying:

Atlas Elementary works to create an environment that discourages bullying from occurring. We believe that prevention is the most effective way to create a safe and respectful environment for all students. The following measures will be taken to discourage bullying:

1. Education: Staff implements positive, preventative education (i.e. how to be a good friend, self-esteem, how to handle conflict, etc.) This preventative education relates to our Atlas core values. Students, staff, and parents will receive education and training on what constitutes bullying, its effects, and ways to prevent it. Families will receive information about the Character Strong curriculum that is available for each classroom.
2. Supervision: Staff members will provide appropriate supervision of students at school, including hallways, classrooms, and playgrounds.
3. Policies and Procedures: Atlas Elementary will have clear policies and procedures in place to address bullying, including reporting procedures and consequences for those who engage in bullying behavior.
4. Support: Students who have been bullied and students who have engaged in bullying behavior will receive on-going support based on a curriculum developed by the School Social Worker. Students may receive support from the school social worker, counseling intern, teachers, and administrators.

Reporting Procedures:

Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to report any suspected incidents of bullying promptly. The following steps should be taken:

1. Students can report bullying to their teacher, school social worker, or any staff member they feel comfortable speaking with. There is a mailbox outside the School Social Worker's office for students to leave notes.
2. Parents or guardians should report any suspected incidents of bullying to the head of school or the school social worker. Families can also complete the Google Form on the Atlas website under the Families Tab. This will go directly to the School Social Worker.
3. Staff members who observe or suspect any bullying behavior should report it to the school social worker and/or student support services.

Investigating and Responding to Reports of Bullying:

Upon receiving a report of bullying, the following steps will be taken:

1. The school social worker or director of student services will conduct an investigation into the incident. This will begin within two school days from the time the report was made.
2. The School Social Worker will communicate with the parents or guardians of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) at the start and end of the investigation.
3. The victim and any witnesses will be interviewed separately.
4. The alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond.
5. The investigation will be documented and shared with the leadership team.
6. If the investigation confirms that bullying has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Consequences for Bullying:

Bullying is a serious offense and will be dealt with promptly and firmly. Consequences for bullying behavior may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The students will be separated within the classroom setting (switch desk seats, carpet seats, etc.)
The Math and Related Arts teams will be notified of the students involved and will separate them as needed.
2. The School Social Worker will make initial parent/guardian contact with both parties.
3. The School Social Worker will utilize the workbook "No Kidding About Bullying" during Conflict Resolution with the victim and the bully when appropriate.
4. Loss of privileges, such as recess or extracurricular activities.
5. Restorative Discipline, such as reading a book about what it means to be a leader to a younger grade-level classroom or assisting the gym teacher.
6. Mandatory Parent Meetings
7. Suspension from school.
8. Expulsion from school.

***Atlas Elementary is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all students. We believe that everyone has the right to be respected and treated with dignity, and that bullying in any form is unacceptable. This policy, created in partnership with families, outlines our approach to preventing and addressing bullying in our schools and community.

Suspension & Expulsion

Pursuant to RSMo 167.171, Atlas Public Schools' Board of Directors, by general rule and for the causes provided in section 167.161, may authorize the summary suspension of students by the Head of School for a period not to exceed ten school days and by the Executive Director for a period not to exceed one hundred and eighty school days. In case of a suspension by the Executive Director for more than ten school days, the student, the student's parents or others having custodial care may appeal the decision of the Executive Director to the Atlas Board or to a committee of Board members appointed by the Board President. No student shall be suspended unless:

1. The pupil shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against them;
2. If the pupil denies the charges, such pupil shall be given an oral or written explanation of the facts which form the basis of the proposed suspension;
3. The pupil shall be given an opportunity to present such pupil's version of the incident; and
4. In the event of a suspension for more than ten school days, where the pupil gives notice that such pupil wishes to appeal the suspension to the board, the suspension shall be stayed until the board renders its decision, unless in the judgment of the Executive Director, the pupil's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, in which case the pupil may be immediately removed from school, and the notice of hearing shall follow as soon as practicable.

In advance of such hearings, Atlas will notify families, the student, and, when applicable, the appropriate division of the juvenile or family court, pursuant to RSMO 167.161. Atlas will make a good-faith effort to have the parents or others having custodial care present at the student's hearing. Suspensions and expulsions are a last resort after Atlas has exhausted its in-school discipline system or when the in-school discipline system is not appropriate under the circumstances.

Atlas shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students including the name of the student, a description of the behavior, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

Notification

Pursuant to RSMo 167.115, Atlas will notify the appropriate division of the juvenile or family court upon the suspension for more than ten days or expulsion of any student that Atlas knows to be under the jurisdiction of the court. In addition, Atlas will report to the appropriate law enforcement agency any crimes that occur on school grounds to law enforcement, in accordance with law.

Trauma Informed School Initiative

Pursuant to Missouri Senate Bill 638, Section 161.1050, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has established the "Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative."

For the purposes of this initiative, the following terms are defined as follows:

1. "Trauma-informed approach" - an approach that involves understanding and responding to the symptoms of chronic interpersonal trauma and traumatic stress across the lifespan
2. "Trauma-informed school" - a school that:
 - a. realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery
 - b. recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in students, teachers and staff
 - c. responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into its policies, procedures and practices; and
 - d. seeks to actively resist re-traumatization

The implementation of a trauma-informed approach is an ongoing organizational change process. A "trauma-informed approach" is not a program model that can be implemented and then simply monitored by a fidelity checklist. Rather, it is a profound paradigm shift in knowledge, perspective, attitudes and skills that continue to deepen and unfold over time. Some leaders in the field are beginning to talk about a "continuum" of implementation, where organizations move through stages. The continuum begins with becoming trauma aware and moves to trauma sensitive to responsive to being fully trauma informed. Visit <https://dese.mo.gov/traumainformed> to learn more.

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

Atlas strives to meet the individualized needs of its students in accordance with law. In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, students with disabilities for whom a disciplinary removal results in a change in placement will be entitled to manifestation determination meeting in accordance with law.

Seclusion & Restraint

In accordance with law, Atlas teachers and staff reserve the use of seclusion or restraint for situations or conditions in which there is imminent danger of physical harm to self or others. Atlas' Seclusion and Restraint Policy can be found [HERE](#).

Threats of Violence

Employees who receive information concerning threats of violence (suicidal and/or homicidal) will report the information to the Director of Social Work or designee, who will respond in accordance with policy.. The Head of School will investigate and if necessary, the Director of Social Work or other trained professional, will administer either a suicidal or homicidal risk assessment, determine next steps, and report the findings

to the Head of School. The Head of School will respond according to policy based on the risk level identified through the risk assessment. Law enforcement or EMS may be notified when appropriate. Guardians will also be notified.

Records

The Office Manager, with support from the Head of School, ensures records are maintained for any act of school violence or violent behavior; any offense that occurs on school property, on school transportation, or at a school activity which is reported to law enforcement officials, and any offense which results in an out-of-school suspension for more than ten school days.



Schedule & Calendar

Year-Round Programming

In order to more effectively meet the needs of our students and families, Atlas has adopted a year-round school calendar. Our calendar supports our whole-child approach to learning. From academics, play, the arts, wellness, and social emotional learning, we are committed to ensuring the success of our students - academically, emotionally, and physically.

For the 2024-2025 school year, our first day of class begins September 4, 2024 and our school year ends on August 8, 2025. Our school year consists of seven academic sessions, each consisting of roughly five weeks of instruction. Each academic session is followed by an intersession break.

Session 1: September 4-October 11 (28 Days)

Intersession 1: October 14-25

Session 2: October 28-December 19 (33 Days)

Intersession 2: December 20-January 3

Session 3: January 6-February 7 (24 Days)

Intersession 3: February 10-14

Session 4: February 18-March 14 (19 Days)

Intersession 4: March 18 -March 28

Session 5: March 31- April 25 (20 Days)

Intersession 5: April 28 - May 2

Session 6: May 5-June 13 (29 Days)

Intersession 6 (Summer Recess): June 116-July 111

Session 7 - Extended Summer Term: July 14-August 8 (20 Days)

Intersession 7: August 11-September 2

Intersession Programming

We've designed our intersessions to fall on a timeframe similar to traditional districts' breaks. For example, Intersession 2 occurs during Winter Break, and Intersession 4 falls during the third week of March, when SLPS typically has its Spring Break. Together, Intersession 6 & 7 make up our extended summer break where students have roughly seven weeks off of school and families have time to enjoy the summer together. During intersessions that don't fall on traditional breaks, Atlas partners with Unleashing Potential to provide affordable programming for students. Intersession programming takes place at our school and runs from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. so families don't have to worry about finding childcare.

2024-2025 School Calendar

September 2024							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2: Labor Day - No School
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	3: Staff Inservice - No School
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	4: Start of 2024-2025 School Year
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30						Session 1: September 4-October 11 (28 Days)
October 2024							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	14-18: All School Recess
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	21-25: Staff Inservice - No Students
27	28	29	30	31			28: First Day of Session 2
November 2024							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
					1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5: Election Day - No School
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	25-29: Thanksgiving Recess - No School
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Session 2: October 28-December 19 (33 Days)
December 2024							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20: Staff Inservice - No School
29	30	31					Dec. 21-Jan. 1: Winter Recess - No School
January 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
			1	2	3	4	2-3: Staff Inservice - No School
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	6: First Day of Session 3
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No School
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		Session 3: January 6-February 7 (24 Days)
February 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10-12: Staff Inservice - No School
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13-14: All School Recess - No School
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	17: Presidents' Day - No School (Makeup Day)
23	24	25	26	27	28		18: First Day of Session 4

March 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	17-21: Spring Recess - No School
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	24-28: Staff Inservice - No School
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	26-28: Makeup Days
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	Session 4: February 18-March 14 (19 Days)
30	31						31: First Day of Session 5
April 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Session 5: March 31-April 25 (20 Days)
27	28	29	30				28-30: All School Recess - No School
May 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
				1	2	3	1-2: Staff Inservice - No School (Makeup Days)
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5: Start of Session 6
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	26: Memorial Day - No School
June 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19: Juneteenth - No School
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	June 16-July 11: Summer Recess - No School
29	30						Session 6: May 5-June 13 (29 Days)
July 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
		1	2	3	4	5	4: Independence Day - No School
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	9-11: Staff Inservice - No School
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	14: Start of Session 7
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30	31			Session 7 Extended Term: July 14-August 8 (20 Days)
August 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
					1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	11-22: All School Break - No School
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	25-29: Staff Inservice - No School
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31							
September 2025							
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1: Labor Day - No School
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2: Staff Inservice - No School
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	3: Start of 2025-2026 School Year
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30					

Logistics

Field Trips or Expeditions

At Atlas, traditional field trips are called Expeditions, and they are an important part of learning. We use both our local neighborhood and the myriad opportunities around the city to explore and research throughout the school year.

As part of your registration packet, guardians are asked to sign a permission slip for all walking and bus field trips. Families will be notified at least 48 hours in advance of field trips. At that time, parents can withdraw permission for any field trip by submitting written opt-out instructions to the classroom teacher. If a parent or guardian signs and returns opt-out instructions for a specific field trip, the annual field trip consent remains valid for all other field trips.

Families will have the opportunity to volunteer to join their students' classrooms on some Expeditions. Watch ClassDojo to stay up to date on when these experiences are taking place.

Morning Arrival & Afternoon Pick-up

Morning arrival begins at 7:30 a.m. If you need your student to get to school earlier than 7:30 a.m., you can sign them up for before school programming that starts at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast is served in the classroom between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. We ask that all students are in the school building by 8:00 a.m. so we can begin our day promptly.

Dismissal begins at 3:30 p.m. each day and runs until 4:00 p.m. (at which time aftercare begins).

Non-Parent Pick-Ups

We will only release students to adults who are authorized to pick them up, as provided during registration. This list is maintained on our student information system (SIS) and can be updated as often as needed. We ask unfamiliar adults to verify their identity by showing an ID. In the event of an emergency, when you need someone to pick up your child who is not on the authorized pick-up list, please email your child's teacher or call the school.

Late Pick-Up

If you are unexpectedly delayed at dismissal time, please call or text the school at (314) 437-4898. If no one is available to answer your call, please leave a voicemail message and someone will return your call shortly. We understand things come up from time to time, and the safety of your child and family is important to us. If your child is not picked up by 4:00 pm, you will receive a call from an Atlas team member. If you do not answer, we will reach out to the emergency contacts listed in your child's registration paperwork. If this becomes a consistent occurrence, we will work with you to enroll your child in our afterschool program or find another solution that works for your family.

Early Pick-up

Picking your child up early from school can disrupt the learning environment and your child will miss valuable time in the classroom. We ask that families avoid picking up their children from school early. And yet, we also know things come up. If you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, you must notify their teacher prior to pick-up via email or call the school office to notify the Office Manager. If you will be picking up your child before the end of the day on a regular basis, a valid reason and documentation must be provided.

Please note that early dismissal from the main office will end at 2:45 p.m. Families coming into the office after 2:45 pm will be asked to pick up their student through the parent pick-up line. Exceptions will be made only in the event of an emergency.

Before and After Care

Atlas, in partnership with Unleashing Potential, offers both before and after care programming for students. Before care runs from 7:00-7:45 a.m. each day and aftercare runs from the end of the school day until 5:30 p.m. If you have questions about Unleashing Potential please contact Charlene Temple, Unleashing Potential's Site Manager at ctemple@upstl.org. Michael Jonagan, Coordinator of Beyond School Programming, is the primary liaison with Unleashing Potential, and he can be reached at michael.jonagan@atlaspublic.org.

For those families not wishing to enroll in Unleashing Potential or who are on a waitlist for enrollment in Unleashing Potential, Atlas offers Beyond School programming before and after school during the hours listed above.

During before and after school hours, reach the Unleashing Potential classroom directly at (314)728-8249.

School Payments

Atlas uses MySchoolBucks, a system that enables families to securely pay for school fees (including uniforms, intersessions, and more) using their credit/debit card or an eCheck.

Families can create a free account at MySchoolBucks.com. Add your student(s) and add a payment method (either credit card or bank account).

Atlas will be able to invoice you from the system, or you can search for items in the school store:

1. Click on the school store at the top of the page and select browse all items.
2. Choose the item you are looking for (e.g., Intersession Programming and select the number of weeks you are enrolling your student in or polo shirt and select the quantity you need)
3. Check out!

If you need assistance on the technical side of your account, you can find helpful how-to videos and answers to commonly asked questions by visiting MySchoolBucks.com. Or, you can contact MySchoolBucks directly by logging into your account to start a chat conversation or give them a call at (855) 832-5226.

On occasion, some items including uniforms and payments for one-time events or items can also be made through form's on the school's website.

Transportation

Atlas does not offer bus transportation to and from school for our general student body. That said, Atlas is committed to working with families to find solutions to transportation barriers. If a child needs transportation and is eligible because of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Atlas will arrange a transportation plan with the family by using modes such as QuikTrip Gas Cards, Metro or Zipcare. All transportation options will have background checks and appropriate licensing.

Parking

There are a limited number of guest parking spots available at the main entrance of the building. Additional free parking spaces are available to families between 8:15 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. underneath the covered parking structure on the east side of the building.

School Policies & Procedures

Enrollment & Lottery

Atlas will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, and all other operations, and will not charge tuition nor discriminate, for admission or otherwise, on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, gender, income level, or proficiency in the English language. Atlas may limit admission to students within a given age group or grade level, but will not have specific requirements for admission (e.g. minimum grade point average, test scores, discipline records, etc.)

Pursuant to RSMo 160.410, the enrollment process at Atlas Public Schools will be open to:

- all students who reside within the boundaries of the St. Louis Public School District
- non-resident students who transfer from an unaccredited district
- those eligible under the terms of judicial settlements or through urban voluntary transfer programs as defined by RSMO 160.410

Families must submit a complete application for their child prior to the application deadline. Upon receiving an application, a team member from Atlas will follow up to explain our enrollment process and timeline. Atlas' initial application will meet all the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act.

If the number of applicants for each lottery exceeds capacity, Atlas will enroll students randomly, with preference for eligible new students given in the following order:

1. Children of faculty & staff
2. Siblings of students currently enrolled as of the lottery date
3. Other student applicants

Should a lottery be held, all completed and accepted applications submitted during the enrollment period will be publicly drawn in random order until capacity is reached. Lotteries will be randomized by computer and certified by a third-party public official or outside firm to attest to the lottery's fairness.

Additional applicants after the lottery will be added to a "waiting list," which will rank applications submitted during the enrollment period. Applications received after the enrollment period will be added to the bottom of the waiting list. These applicants will be identified by number and by grade. Additional seat capacity after the lottery will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis to eligible students.

Supporting Students When They Struggle

At Atlas, we believe all students are capable of rigorous work when given the personalized support needed to be successful. We also acknowledge the fact that there will be times when students struggle to master skills and concepts that will set them up for success in the next grade level.

When this happens, teachers will notify families to keep them informed about their student's strengths and areas for growth. If necessary, a meeting will be held to discuss school based interventions and what families can do at home to support their students.

If by the end of the fifth academic session the student has not made adequate academic progress, retention will be discussed. We recognize there are many factors that must be taken into account when recommending grade level placement. Atlas' Director of Student Success will work with families to understand each student's unique situation and needs, and ultimately make a grade level placement decision based on the following factors.

Promotion Factors:

- Current Grade Level
- Academic Performance
- Attendance
- Age
- Grade Level of Siblings
- Physical Size
- Maturity Level
- Physical Health
- Mental Health/Emotional Factors
- Previous Retentions
- ELL Status
- Learning Differences/IEP & 504 Status
- Student Motivation/Engagement
- Student Feelings Regarding Retention
- Parent/Guardian's Wishes
- [Missouri Promotion and Retention Requirements](#)

Decision Making Process:

The school-based team, in collaboration with families, will review all relevant documents and information and make a grade-level placement determination based on concrete data that sufficiently demonstrates the student's ability to be successful at the recommended grade level. They will also discuss which interventions to put in place to support the student at the start of the next school year. After the Atlas team makes promotion and retention decisions, families who disagree with the decision do have the opportunity to submit an appeal.

Arriving on Time

It is important for children to develop the habit of arriving to school on time and helps them to learn responsibility and respect. Work begins promptly when students arrive. Students can enter the school beginning at 7:45 a.m. If a student enters the school after 8:30 a.m., they are counted late. When students arrive late to school, it decreases learning time, impacts focus and concentration, and breaks continuity of the teaching process. Parents are encouraged to make every effort to get their child to school on time, and to contact the Director of Social Work for support if facing extenuating circumstances. When students are habitually late to school, this results in missing entire days of instruction over the course of the school year.

Attendance Policy

Timely and consistent attendance is pivotal to children's academic and social-emotional development. There is a clear link between attendance, academic achievement, and a child's overall success in school. Students who are absent miss out on class discussions, small-group activities, and class projects. Research shows that missing instructional activities can lead to weaker work habits, diminished problem-solving skills, lower

academic achievement, decreased self-esteem, and a lack of self-discipline. For these reasons, school attendance laws in the state of Missouri require that children must attend school regularly.

Breakfast starts at 7:45 a.m. and the school day starts at 8:00 a.m. Students are considered late after 8:30 a.m. This affects each student's attendance percentage.

Parents and guardians have the responsibility of ensuring that their children have regular attendance, as this is the first step in achieving academic success. When a student's attendance becomes a concern, families and the school shall work cooperatively to resolve the situation.

Since there is a direct relationship between attendance and a student's overall success in school, it is imperative that a student's average daily attendance remains above 90%. If a student's average daily attendance drops below 90%, the student will be in danger of retention.

What do you do if your child will be absent?

1. Please email the front office at atlasoffice@atlaspublic.org to report the absence.
2. Let us know if your child has a contagious disease, confirmed by your child's physician, such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, or strep throat. Letters will go home via email or hard copy in your child's backpack.
3. Please provide the Health Office with a note from your physician indicating the diagnosis and releasing your child to return to school.
4. A child who was absent due to a fever, rash, vomiting, diarrhea must be symptom free and medication free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Please notify the school of any anticipated absence due to out-of-town trips, family emergencies or medical or dental appointments.

If a parent or guardian does not notify the school of an absence or tardy, an Atlas Team Member will contact the family to check-in and make sure everything is ok and see if the student will be able to make it to school. All information gained from these conversations will be documented in our Student Information System.

Barring emergencies, Atlas Elementary does not dismiss students between 2:45-3:20 p.m. Repeated early pick-ups will trigger a family meeting with the Director of Social Work or Head of School.

The following are considered excused absences, tardies, or early dismissals:

- Illness
- Quarantine due to possible covid exposure
- Medical Appointment which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours
- Days of Religious Observation
- Death in Family
- Extreme Emergencies

The following are considered unexcused absences, tardies, or early dismissals:

- Family outings or trips
- Time with family or out-of-town visitors
- Lack of sleep or over-sleeping
- Lack of interest/motivation
- Lack of transportation or car troubles

A Couple Things To Keep In Mind:

- Partial unexcused absences (i.e., tardies and early pick-ups) are summed to accurately reflect the total amount of time a student was absent from school. That means that if your student is frequently late or often leaves early, we may need to report truancy even if they show up every day. All that missed time accumulates and adds to learning loss.

Excessive Unexcused Absences Procedure

In the event of an attendance problem parents/guardians and the school shall cooperatively work to resolve the situation.

After three (3) days of unexcused absences or five (5) days of excused absences per semester, the school will establish written communication with the parents/guardians.

After five (5) days of unexcused absences per year, a second letter of notification will be sent from the school to the parents/guardians. The school may also make a referral to the school social worker.

After a total of ten (10) days of absences per year, either excused or unexcused, a letter of notification will be sent from the school to the parents/guardians. At that time, a social worker referral may be made, which may include contacting other community resources to support the family. A doctor's note may be required for any/all future absences.

Once a student has reached fifteen (15) days of total absences per year, a social worker will make contact with the family to offer support and/or resources of varying degrees.

A pattern of chronic tardiness may result in written notification to the parents/guardians and/or a social worker referral.

Excessive Unexcused Tardiness or Early Dismissals

We expect students to arrive at school on time. A student entering class late not only impacts his/her own learning but also disrupts the flow of the classroom and the entire community of learning. Upon arrival, tardy students must check in at the office. If your child has several tardies, the school office will send home a letter. Tardy letters will go home each month starting in October. If your child receives a second tardy letter, an attendance meeting with the Director of Social Work will be scheduled. If the excessive tardies continue, a meeting with the Head of School will be scheduled.

Chronic tardiness or early dismissals may result in referral to the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division for education neglect.

Missouri Department of Health Regulations

The following guidelines are based on the MO Department of Health's Prevention and Control of Communicable Disease. Students with the following symptoms will be excluded from school.

1. Chicken Pox: Until all blisters have scabbed, usually five to seven days after the rash begins.
2. Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):
 - a. *Purulent Conjunctivitis* (redness of eyes and or eyelids with thick white or yellow discharge and eye pain) Exclude until appropriate prescribed treatment has initiated, or discharge has stopped, unless a doctor has diagnosed it as non-infectious.
 - b. *Non-Purulent Conjunctivitis* (redness of eyes with clear, watery discharge. No pain or fever or

- eyelid redness) No exclusion necessary.
3. Diarrhea: Free of diarrhea for 24 hours.
 4. Fifth Disease (Parvovirus): No exclusion necessary. When rash appears, it is no longer contagious.
 5. Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease: Until fever is gone and the child is well enough to participate in school.
 6. Head Lice: If live lice are present, exclude until first treatment has been completed and no live lice are seen. A nurse or medical designee will assess the student upon return to school.
 7. Impetigo: If impetigo is confirmed by a healthcare provider, exclude until 24 hours after prescribed treatment is completed. Lesions on exposed skin should be covered with water-tight dressing.
 8. Mononucleosis: No exclusion necessary. Student may return upon feeling well enough to participate in school.
 9. Ringworm: Until treatment has been started. If the lesion cannot be covered, or the lesion is on the scalp, until 24 hours after starting treatment.
 10. Scabies: Until 24 hours after treatment begins.
 11. Strep Throat or Scarlet Fever: Until 24 hours on prescribed antibiotic treatment begins and the student is fever free.
 12. Vomiting: Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

Medications

If your child needs to take medication during the school day, you must fill out the authorization form to permit Atlas staff to administer medication. Please note, by law, we are not allowed to administer any medication, including children's Tylenol or ibuprofen, without a completed authorization form. If the medication is over-the-counter, we only need parents to fill out the top half of the form. If the medication is prescribed, we will need the doctor to fill out the bottom half of the form. Prescribed medications should be in the original pharmacy RX bottle and over-the-counter medicine should be in the original container. Please bring the medication to the office along with the signed authorization form.

Immunizations

All students attending Atlas Elementary must be immunized in accordance with law. Students cannot attend school without providing satisfactory evidence of immunization, unless they are exempted from immunization and provide proper documentation of exemption.

A student is exempted from obtaining immunizations if Atlas has on file the completed original forms necessary to prove that the student will not be immunized for religious or medical reasons. To protect inadequately vaccinated individuals and the entire community, unimmunized students could be excluded from school during disease outbreaks.

Medical Immunization Exemption - an exemption for medical reasons requires certification by a licensed doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathy that either the immunization would seriously endanger the child's health or life or that the child has documentation of laboratory evidence of immunity to the disease. The original copy of MO Department of Health and Senior Services form IMM.P.12 must be on file at the school with the immunization record.

Religious Immunization Exemption - an exemption for religious reasons requires written certification that immunization of the student violates his or her religious beliefs. Religious exemption cards must be obtained

from the MO Department of Health and Senior Services. The original Form Imm.P11A card, as is required by law, will be retained in the student's school health record.

Health Records

Records containing student health information will be stored separately from other student records in a locked file cabinet or in a secure computer file, except as otherwise required, to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504).

Lice Policy

Children from all backgrounds can get lice, and head lice do not pose any health risk. If we think your child has lice, a staff member will check his or her hair. If a lice or nit is found, we will call you to come pick up your child. Your child may come back to school once one lice treatment is done. However, it's important to keep monitoring their hair for up to 2 weeks after the initial treatment of lice. The best way to prevent your child from getting lice is to keep their personal belongings to themselves. This is especially important with jackets, hats, and combs.

If we discover an incident of lice in your child's classroom, we will notify the entire grade level within 24 hours of the exposure. Your child's name will not be shared in any lice-related notifications sent out.

Public Information Program

Open communication with Atlas' students, parents/guardians, employees, and the public is essential for our school to operate effectively. The Atlas Public Schools Board of Directors places high importance on conveying information concerning Atlas' goals, achievements, activities, and operations to our stakeholders.

Atlas will provide parents/guardians and members of the public information as required by law. Board policies and related documents, including current versions of our Family Handbook, will be posted on our website. Atlas will also post notice of Board Meetings on our website, and all meetings of the Atlas Board of Directors are open to the public. Other public information will be available in the school's buildings for viewing by the public during the office's normal business hours, as required by law and in accordance with board policy.

Visitors at School

For the 2024-2025 school year visitors will be permitted inside of the school building. All visitors will need to adhere to the health and safety protocols in place for staff and students. All visitors must check in with the front office staff and have their driver license run through the Raptor Visitor Management System to verify that they are safe to be on campus. When the visitor has been verified, the system will create a customized badge that includes the name, date, time, and destination in the building. We ask that the visitor wear their visitor's badge while in the building, allowing for easy identification of all guests. Visitors will not be allowed to visit during lunch unless it's during a scheduled school event. All visitors are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner. Any visitor that engages in conduct that is disruptive, threatening or otherwise inappropriate for a school environment may be asked to leave and/or barred from being present on Atlas property and at Atlas events.

Below are frequently asked questions about the Raptor Security System.

Q: When does a visitor need to have their license/government ID scanned?

A: If a visitor is leaving the main office and entering the secured area of the school building. For example, if a family was dropping off their student's lunch or paperwork at the main office they would not need to present their ID and get a visitor's badge.

Q: What if the person does not have a license or government issued ID?

A: That person's word-of-mouth information (Name and DOB) can be manually entered into Raptor, but the system will not save their information.

Q: Why do I need to show my ID?

A: The Raptor visitor management system allows us to confirm the identity of each visitor and helps manage campus visitor access. By running contact information through the registered sex offender database, we are able to quickly identify those who may present a danger to our students.

Q: What other systems is my information checked through?

A: The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system.

Q: What data is gathered or recorded from my state ID?

A: The only data gathered and recorded from an ID is a person's image, name, and date of birth. No other information is gathered or recorded, and the information is not shared with any outside agencies.

Q: Will we use the Raptor system during large events held at our school?

A: No. These events are considered exceptions to the rule.

More FAQs about the Raptor system can be found at: <https://raptortech.com/>

Parent Custodial Issues

As a general rule, Atlas will allow a parent access to his or her child and/or the child's records unless we have a copy of a current court order prohibiting such access. It is essential for a custodial parent to notify the Office Manager when there are legal restrictions regarding access to records or ability to release the child to the non-custodial parent. This information must be on file in the office. Please contact the Office Manager if you have any questions. No parent will be permitted access to students in a manner that causes disruption to the learning environment or jeopardizes the safety of students. Parents are discouraged from using Atlas as a visitation site.

Smoke, Alcohol & Drug-free Campus

Atlas is a drug, alcohol & smoke-free campus. This policy includes the use of electronic cigarettes and smoking outside on the sidewalk.

Dress Code

Atlas students wear school uniforms for a variety of reasons. Uniforms can reduce economic barriers for some families. Students are more focused on expressing themselves through their personalities, rather than their outward appearance when in uniform. Uniforms also help students stand out of the crowd so that they can be easily recognizable when they are off campus on an expedition. Students are required to wear a branded Atlas polo shirt or branded Atlas T-shirt purchased from the school. Branded sweatshirts are also available if students would like to wear an additional layer. Students must wear khaki bottoms- shorts, skirts, jumpers, or pants. The khaki bottoms do not need to be purchased through Atlas. Students can wear closed-toed shoes of their choice.

Toys at School

Although we appreciate the enthusiasm with which children bring in their toys to share with their classmates and teachers, toys tend to cause distractions to the learning environment. We ask that all toys and other items that are irreplaceable and/or of value be kept at home. The school will have sensory manipulatives (like balls, fidgets, or play-doh) on hand to help ease transition for students. Please connect with your child's teacher directly regarding the use of sensory manipulatives in the classroom.

Personal Belongings/Lost & Found

All personal belongings (including backpacks and uniforms) should be clearly labeled with your student's full name. We ask that items of great personal value (irreplaceable items) stay at home to avoid loss or theft. For lost and found items, see the Atlas Lost and Found. Unmarked articles and unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each month on a designated Friday so please check the Lost and Found regularly. Make sure to label your child's clothes with their name - a staff member will go through the Lost and Found and return all labeled items before donating.

Personal Electronic Devices

Atlas values the use of technology for both learning and communication and we also seek to minimize learning distractions that may arise from personal cell phones and electronic devices in the classroom. Because staff do not always have access to their cell phones while they are teaching, we ask that you call the Atlas office number if an urgent communication need arises during the school day. Students should only carry a cell phone if absolutely necessary. Phones must be turned off and stored out of sight during school hours in cubbies/backpacks or a teacher designated space in the classroom. Phones may not be used to talk, take pictures, play games, record, or text during school hours, including recesses and during after school (if applicable).

Breakfast and Lunch

Because Atlas qualified for the Community Eligibility Program (CEP), all students will receive free breakfast and lunch for the 2024-2025 school year. It is our goal to ensure all students have access to high-quality, safe, nutritious, and balanced meals that meet or exceed the USDA guidelines.

Allergies

We believe that a safe, inclusive, and successful school environment is one that is aware of and sensitive to issues surrounding students' health and supports parents in safeguarding their child's well-being. This is especially important for students with severe, life-threatening allergies. To this end, the school will avoid using known allergens in class or school-wide projects, parties, and events where food-allergic students are present. Each year, we will release our protocols and processes to ensure that all families and staff understand the safety procedures and precautions we will take as a school.

Nut Free Campus

All breakfast and lunch items provided at school are nut-free. In an effort to support our students with life-threatening food allergies and ensure all students' safety while at school, please pack a nut-free lunch if your child is bringing their own lunch to school. If your child has a snack or lunch item that contains nuts, they will not be allowed to eat it at school at any time and we will send it back home in their backpack. If this occurs, your child will be given a school lunch for the day. We appreciate your compliance with our food safety measures and thank you for your consideration of all children.

Birthday and Other Celebrations at School

At Atlas, we know that birthdays are very special for students, and families may wish to recognize their child's birthday at school. If you want to celebrate your child's birthday at school, we ask that you follow the guidelines listed below. These guidelines enable us to make sure that your child feels special on their birthday while keeping other students safe and providing rigorous academic instruction for our students.

- Birthday celebrations happen during Lab at the end of the school day.
- Please get in touch with your child's teacher via Class Dojo one week in advance of your desired celebration day.
- Please leave all birthday items at the Front Desk promptly by 10:00 AM on the day of the celebration. We ask that families do not participate in the birthday celebration at school. Teachers will facilitate the celebration and send you a photo of your child on their special day through Class Dojo.
- Ensure you bring enough treats for all students in the class and label birthday items with your child's name and classroom teacher. Please note: most classes have 26 students.
- All food items must be store-bought, include an ingredients list, and be nut-free. Individual chips, cupcakes, cookies without nuts, and juice boxes are easy-to-serve options. We ask that you not bring sheet cakes, pizza, or soda. We also don't currently have freezer capacity for ice cream or popsicles. Please avoid snacks containing **peanuts, peanut flour, peanut oil, peanut butter, or tree nuts**. This includes snacks with almonds, coconuts, sunflowers, filberts, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts.
- If you would like to send goody bags, please ensure there are enough for all children in the class. Please also make sure that they do not include any food items. Pencils, erasers, and stickers are good options.
- If a student wishes to distribute birthday party invitations at school, all students in the class should receive an invitation. If you plan on having a smaller celebration, please distribute invitations outside school hours.

Recommended Nut-Free Snack List

Please avoid snacks that contain peanuts, peanut flour, peanut oil or peanut butter or tree nuts. This includes snacks with almonds, coconuts, sunflowers, filberts, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts.

Following this is a list of birthday food items that, to the best of our knowledge, are nut-free.

Please note: *Food labels/ingredients may change over time, so it is always recommended that you read the label before purchasing snacks. Please read labels carefully to ensure that products are nut-free. This includes labels that read: "contains peanut ingredients," "may contain traces of peanuts/tree nuts," "processed in a facility that processes nuts," "manufactured on equipment also used for peanuts/tree nuts."*

Nut-Free Cookies & Snack Cakes

- Kellogg's brand Original Rice Krispy Treats
- Nabisco brand Oreos (Original, Double-Stuffed, Golden, Birthday Cake flavor, Mint)
- Nabisco Chips Ahoy Original Chocolate Chip cookies
- Keebler E.L. Fudge cookies & Scooby Doo Graham Cracker Sticks
- Nabisco Graham Crackers & Vanilla Wafers
- Animal Crackers (Barnum, Austin Zoo)
- Teddy Graham crackers
- Kellogg's NutriGrain bars

Nut Free Chips & Crackers

- Pepperidge Farm Goldfish
- Cheez-Its (brand name)
- Cheetos brand snacks
- Rold Gold Pretzels
- Lay's Potato Chips (Original & BBQ)
- Popcorn (Smartfood, Popsecret Movie Theater Popcorn, Skinny Pop)
- Pringles
- Utz Cheese Ball

Nut Free Donuts & Cupcakes

- Entenmann's Rich Frosted Donuts & Softee Donuts (powdered, cinnamon, plain)
- Hostess Frosted Mini Donuts, Ding Dongs, & Twinkies
- Hostess Cupcakes (chocolate + birthday flavor)

Nut-Free Fruit Snacks & Candy

- Lollipops (Dum Dums, Caramel Apple Pops, Charms, Tootsie roll pops, Blow pops)
- Fruit Snacks (Motts, Welchs, Gushers, Annies)
- Fruit Roll-Ups & Fruit by the Foot
- Tootsie roll products
- Skittles, Starburst, Smarties, Nerds, Laffy Taffy, & Twizzlers

Celebrations Outside of School

We believe in creating and sustaining a strong and inclusive school community for parents, staff, and students. To that end, students and families who wish to distribute invitations at school should include all the children in their child's class. For smaller gatherings and parties, we ask that you distribute invitations outside of school and use discretion when discussing them on campus. This helps maintain an inclusive environment and cultivate a strong community at Atlas.

Flyer Distribution

We do our best to limit flyers in order to reduce our use of paper. We will occasionally distribute paper flyers on behalf of the school and Atlas Family Council or outside organizations if they fit within our guidelines. We may also share electronic versions of flyers in the Family Council Corner portion of our weekly newsletter.

A flyer from an outside organization may be approved if one or more of the criteria below are met:

- The request originates from a 501(c)(3) organization
- The request is from the City of St. Louis or a municipal or government agency that is not political in nature ie St. Louis Public Library etc

- Contains information from non-school sponsored youth sports programs or recreation activities that include cost information
- Is from an organization that provides educational or enrichment services that may directly benefit students
- The flyers are pre-printed and delivered to school ready for distribution

Fundraising

Fundraising activities and sharing information on fundraisers are limited to activities directly sponsored by Atlas Public Schools.

Sometimes, an individual or organization may fundraise for the school through various methods, including but not limited to grant opportunities, individual solicitations, events such as food sales, and/or crowdfunding efforts. However, prior approval from the school's Chief Communications & Development Officer must be obtained before planning for any fundraiser or applying for funds on Atlas' behalf. The Chief Communications & Development Officer or their designee will provide additional guidelines for conducting fundraisers and collective funds before approval.

All donations must be made directly to Atlas. Under no circumstances should funds intended for Atlas be deposited into an individual's account. Funds raised for Atlas are subject to internal, local, state, and federal guidelines and laws. Our fundraising policies may be adjusted accordingly to fit those specifications.

Information Sharing

Atlas will make every attempt to limit content shared on the school's information channels including Dojo, text services, emails etc, to only pertinent school and Family Council announcements. Families or individuals requesting information to be shared should follow the protocol outlined in the flyer distribution and fundraising policies. We cannot share information on fundraisers for non-school groups or individuals, profit shares, or related content. Atlas may occasionally share personal accolades or achievements of students and staff on our internal and external channels.

Social Media Policy

At Atlas, we encourage public interactions on our social media pages, including comments and questions. Please note that user comments might be deleted and/or hidden if the content is:

- A duplicate post
- Off-subject or out of context with the original subject of the post
- Abusive, offensive, obscene, defamatory, or includes a personal attack or insults to an individual
- Spam or advertisements, including those with a hyperlink
- Contains sensitive information or anything that could reasonably compromise an individual or the public's safety
- Discriminates on the basis of race, religion, age, marital status, gender, ability, sexual orientation, gender identification, or other categories protected by federal, state, or local laws
- Promotes, endorses, or opposes political candidates, campaigns, or applicable ballot measures
- Violates a copyright or the intellectual property of another person or entity

Atlas is not responsible for the accuracy of information shared by other users of our social media platforms nor do we endorse the comments or opinions posted by users. We reserve the right not to share any information or events submitted to our accounts for promotional purposes. This policy is subject to modification at any time.

Parent Rights and Notifications

There are a number of federal and state statutes that require school districts to provide parents, guardians, and students with information pertaining to Atlas Public Schools' Board policies that affect them. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) legislation has significantly added to the list of required parental notifications.

The following policies are available in the school office for parent review at any time. These policies provide the guidelines for how such incidents at Atlas will be handled.

- Bullying
- Student Records
- Student Suspension/Expulsions
- Weapons & Dangerous Instruments
- Child Abuse
- Nondiscrimination

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

1. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
2. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
3. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Concerns/Complaints

Most concerns or issues can be handled through simple communication with those involved. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, it is appropriate to contact the Head of School about the concern or complaint. If the issue cannot be resolved with the Head of School, parents may contact the Executive Director. If the issue still cannot be resolved, parents may contact a member of the Board of Directors. A list of the Board of Directors and their contact information can be found at the end of the handbook. If the issue cannot be solved at the school level, parents of charter school students may contact Atlas Public School’s sponsor, the Missouri Charter Public School Commission (MCPSC). Contact information for MCPSC can be found at the end of the handbook.

Parent Concern Communication Protocol

When addressing problems, please follow this simple protocol:

Teacher » Head of School » Executive Director » Board of Directors » MCPSC

Non-Discrimination

Atlas Public Schools is committed to maintaining a workplace and educational environment that is free from discrimination and harassment in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, services, activities and facilities. In accordance with law, the school strictly prohibits discrimination and harassment against employees, students or others on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, age, veteran status, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law. Atlas Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer. Atlas’ Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy can be found [HERE](#).

Atlas Public Schools’ Chief of Staff serves as the Title IX/Compliance Coordinator and can be reached at genevieve.backer@atlaspublic.org.

Equal Education Opportunity

It is the policy of Atlas Public Schools to provide a free and appropriate education for students with a disability. Atlas’ programs and services available to meet the needs of these students will be in accordance with The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and 162.670 - .995 RSMo. In addition, the identification of students and the services provided by Atlas will be in accordance with the Missouri State Plan for Special Education, Regulations Implementing Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Special education and related service providers will provide direct services to students with IEPs, and ensure the professional development of all instructional and administrative staff. When appropriate, direct services will be provided within the classroom. Parents must sign a release to allow Atlas and its special education staff to evaluate a student for special education services.

Parents' Right To Know Guide Qualifications

Atlas is required to inform you of certain information that you, according to the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), have the right to know. Upon your request, Atlas is required to provide you in a timely manner, the following information:

- Whether your student's teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether your student's teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- Whether your student's teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

In addition to the information that parents may request, a school receiving Title I.A funds must provide to each individual parent:

- Information on the level of achievement and academic growth of your student, if applicable and available, on each of the State academic assessments required under Title I.A.
- Timely notice that your student has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who has not met applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

ESSA Complaint Procedures

This section explains how to file a complaint about any of the programs that are administered by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the Department) under the Every Students Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). Programs include Title I. A, B, C, D, Title II, Title III, Title IV.A, Title V.

1. What is a complaint?

For these purposes, a complaint is a written allegation that a local education agency (LEA) or the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the Department) has violated a federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under ESSA.

2. Who may file a complaint?

Any individual or organization may file a complaint.

3. How can a complaint be filed?

Complaints can be filed with the LEA or with the Department.

4. How will a complaint filed with the LEA be investigated?

Complaints filed with the LEA are to be investigated and attempted to be resolved according to the locally developed and adopted procedures.

5. What happens if a complaint is not resolved at the local level (LEA)?

A complaint not resolved at the local level may be appealed to the Department.

6. How can a complaint be filed with the Department?

A complaint filed with the Department must be a written, signed statement that includes: 1. A statement that a requirement that applies to an ESSA program has been violated by the LEA or the Department, and 2. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated.

7. How will a complaint filed with the Department be investigated?

The investigation and complaint resolution proceedings will be completed within a time limit of forty-five calendar days. That time limit can be extended by the agreement of all parties.

The following activities will occur in the investigation:

1. Record - A written record of the investigation will be kept.

2. Notification of LEA - The LEA will be notified of the complaint within five days of the complaint being filed.

3. Resolution at LEA - The LEA will then initiate its local complaint procedures in an effort to first resolve the complaint at the local level.

4. Report by LEA - Within thirty-five days of the complaint being filed, the LEA will submit a written summary of the LEA investigation and complaint resolution. This report is considered public record and may be made available to parents, teachers, and other members of the general public.

5. Verification - Within five days of receiving the written summary of a complaint resolution, the Department will verify the resolution of the complaint through an on-site visit, letter, or telephone call(s).

6. Appeal - The complainant or the LEA may appeal the decision of the Department to the U.S. Department of Education.

8. How are complaints related to equitable services to nonpublic school children handled differently?

In addition to the procedures listed in number 7 above, complaints related to equitable services will also be filed with the U.S. Department of Education, and they will receive all information related to the investigation and resolution of the complaint. Also, appeals to the United States Department of Education must be filed no longer than thirty days following the Department's resolution of the complaint (or its failure to resolve the complaint).

9. How will appeals to the Department be investigated?

The Department will initiate an investigation within ten days, which will be concluded within thirty days from the day of the appeal. This investigation may be continued beyond the thirty day limit at the discretion of the Department. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Department will communicate the decision and reasons for the decision to the complainant and the LEA. Recommendations and details of the decision are to be implemented within fifteen days of the decision being delivered to the LEA.

10. What happens if a complaint is not resolved at the state level (the Department)?

The complainant or the LEA may appeal the decision of the Department to the United States Department of Education.

LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Policy Development

Describe how the LEA involves parents in the joint development of the LEA parent and family engagement policy.

1. Parents and guardians shall be invited to the Atlas Family Council Meeting to review and revise the plan (via email and phone).
2. Parents and guardians shall be surveyed asking for input on the plan; parents can make responses via survey response or directly to the school through email.
3. Atlas will maintain a Family Council for the purpose of soliciting ongoing input that can be incorporated into the parent and family engagement policy.

Describe how the LEA seeks and obtains the agreement of parents with the parent and family engagement policy.

1. Families are informed and invited to attend the Atlas Family Council Meeting via email, phone calls, text messaging, and social media.
2. The Atlas Parent and Family Engagement Policy shall be included in the Family Handbook.
3. At the Summer Family Meet-and-Greet, prior to the first day of school, the policy and the Family Handbook shall be discussed; parents shall be asked to agree to participate in the outlined items.
4. Parents/guardians shall be asked to sign the Family Handbook Acknowledgement Document in the Family Handbook, agreeing to this policy as well as others.

Describe how the LEA distributes the LEA parent and family engagement policy to parents of participating children.

1. The Atlas Parent and Family Engagement Policy will be distributed in the Family Handbook.
2. Each parent/guardian will be given a copy of the Family Handbook at the beginning of the school year.
3. The Family Handbook will be available on Atlas' website.
4. Each family and child must sign a document stating that they have read and understand all of the policies located in the handbook.

Plan Development

Describe how the LEA involves parents and family members in jointly developing the local education agency plan.

1. Parents/guardians will be invited to the Atlas Parent and Family Engagement meeting to review and revise the plan (via email and text).
2. Parents will be surveyed asking for input on the plans; parents can make responses via survey responses or directly to the school through email.
3. Atlas will maintain a Family Council for the purpose of soliciting input that can be incorporated into the parent and family engagement policy.

Capacity Building

The LEA provides coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the LEA in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance, (which may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engagement parents and family members in education.

1. The Atlas team will be notified of planning meetings via email. Atlas will provide ongoing professional development to strengthen parent and family engagement efforts.
2. Atlas will seek to develop partnerships with area schools and organize family involvement with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background.
3. Atlas will provide materials and training to engage parents to work with children to support their academic achievement.
4. Atlas will develop appropriate roles for businesses, and community and faith based organizations within Atlas parent involvement activities. Atlas shall form partnerships that engage these organizations with staff and families and seek to improve Atlas' graduate aims.

Coordination & Integration

Describe how the LEA will coordinate and integrate family engagement strategies with these laws and/or programs.

1. Atlas will coordinate and integrate the Parent and Family Engagement Policy with the Title I.A. Schoolwide Plan by ensuring that parent input is included in the planning of both.
2. Atlas will solicit parental input in all district-wide Title I, II, and IV and Parent and Family Engagement to strengthen achievement efforts and in the educational decision-making process.
3. Services for students under Title I. A. will be coordinated through many school systems to ensure each student's best path to success by coordinating the many resources and supports available via Federal, State and local laws and programs:
 - a. Joint Planning Time
 - b. Shared Instructional Objectives
 - c. Data Team Meetings
 - d. Positive Support Team Meetings
 - e. Weekly PLC/ Peer Review
 - f. Shared Lesson Plans
 - g. Shared Data/Analysis
4. The school will remain in regular communication with families, providing ample opportunities for input and engagement.
5. Atlas will coordinate and integrate the Parent and Family Engagement Policy with Title II.A by providing staff training on effectively engaging parents in improving student outcomes.
6. Atlas will coordinate and integrate the Parent and Family Engagement Policy with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by ensuring that parents of students with disabilities and special needs are engaged in their student's success. Further, Atlas' will ensure that necessary accommodations will be made for anyone needing them in order to participate.
7. Atlas will coordinate and integrate the Parent and Family Engagement Policy with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act by ensuring that families and students have the resources needed to participate and engage fully in their child's education.
8. Atlas will distribute and share information about programs and services available to families through both electronic and paper methods (email, flyers, videos, etc.)

9. Atlas will distribute and share information with parents that will help support student learning and promote academic achievement.
10. Atlas will coordinate with a network of organizations to provide potential opportunities for parent and family engagement, beyond the walls of Atlas.
11. Atlas will provide Founding Family Events and Curriculum Nights for parents and students to assist in successful student transitions in school.
12. Atlas will coordinate with local organizations to strengthen communication and enhance potential opportunities for parent and family engagement, including providing information to assist in successful student transitions to middle school.
13. Atlas will provide appropriate opportunities for the participation of all parents/guardians, including guardians with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required until Title I law, section IIII, in an easy to read format and in a language that parents understand.

Annual Evaluation

The LEA conducts, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all schools served under this part. Describe annual evaluation.

1. Atlas will conduct semi-annual Satisfaction Surveys through Panorama that will help evaluate the effectiveness of the Parent and Engagement Policy. The survey will determine the effectiveness of the policy.
2. Atlas' Leadership Team will review the effectiveness of family activities related to core subjects.
3. We will assess the Parent and Engagement Policy's effectiveness through the following ways;
 - a. Family Surveys through Panorama
 - b. Progress monitoring through at-home learning and ongoing communication.
 - c. Student Attendance
 - d. Parent/guardian attendance at conferences
 - e. Family Council work
 - f. Family participation in social events
 - g. Parent/guardian advocacy for Student Support Services

Barriers to greater participation by parents of participating children (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background).

1. Atlas identifies barriers at Student Screenings (prior to the first day of school during Meet-and-Greet events), parent surveys, and conferences.
2. Atlas will identify barriers to greater participation by parents of participating children (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency, limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). Atlas will do this by evaluating the following data:
 - a. Surveys
 - b. Student attendance
 - c. Parent/guardian attendance at conferences
 - d. Family Council work
 - e. Family participation in social events

3. If identified as less engaged, the Director of Student Support services will be made with the family to discuss needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children. Resources and support will be discussed and shared in an attempt to improve parental engagement.
4. Small groups of less engaged families will also be attempted to be convened to discuss barriers to engagement and participation.

The needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers.

1. Atlas identifies the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers, at Student Screening prior to the first day of school, conferences, and surveys.
2. Atlas will identify the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers with an evaluation of the Family Survey.
3. The Leadership Team will meet monthly to discuss the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children and engagement with the school team.

Strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

1. Atlas will hold several opportunities for families to engage with the Atlas team such as Summer family events, Meet-and-Greets, and Back to School night.
2. Students will display their work quarterly in an exhibition style event and invite their families to attend.

The school will implement a policy to interact with students who are struggling academically or socially.

1. Teachers will make bi-weekly phone calls to parents who are struggling and create a call log of what topics were discussed with the families. Topics may include homework strategies, suggestions, and offering extra services to support their child.
2. The Atlas' Leadership Team will review the call logs and when needed, request meetings with the individual families to make sure the child's needs are being met.

The school-parent compact will

1. Describe the ways in which all parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning. Section 1116 (d)(1)
2. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment. Section 1116 (d)(1)

School + Family + Student Compact

Atlas' mission is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with authentic, real-world experiences, so all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond. By committing to The School + Parent + Student Compact and signing below, the Atlas team and families show that they are ready to work together to realize that mission.

Atlas Elementary and its staff will:

1. Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables participating children to meet the Missouri Learning Standards as follows and prepare them for middle school, high school, and beyond. Atlas will do this by:
 - Retaining appropriately certified school leaders and teachers
 - Teaching math "off-team" by certified math teachers
 - Supporting students by normalizing interventions in the most inclusive way possible by providing two educators in each classroom
 - Providing instruction, materials, and high-quality professional development that incorporates the latest research
 - Incorporating fun, hands-on learning experiences in Lab and other core content areas throughout the day
 - Maintaining a safe and positive school climate through Crew, explicit SEL lessons, and components of the Responsive Classroom Framework.

2. Provide a nurturing, safe, and joyful environment for every child by:
 - Treating each child as an individual, knowing that each child has unique strengths and areas of growth
 - Focusing on developing the whole child by not just providing academic support but also social-emotional learning opportunities
 - Living out our school values of kindness, respect, integrity, excellence, and stewardship
 - Welcoming, including, and respecting every student and parent, regardless of differences in race, color, gender, gender identity, ability, age, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic background

3. Provide families with frequent reports on their child's progress as follows:
 - At least bi-monthly updates from the classroom teacher,
 - Open and honest communication with child's progress, strengths, and areas for improvement throughout the school year as needed,
 - Trimesterly grade cards/reports sent home by the school,
 - In addressing behavioral concerns, the Atlas team will maintain the dignity of each student and try to discover the root of the issue; every instance is a teaching moment and we will leverage natural consequences as much as possible,
 - Parents/ guardians will be informed of the sequence of events that occur when misbehavior happens,
 - Hold parent-teacher conferences to discuss the child's progress and answer any questions the family may have.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

1. Ensure my child's attendance by:
 - Making sure they are in school every day possible,
 - Keeping my child home if they are sick,
 - Notifying the Office Manager if my child will be absent by 8:20 a.m.

2. Support my student's academic and social-emotional growth by:
 - Regularly reading Atlas communications, including emails and Class Dojo messages from my child's teachers and the Head of School,
 - Making sure my child comes to school organized, well-rested, and excited to learn every day,
 - Reinforcing at-home learning and areas to work on that are mutually agreed upon with my child's teacher,
 - Reading with my child at night and on weekends.

3. Ensure that my child and family comply with the procedures and policies outlined in the Atlas Family Handbook, including:
 - The Atlas Dress Code,
 - Drop-off and pick-up procedures,
 - Respectful and responsible behavior.
4. Communicate with Atlas by:
 - Contacting my child's teacher with any questions or concerns,
 - Responding to Atlas communication when necessary.
5. Join the Atlas community to the best of my ability through Atlas Family Council, parent surveys, family events, Parent + Teacher conferences, and volunteer opportunities.
6. Treat all individuals with kindness and respect regardless of race, color, gender, gender identity, age, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic background.

Student Responsibilities:

- As a student I will share the responsibility to improve my academic performance and to meet Atlas' graduate aims by;
- Attending school every day possible,
 - Being kind to everyone and treating others with respect even if they are different than me,
 - Trying my best and ask for help when I need it,
 - Reading every day outside of school time and completing my at-home learning,
 - Giving all notes and information from my school to my family.