



**ANSER Charter School**  
*An Expeditionary Learning Community*

---

Dear ANSER Families,

On behalf of the ANSER Board, Family Council and staff, we would like to welcome you to ANSER Charter School. ANSER Charter School offers a different kind of educational program for our students, one that emphasizes rigorous academics, adventure, strong character and service to others. The curriculum leads to students taking responsibility for their learning through inquiry based, in-depth projects. We are both delighted and honored that you chose our school to play a central role in your child's education. We're excited to get to know each and every one of you and hope you will find this community an inviting and inclusive one. There are numerous ways to get involved and we invite you to find your passion through multiple opportunities extended to our families.

From the beginning, ANSER has been committed to hiring highly qualified and effective instructional and administrative staff. They are extremely patient, hardworking, and committed to our students and families. Without these dedicated individuals we would not have the education program we desire for our children. Each year, they prove over and over again their commitment to children, families and their own professional learning.

Family involvement and community partnerships remain fundamental to our success. We are devoted to developing a culture that includes families and community members. We couldn't operate without the families and individuals who contribute many volunteer hours of direct support and service for teachers, students, and our Community Based Curriculum and Electives programs.

This school year we are happy to announce two tuition based programs. Our **ANSER Arts Program for Young Children** is in its second year and has proven quite successful and new this year is our **ANSER After School Program**. You may read about both of these programs in the handbook.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Gregg, Education Director/Principal/Principal

Heather Dennis, Organization Director

## **Daily Schedule**

Students may arrive at school no earlier than 7:45 am at which time an adult supervisor is on duty. Students need to dress for the weather as they will remain on the playground and not permitted in the building unless the weather is so severe it indicates otherwise.

**School Begins:** 7:55 am for JH Students  
8:15 am for K-6 Students

### **Morning Break:**

K & Early Childhood: 10:15-10:30 am  
Middle Childhood: 9:45 – 10:00 am  
Upper Childhood 10:00-10:15 am  
Junior High varies

### **Lunch:**

K (pm program only) 11:30-12:00-12:15 (lunch) 12:00-12:30 (break)  
Early Childhood 12:00-12:15 (lunch) 12:15-12:45 (break)  
Middle Childhood 11:35-11:40 (lunch) 11:40-12:20 (break)  
Upper Childhood 11:20-11:35 (lunch) 11:35-12:05 (break)  
Junior High 11:48-12:02 (lunch) 12:02-12:33 (break)

### **Afternoon Break:**

K & Early Childhood Varies-Crew Leader Duty (usually 2:00-2:15)  
(all other grade levels may schedule a break as needed) – Crew Leader Duty

### **School Dismissal:**

Kindergarten 11:30 am  
Anser Arts for Young Children 3:15 pm  
EC, MC, and UC 3:15 pm  
Junior High 2:55 (Some JH students may be dismissed early for after-school sports programs)

***All students need to be picked up by 3:30  
unless they are involved in the Anser After School Program (which runs from 3:30-5:30)***

## **Our Vision**

ANSER's vision is to educate the whole child in a collaborative learning community where individuals are inspired to achieve their academic potential, be self-motivated and feel a sense of connection and responsibility to the world.

## **Our Mission**

ANSER's mission is to foster learning that imagines a better world and works toward realizing it; set high academic standards; promote creativity, discovery, reflection and balance; embrace diversity; and use developmentally appropriate practices and real-world experiences to educate within a climate of collaboration, community, character, and compassion.

## **Introduction to ANSER Charter School**

### **Profile/History**

ANSER is a **PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL** whose shared philosophical vision encompasses the whole child approach to education and the building of community within each classroom and the school itself. ANSER's collaborative program considers students' academic, emotional, physical, and social needs in a cooperative and supportive environment.

The Independent School District of Boise city approved ANSER's petition for a charter on September 28, 1998. ANSER opened its doors to 112 students for the first time on September 7, 1999 in a former office building in downtown Boise. The school moved to a former athletic club, in December of the same year and housed 188 students K-8. September 2009, our eleventh year of operation, proved to be a very exciting time for us. We purchased a building at 202 E 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in Garden City, our current location, and have increased our enrollment to over 350 students, grades K-8 allowing more families to experience ANSER's unique approach to education.

Our name, **ANSER**, is Latin for goose. Geese are birds with extraordinary learning capacity, social skills, individuality, stamina, and physical health. The name was selected to reflect the sense of community encompassed by those who are a part of the school. Geese fly in formation and use thrust to fly farther and faster than they ever could by themselves. They rotate positions while flying to increase endurance; and their honking is encouragement to continue the community effort. Finally, geese will stay with an injured bird until it dies or recovers before joining another formation and continuing the journey. These characteristics of a supportive and collaborative community are embodied in the name ANSER.

### **Crews**

Crew is the term used to identify classes, staff, or any group working together on a project. The concept places the responsibility on everyone to function as part of the crew carrying their own weight in all endeavors. Reference to 'crew' will be found throughout the school culture. As an Expeditionary Learning School our motto is, "We are crew, not passengers."

## **School Governance**

The ANSER Board of Directors of the nonprofit corporation, ANSER of Idaho, Inc., is the legal entity responsible for all school operations. Meetings are open and scheduled every third Tuesday of the month. Crew ANSER, which comprises the contracted teaching and administrative staff, is responsible for the daily functions of the school. Family Council and its sub-committees are considered part of ANSER's governance structure to ensure parental involvement in school activities.

## **Lines of Communications**

The *Lines of Communication* functions with the ANSER Governance Structure to clarify the communication channels for various situations. ANSER's goal is to promote open lines of communication. It is understood that every individual may choose to take an issue to the party where they feel their needs will best be met. We will always be working to help communication flow smoothly.

If you are looking for information about an upcoming meeting, community activity, school performance, etc. check these sources:

- ANSER Weekly Flight Plan and Monthly Calendar
- School bulletin boards and notes home
- Classroom Newsletters
- The ANSER School Website ([www.ansercharterschool.org](http://www.ansercharterschool.org))
- School e-mails

**Office number: 426-9840**

**Places to share ideas and innovations:** If you have an idea for a classroom project, a thought about a Community Based Curriculum Module, or a possible grant opportunity, the ANSER community wants to know about it. If you are not sure where to direct your information, check with another parent, a Family Council member, a teacher, office personnel, or the Education Director/Principal and/or Organization Director.

**Concerns or issues that need addressing:** This could be about a school policy, a question about curriculum or a behavior issue. ANSER would like to deal with these issues in a timely and efficient manner. Communication is encouraged to take place between the concerned party and the classroom teachers, education/principal or business administrator.

## **ANSER Committees**

Committee work is how business is done at ANSER Charter School. There are numerous committees to involve our families either in their area/s of expertise or tapping into personal passions. We invite you to get involved in any of the following committees.

**Budget/Finance Committee** meets one time each month to review accounting procedures and monitor cash flow projections prior to presentation to the ANSER Board.

**Community Based Curriculum** committee works together to establish and implement ANSER's unique volunteer program. Parents volunteer on Wednesday afternoons. Involvement in this committee is very fulfilling as well as an opportunity to get your creative juices flowing!

**Family Council** meets on the first Wednesday of each month and provides parent input into school policies and development, conducts activities for parent education and school involvement and links families to activities and volunteer opportunities within the ANSER community. Additionally, Family Council provides an impartial voice to staff and the ANSER Board on issues or concerns parents bring to them. Family Council is a great vehicle to become involved in your child's school.

**Library** is provided for our students one time a week. This service is provided entirely by volunteers. Volunteers are responsible for the entire library operation.

The **Facilities** committee is a very important committee at the school. **Contact Organization Director**

**Nominating Committee** receives and recommends candidates to the ANSER Board.

## UNIQUE FEATURES OF ANSER CHARTER SCHOOL

### **Expeditionary Learning**

Learning is an expedition into the unknown. Expeditions draw together personal experience and intellectual growth to promote self-discovery and construct knowledge. Adults provide guidance for students along this journey modeling care, compassion, and respect for their diverse learning styles, backgrounds, and needs. Addressing individual differences profoundly increases the potential for learning and creativity for each student.

Given fundamental levels of health, safety, and love, all people can and want to learn. Expeditionary learning harnesses the natural passion to learn and is a powerful method for developing the curiosity, skills, knowledge, and courage needed to imagine a better world and work toward realizing it.

ANSER is one of just over one hundred Expeditionary Learning schools in the nation and in the spring of 2011 became one of 17 schools throughout the nation to be named an Expeditionary Learning Mentor School. A New American Schools design for comprehensive school improvement, Expeditionary Learning challenges students to meet rigorous academic and character standards and to provide service to others. Students learn to take responsibility for achieving their personal best. They participate in learning expeditions – purposeful, extensive studies of a single topic. Harnessing the power of adventure and discovery, expeditions lead students to become more motivated in their academic work while developing perseverance and self-discipline.

Expeditionary Learning is a specific learning approach. It is designed to challenge teachers to get students out into their communities to investigate real-life issues or problems, and in the process, develop solid academic and character skills. The underlying values and design principles of the Expeditionary Learning program are consistent with other areas of ANSER’s philosophy (e.g. multi-age and community). All honor key values that include: self-discovery, individual responsibility, teamwork, learning from failure, respect for the natural world, a competitive spirit with oneself, and the importance of serving others. If you would like to learn more about this important part of ANSER’s learning environment, you can explore Expeditionary Learning through the ANSER website at: [www.ansercharterschool.org](http://www.ansercharterschool.org).

### **Multiage Classroom Structure**

“...the practice of teaching children of different ages and ability levels together, without dividing them (or the curriculum) into steps labeled by grade designations (Guastad, 1992, p. 2). The multiage model is further characterized as one that favors an integrated curriculum, practices that are developmentally appropriate, and instruction that is individualized. Flexible groupings are a common strategy used within the model in order to accommodate differing levels of maturity and achievement (Mason & Stimson, 1996).

The multiage classroom might be compared to that of a family unit; one that lives and learns together over an extended period of time. In a multiage setting students stay with the same teacher for more than one year allowing time to foster trusting relationships with teachers and peers. Like a family, the multiage classroom is comprised of differing age groups who work and play together, as well as learn from and with one another. Both settings represent a multitude of abilities, gifts and talents, as well as different ways of coming to know something. In healthy settings, this diversity is recognized and celebrated with both groupings.

Multiage classroom structures (with the exception of Kindergarten) are utilized to enhance community. *Early Childhood* consists of first and second grade students; *Middle Childhood* consists of third and fourth graders; and, *Upper Childhood* is comprised of fifth and sixth grade students. The junior high program houses our seventh and eighth grade students. This configuration gives students more time with the same teacher, as well as fellow students, allowing for longer-term relationships so critical to the learning process.

## Assessment/Portfolios/Conferences

### Evaluating Student Progress

ANSER believes that all children can learn and achieve high standards as long as they have equal access to the curriculum. The student assessment process at ANSER facilitates the achievement of this goal by making explicit the criteria by which successful performance may be judged.

### The Work Sampling System

ANSER Charter School's project-centered, experiential and inquiry approach to learning requires a comprehensive way to monitor children's academic, social, emotional, and physical progress. Expeditionary Learning schools use the "Work Sampling System" to evaluate student progress.

The Work Sampling System at ANSER consists of the following interrelated elements:

- Student Portfolios
- Expedition Projects/Products (an integrated approach to curriculum that includes science, social studies, health and art)
- Student Work Samples
- Elements of Problem Solving Through Critical Thinking

In addition to the above criteria, ANSER Charter School uses embedded assessment practices (see below), standardized testing and public exhibition nights (no fewer than 1 per year) to evaluate student progress.

### ✓Portfolios

ANSER student portfolios contain a collection of work that:

- is valuable and accessible to multiple audiences;
- shows growth and best work;
- addresses the Idaho State Content Standards;
- represents the uniqueness of the individual student; and
- shows evidence of revision and reflection.

Students develop portfolios that document their learning in the areas of academic disciplines, character, service and adventure. Students must demonstrate in their portfolios that they have accomplished what the community believes important for a student to know and be able to do.

Teachers, students and their parent/s, or guardian/s use portfolios in curricular decisions as they compile, review, and reflect upon its content. Students and teachers also develop new learning strategies based on their joint assessment of the child's progress and interests. ANSER student portfolios serve several purposes: 1) provide teachers and students a medium for ongoing assessment, 2) demonstrate how far students have progressed toward meeting standards, and 3) document a student's history at ANSER.

### ✓ *Embedded Assessment Practices*

Specific classroom practices support portfolio-centered assessment:

- **Models and exemplars.** Students frequently study and discuss exemplars of quality work, from both professional and student sources as well as reflect on the elements of exemplary projects. From these discussions, students generate, along with their teacher's guidance, standards of excellence against which they measure their own work as well as the work of their peers.
- **Criteria and rubrics.** Criteria established during class discussions are combined with the Idaho State Achievement Standards to define high expectations for student work of all types. Rubrics or scoring guides developed by the teacher or the students make those expectations explicit for specific projects.
- **Expectations for reflection, revision and quality.** Each classroom nurtures a culture of reflection, revision and quality. This journey toward continuous improvement expects that students will work hard until they have achieved high quality work products, no matter how much time and effort this may require.

### ✓ *Standardized Testing*

As one means to monitor student progress, to comply with state regulations, and to compile data for broad-based comparison to other programs and schools, ANSER administers a range of standardized tests: the Idaho Standards Achievement Test in the spring (grades 3-8); the Idaho Reading Indicator at grades K-3 in fall, winter, and spring.

### ✓ *Report Cards*

Formal achievement reports are distributed three times per year for K-6 students and four times for grades 7 & 8. All students' reports include expectations that align with the Idaho State Content Standards as well as expectations ANSER Charter School has for each child to achieve at certain points in their educational career. These expectations include character expectations as well as an academic record of progress. Junior High students receive both graded expectations and traditional letter grades.

### ✓ *Public Exhibitions and Performances*

Presentations, demonstrations, performances, and exhibitions of final products culminate learning expeditions. Public displays of student work allow families, and members of the broader community, opportunities to review and assess student work as well as to provide valuable feedback to ANSER students and teachers for continued growth.

### ✓ *Expedition Projects*

Students participate in project-based investigations within each grade level's topic of study. The final product encompasses an array of disciplines and is evaluated using a scoring guide, or rubric, created by the students and teacher. The assessment is generated using exemplary model work samples.

## **Conferences**

Teachers hold Goal Setting conferences, usually in September, with students and parents (with the exception of Kindergarten being scheduled in December). Student-Led Parent Conferences are held in December for K-6 students and in January for junior high students and again the last month of school. Both the teacher and the parents may schedule a conference at any other time. As staff we encourage families to initiate a conference anytime throughout the year making this process very interactive. Our goal is to make sure families realize they have the right and the responsibility to set up a time to meet with their child's teacher each time they deem it is necessary.

## **Fieldwork**

Students collect data outside the school walls that move them to deeper levels of understanding in their area of study. Data is brought back into the classroom and analyzed and reflected upon. Field specialists are brought into the classroom to make connections to the curriculum.

## **Collaborative Teacher Accountability and Professional Growth**

In keeping with ANSER's commitment to continuous improvement and shared accountability for student growth, development, and achievement, ANSER Charter School looks to what crew leaders (teachers) believe to be important, know, and able to do. Our school culture values constant analysis, reflection, and refinement of instructional quality in order to create a powerful teaching and learning community.

The design of our Professional Growth and Accountability System recognizes the complexity of teaching to the whole child. We stress the significance of recognizing and honoring children's developmental milestones along with the academic and character growth of each individual student. We are committed to providing crew leaders with a comprehensive and focused accountability system; one that includes professional development, opportunities for continuous learning, and spans the instructional leader's entire career with ANSER.

The main goal of ANSER's accountability system is to ensure success for every child as we provide effective teaching and learning opportunities for our crew leaders.

## **Community Based Curriculum (CBC) and Junior High Electives**

The principles of Expeditionary Learning are furthered through the ANSER CBC Program and Junior High Electives. Activities extend beyond the classroom, and students serve, learn about, and connect with the community. The goals of the CBC Program seek to have . . .

- students exposed to an individual's role and responsibility as a member of a community.
- students gain a greater knowledge of their community and learn about the efforts of individuals and organizations that support their community
- students become empowered and contributing participants in their community.
- students take risks and accept challenges in new situations.
- enrichment sessions that are grounded in Expeditionary Learning Design Principles.
- students exposed to a wide variety of course offerings. New abilities and interests are then discovered.
- parents provide opportunities to share their interests and talents with the students, and participate in the learning experience of their child.

## **Sixth Grade Year of Service**

All sixth grade students are required to complete a yearlong service project they design and implement. Several past projects have included training a seeing-eye dog for the blind; raising \$1700 to send 1600 books to Kenya, Africa; helping at the Humane Society; working with the Boys and Girls Club and the Veteran's Home; making books and collecting stuffed animals for the children's wing at the hospital and making flower boxes for senior citizens.

## HOW WE TREAT ONE ANOTHER

- We work to continuously improve achievements of staff and students alike. We value, above all else, the nurturing of human dignity and growth. We recognize that we are the primary keepers of our school's vision and mission.
- In all our actions, we demonstrate that we are continuous learners, sometimes vulnerable, yet skilled in and committed to critical self-appraisal and improvement of individual and community performance.
- We behave, and expect our community to behave with integrity in our relationships with one another, students, parents, and the greater community.

### ANSER Charter School Community Understandings

#### Role of Administrator/s:

- *To be a positive and passionate spokespersons for ANSER and stay true to the school's vision and mission;*
- *insure an effective instructional program for all students;*
- *implement policies, rules, and regulations that facilitate a safe environment conducive to learning;*
- *to do our best in solving school-related problems and/or conflicts of students, staff, families, and community;*
- *ensure that the rights of students are protected;*
- *encourage and facilitate family communications with the school;*
- *implement, evaluate, and revise, when needed, the discipline management plan;*
- *serve as appropriate role models for students; and*
- *comply with school policies, rules, regulations, and directive.*

#### Role of Crew Leaders (teachers):

- *To be positive and passionate spokespersons for ANSER and true to the school's vision and mission;*
- *recognize and respect the rights of students;*
- *provide fair and equal opportunities for all students;*
- *maintain an orderly classroom;*
- *align curriculum planning, instruction, and assessment with standards deemed important by the state of Idaho and our school;*
- *follow through with discipline situations reasonably, fairly, patiently, and without provocation;*
- *communicate with families about their child's progress and any significant changes in achievement and/or behavior;*
- *participate in helping to identify and resolve school-related concerns;*
- *serve as positive role models for students; and comply with school policies, rules, regulations, and directives.*

### **Role of the Student:**

- *Take responsibility for learning (e.g. homework, projects, timelines, organization, cooperation);*
- *attend school on time and use class time in an effective and efficient manner;*
- *model behaviors that reflect safety, responsibility, compassion, respect, discipline, courage, and integrity;*
- *follow school and classroom expectations;*
- *speak directly to individuals involved if there is a concern/disagreement;*
- *actively participate in the life of the classroom, school activities, and community work.*

### **Role of the Family:**

- *Support child/teacher in attainment of student academic and character expectations;*
- *ensure child's regular and prompt daily attendance;*
- *attend Goal Setting Conferences during scheduled time frame; support child's follow through on goals at home;*
- *attend Student Led Conferences twice per year; compose a letter to your child after the first, speaking to strengths, challenges and ways in which you will provide support;*
- *write a letter to your child's teacher at the end of his/her grade level year providing feedback to the teacher;*
- *attend unscheduled conferences throughout the year when set up by individual teacher/s;*
- *initiate a conference with your child's teacher, or the Education Director when there is a concern;*
- *support your child in homework and project activities, helping to adhere to timelines;*
- *read Classroom Newsletters and Flight Plans and be responsive to its contents and requests; and*
- *volunteer as appropriate to your family needs to the school or crew, either at home, at school, or in the community.*

### **Parent Commitment**

Research indicates that parental involvement has a profound effect on student achievement and attitude. Parent/teacher/child partnerships are essential to ANSER's continued success, and participation can take many forms. An interdependent relationship between family, community and school is essential in helping every child reach his full potential. Family participation is one of the most vital components of ANSER's program. Given the great diversity existing among families, ANSER recognizes:

- 1) Volunteering is a choice that is internally motivated.
- 2) The best way to get families involved is to offer a wide variety of opportunities, which allow them to participate.

### **Attendance/Tardies**

Regular attendance is essential if the student is to **maximize** the educational opportunities at ANSER Charter School. Unnecessary absences and tardiness should be avoided. Expectations are for students to be in their classrooms on time each morning. *Attendance is also linked to state funding for all schools.* Parents/guardians are to notify the office (426-9840) if a student is absent or will arrive late at school.

- If the school has not been notified of an absence parents will be notified.
- Any student leaving school must first check out at the office.

- Students returning to school are to check into the office. A note signed by the parent/guardian or the presence of the parent/guardian is necessary to release the student from school.
- Parents/guardians need to contact the school if someone other than a parent will be picking up their child during the school day.
- In the case of lengthy absences, some assignments may be sent home in advance or obtained during the absence. However, most of the work will be held until the child's return to school. Appropriate time will be given to allow the child to complete the work.
- Students arriving after school start times will be considered tardy and will need to pick up a pass from the office to enter class. Crew Leaders will have any student arriving late go to the office for a pass.

### **Student Dress**

ANSER does not have a formal dress code. Our first responsibility is the education of our students. Clothing displaying inappropriate/offensive writing or graphics is unacceptable. Prohibited clothing includes the use of obscene, sexual, drug/alcohol/tobacco related messages. Low hanging pants, short-shorts, and spaghetti strapped tops are not allowed. **If the student's clothing is inappropriate for school activities or disruptive to the educational process, parent/s will be called to bring appropriate attire.**

Sneakers are recommended and are preferred footwear on days the student has physical education or fieldwork. Children should wear or have available comfortable clothing suitable for both our air-conditioned and heated building, and the outdoors. Because children will go outdoors for play everyday, except for inclement weather, they should arrive on days of cooler weather with coat, hat, gloves, and, if necessary, boots so they can fully participate in outdoor play.

### **Enrollment & Records**

Student records are confidential and will only be released to non-school personnel with parental consent. Parents are asked to give ANSER permission to obtain records from former schools upon enrollment.

### **Student Records**

As a result of federal legislation guaranteeing an individual's right to privacy, attention has been focused on school records and the content of those records. The following is a summary of the basic provisions contained in the laws and regulations, which the school is obliged to follow:

- 1) Parents of children under the age of 18 (including the non-custodial parent in the case of divorced parents) must be granted access to all official records maintained in any form by the school pertaining to their children. Students under the age of 18 (with Parental consent) shall also have access to their records. Students and parents who wish to review records shall contact the office and make an appointment.
- 2) The student's records or information contained in those records, shall not be released to anyone other than school or educational officials without the informed written consent of the student's parents.
- 3) The parent or student shall be provided an opportunity to challenge or rebut information contained in the student's records.
- 4) The school shall provide appropriately trained educational personnel to assist the parent or student in understanding the school records.

### **Confidential Records**

Student records are privileged and confidential and shall not be disclosed except under the following circumstances:

- 1) Threat of harm to self or others
- 2) Reported or suspected child abuse/neglect
- 3) Court order

### **Student's Personal Belongings**

Students are responsible for their personal belongings. The school is not responsible for theft of any student's personal belongings.

### **Care of School Property**

Students are responsible for the proper care of assigned materials and all books, supplies, and furniture supplied by the school. Students who deface property or equipment will be required to pay for damage done or replace the item and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students, parents, and staff have contributed many hours to the landscape of the school play area. All members of our community are expected to be stewards of this space.

### **Emergency Drills**

Emergency drills are required by law and constitute an important safety precaution. An evacuation plan is posted in each room. Students **will be apprised** of the plan and **are expected** to respond immediately to drills in an orderly fashion. Students not cooperating during an emergency drill may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Lunch/Snacks**

ANSER does provide a hot lunch program in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. Applications for free or reduced lunch can be obtained in the school office. Individual classrooms will coordinate snack times if it is a group snack. Students may bring their own snacks to eat during break times. ANSER is a peanut-free school. Any group snack should not contain peanuts.

### **Health and Safety**

ANSER does not have a nurse on staff. The first-aid care the school can provide is very limited. If a child is hurt or complains of illness, the teacher will send the child to the office. Simple cuts or bruises will be treated by applying a bandage or ice to the injury. We are unable to administer more serious medical treatment. The office will call the parent in the event of a more serious injury or illness. In the event of a injury deemed major, 911 will be contacted first, then the parent. The child will be kept in the office until the parent arrives to get the child. It is essential that the school have up-to-date contact information at all times for each parent. In the event of an emergency, the office will call an ambulance before calling the parents.

Emergency medical forms for each student are on file in the office to guide school officials in the event of an emergency. Parents should ask to review their child's medical forms if they have questions or need to make changes. Student's medical needs, including those that may arise on school grounds, must be covered by parent's insurance. Parents should notify the office if they do not have insurance for their child.

### **Medications**

No medications, including over-the-counter medications, should be sent to school with your child. All medications must be brought in by a parent or guardian and kept in the office. Medication cannot be administered without the parent or guardian's consent and a physician's written order. We strongly encourage short-term medications, such as antibiotics, to be taken by children at home if possible. If your child needs to receive medication at any time, please bring a written notice to the office.

### **Homework**

Homework is designed to reinforce the day's lesson or provide practice. Homework is assigned almost every night for most classes. Parents need to encourage and monitor their child's completion of homework. Children should be taught a routine for where and when to do their homework and how to pack up their backpack before school the next day. Parents should check that homework is completed and offer assistance when needed, but should not complete their child's homework. Homework assignments are designed to be developmentally appropriate for the student.

Situations may occur that homework cannot be completed on time. If the student cannot complete homework for any reason, the parent should write a note or contact the teacher explaining the situation. Children will not be punished for missed homework assignments, but they will be expected to make up or complete unfinished work. Communication regarding home and school is vital. If you have any questions about homework, or if your child is regularly having difficulty completing homework, please discuss it with your child's teacher.

### **Recess and Playground Expectations**

*Treat others as you would like them to treat you.*

Time on the playground at recess is meant to be fun for every student. Remembering that each of us is an important member of our community, every student has an important part to play in respecting all recess and playground behavior expectations. The goal for all students at ANSER Charter School is for everyone to play together fairly, and respectfully solve any differences. Adults and other students are also available at recess to help supervise and resolve difficulties.

#### **Every student needs to know, understand, and abide by the recess and playground expectations:**

- ✓ Eat snacks and lunch in the designated areas. Clean up after yourself.
- ✓ Walk in the hallways and in the building; run and play on the playground.
- ✓ Hold on to balls and other recess equipment until you get out to the play area.
- ✓ Throw balls on the field, not snowballs, rocks, bark, dirt or sticks.
- ✓ Speak kindly to one another and respect each other's needs.
- ✓ Stay within the designated playground area. If something goes over the fence, ask an adult to get it.
- ✓ Everyone is welcome to become involved in playground games.
- ✓ If you are not certain you are playing safely, ask yourself this question, "Will my play hurt me or others?" If you are still not sure, ask an adult.

- ✓ Play carefully with equipment and return to proper place when recess ends.
- ✓ Recess play stops when the whistle is blown; everyone helps clean up; everyone returns to class.
- ✓ The bathrooms are available during recess, but not as a play and gathering place.
- ✓ On bad weather days, children will have recess in the gymnasium
- ✓ Once students have been released for recess they are to stay on the playground unless they have permission to work in the classrooms.

### **Transportation**

ANSER Charter School does not provide transportation to school or to children's homes at this time. Parents are asked to sign a fieldwork permission form that permits their children to participate in fieldwork the entire year. Special events such as overnight adventures will require additional notification and acknowledgement from families.

### **Library**

ANSER received a \$15,000 grant in the 2001-02 school year from The Steele Reese Foundation. A library committee comprised of parents spent many hours getting this wonderful resource ready for our students. The library continues to be a parent run entity. Students formally visit the library one time per week. Check with your child's teacher to find out the day and time for your child's visits to the library.

### **Physical Education**

Students participate in physical education activities one time per week. ANSER staff also provides other activities at school regularly through classroom initiatives, fieldwork and adventure. One complete Community Based Curriculum module is dedicated to physical activity. Check with your child's teacher to find out the day and time for your child's PE time.

### **Foreign Language**

ANSER K-6 students receive Spanish one time per week; Jr. High students four time per week. Some students will take a Study Skills class rather than foreign language. Check with your child's teacher to find out the day and time your child's class is scheduled for Spanish.

### **Technology**

Application of technology is integrated with classroom curriculum as much as possible. Students learn technology standards by making connections to classroom projects. They are also taught basic technology skills. Student use of the Internet will be an important component of classroom research and learning. Staff supervises student Internet use and students will abide by Internet safety protocols. At the very least, failure to abide by the rules will result in the suspension of privileges for the student.

#### ➤ **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

Learning is enhanced through technology's endless possibilities. Students and teachers have opportunities to gather information, communicate with people all over the world, and create their own products. ANSER provides students and staff with technology services. These services include the use of computers, servers, other technology equipment, and the Internet.

Some sites on the Internet may contain offensive material. Even though it is impossible to have control over all of the information on the Internet, ANSER has in place several ways to prevent access to inappropriate materials and to provide for a positive, productive educational experience. Communications on the Internet are public in nature and files stored on the Internet should not be assumed to be private. ANSER

- Filters out most of the inappropriate material.
- Supervises and monitors students.
- Provides students with the understanding and skills needed to use technology in an appropriate manner.

The use of ANSER's technology is a privilege and not a right. Technology is designed to be used as a tool to assist with the instructional objectives of the school. Students and staff shall use technology efficiently to minimize interference with others.

➤ **Prohibited uses of the Technology include, but are not limited to:**

- Sending, receiving, displaying, or accessing defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, harassing, or illegal materials.
- Encouraging the use of or promoting the sale of controlled substances or drugs.
- Any attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the network, any technology equipment, or any of the agencies or other computer network services that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
- Any attempt to sell or offer for sale any goods or services that could be construed as a commercial enterprise, unless approved by the Board or their designee.
- Redistributing a copyrighted program or copyrighted material without the express written permission of the owner or authorized person or as provided by the fair use exception. This includes uploading and downloading of materials.
- Invading the privacy of individuals, revealing personal information of others or themselves, such as home address, or phone number.
- Logging in to the system using another user's account or password.
- Leaving an account open or unattended.
- Violating any local, state, or federal regulation or statute.
- Altering computer equipment as set up by the system administrator.

*ANSER reserves the right to monitor all activity on the Internet.*

*ANSER reserves the right to block any material on the Internet.*

*ANSER reserves the right to deny access to technology to any individual.*

Security on the network is a high priority. The Administrator or designee has established procedures that will maximize system security. No warranties are made or given with respect to any service, any information, or any software contained within the Internet. Opinions, advice, services and all other information expressed by students, staff, information providers, service providers, or other third party personnel on the Internet provided by ANSER are those of the individual and do not represent the position of ANSER. Accounts which are inactive for more than 30 days may be removed by ANSER along with the user's files without prior notice. ANSER staff is responsible for supervising student use of technology.

Student discipline for violation of any part of these rules and procedures shall be based on the student's age and the severity of the infraction. Student discipline may involve actions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. Discipline of staff may involve actions up to and including termination. Perpetrators or their parents/guardians may be billed for damages to equipment. Illegal activities will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

### **Special Education**

ANSER Charter School is a public school. Two certified special education instructors are employed by ANSER as well as several full and part-time paraprofessionals. All students' needs must be addressed under the same guidelines and laws as any public school. Federal and state statutes identify the Boise Independent School District as the Local Education Area (LEA) responsible for serving students with special needs. ANSER, as part of the LEA, shares responsibility with the district for special education. Therefore, procedures for identifying and serving students with needs will be coordinated with the Boise School District. Any evaluations or services offered to students must have parental consent. The ANSER Board has adopted the State Department of Education's manual for Special Education. This manual is available for review in the school office. ANSER does have speech and language and occupational therapy services on site. These services are provided by the Boise School District.

### **Gifted and Talented Program**

ANSER works with the district in identifying students who may qualify for the Gifted and Talented Program. ANSER does not offer a formal program but does provide many of the structures found in a gifted and talented classroom.

### **Tuition Based Programs**

ANSER offers two tuition based programs.

The **ANSER Arts for Young Children** is a program for children who attend Kindergarten in the morning sessions either at Anser or another school and any child who turns five before December of that year. Children who are not five before September 3 may not enter the program until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The program focuses on the visual and performing arts on a daily basis as well as visiting artist in areas such as dance, pottery, storytelling, etc. one time per week. If this program interests your family, please contact the CBC Director.

**ANSERS After School Program** offers families an art and movement program from 3:30-5:30 for their children. The program is also available a week before school begins, three days of Thanksgiving Break, one week of Winter Break, Spring Break and any day that does not include a holiday that ANSER students are not in school. Please refer to the school calendar for these days. Families must sign up a month in advance and choose the week, weeks, or entire month/s they would like their child/ren enrolled. If this program interests your family, please contact the After School Program Coordinator.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION & DISCIPLINE

### Student Discipline

The objectives of disciplining any student must be to help the student develop a positive attitude toward self-discipline and socially acceptable behavior. ANSER intends for students to grow toward self-discipline, to accept responsibility, and to learn to appreciate the rights of others.

All school employees and volunteers are expected to share the responsibility of supervising the behavior of students and for seeing that they abide by the established rules of conduct. Where student conduct is not covered by policy, adults are expected to exercise reasonable, professional judgment

Students are immersed in learning about, and expected to practice, strong **character**. The following traits are ones adults at ANSER model in order to help students grow and interact with personal responsibility for their behavior and learning.

Responsibility	Integrity	Courage	Compassion	Discipline	Respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*On time</li> <li>*Completes individual and group tasks</li> <li>*Pitches in without measuring contribution against that of others</li> <li>*Respects space and belongings of him/herself and others</li> <li>*Is where s/he is supposed to be</li> <li>*Takes care of environment</li> <li>*Conscientious in everyday affairs, and in tasks with which s/he is personally entrusted</li> <li>*Completes individual and group tasks</li> <li>*Accepts consequences for actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Listens to others</li> <li>*Consistent in action-lives by convictions, not circumstances</li> <li>*Respects the learning environment</li> <li>*Does not talk while others are talking</li> <li>*Good audience member</li> <li>*Does the right thing whether supervised or not</li> <li>*Honest and trustworthy</li> <li>*Supports everyone's efforts</li> <li>*Completes own work</li> <li>*Refrains from talking when others are talking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Tries something new.</li> <li>*Lives by convictions, not by circumstances</li> <li>*Shares a personal challenge with a group</li> <li>*Works toward personal best</li> <li>*Takes risks but does not endanger self and others</li> <li>*Follows what s/he believes to be the right course even when things are tough</li> <li>*Deals with the unexpected</li> <li>*Tries different approaches and solutions, before giving up</li> <li>*Stands up for beliefs</li> <li>*Accepts constructive criticism as well as praise</li> <li>*Is honest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Listens to and speaks kindly to others</li> <li>*Calls people by name.</li> <li>*Uses good manners</li> <li>Helps others</li> <li>*Does not talk while others are talking</li> <li>*Includes those who are different</li> <li>Wants to make a positive influence</li> <li>*Is respectful and appreciates own and other's the struggles, achievements, feelings, points of view, safety, and property of others</li> <li>*Appreciates own and other's ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural ways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Completes work</li> <li>*Cleans up</li> <li>*Is on time</li> <li>*Maintains a healthy diet</li> <li>*Exercises regularly</li> <li>*Maintains an organizational plan</li> <li>*Works at an appropriate rate for the task</li> <li>*Maintains safety</li> <li>*Does best work</li> <li>*Revises work often</li> <li>*Balances work and play</li> <li>*Plans ahead</li> <li>*Attends to detail</li> <li>*Adapts to change</li> <li>*Meets deadlines</li> <li>*Keeps at a task, even if it's hard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Responds sensitively to the ideas and needs of others without dismissing or degrading them</li> <li>*Differences are celebrated</li> <li>*Able to accept praise and constructive suggestions</li> <li>*Affirms individual freedoms while honoring the rights of the group</li> </ul>

## Developing Positive Behavior in the ANSER Community and Curriculum

Teaching and modeling positive behaviors are the primary approaches to discipline at ANSER. As a result, children seldom engage in serious, negative behavior. One unique aspect of ANSER is that the entire school has adopted and promotes a particular culture of values. In turn this provides the foundation for individual classrooms to develop their own set of behavioral expectations. This self-governing model teaches the EL Design Principles (beliefs) and ANSER Character Traits on a consistent basis through countless interactions between children, children and teachers, and other adults.

As we all know, conflicts arise within any community. Conflict resolution is an area of the school environment that is crucial to the on-going positive nature of our program. We have spent considerable time and energy on synchronizing our values and methods for handling conflicts. As a general rule, children and adult members of our community attempt to use conflicts to teach new and/or better behaviors through a belief that restitution (making things right) is a way to help all students get to the next level of “doing the right thing.”

Aggressive or disruptive behavior may happen for a variety of reasons and in a variety of school settings. In line with our educational philosophy, these behaviors are handled in a variety of ways that integrate the needs of the child or children and teach and model the desired outcome. Whenever possible, those involved are invited to actively participate in ways to make the situation right and learn from their actions. Our goals are to protect each person's rights, and to help each person learn to make wise choices, caring for themselves and others.

The proactive strategies used in classrooms and throughout the school to achieve these goals are as follows.

- 1) **Crew Meetings** are utilized as a forum for discussing and problem-solving specific issues. Here, both children and teachers teach, practice and model appropriate ways of resolving conflict.
- 2) **Behavior is viewed within the context of the student's life at school**, in a particular classroom's expectations, and ANSER's collaborative, respectful methods. Throughout the year/s teachers and staff are called upon to get to know and understand the children at ANSER. Personal knowledge about the child's, or family's, “story” can be respectfully useful in working with the children.
- 3) **Violent or hurtful behavior will be stopped immediately**, intervening verbally if possible, physically if necessary. Physically intervening might include temporarily isolating children, restraining violent acts by holding a hand, or placing one's self between angry children. Children must never be treated roughly or violently by adults-physically or verbally.
- 4) Be certain that any “**injured**” **person's rights and needs** are addressed and reinforced as soon as possible. This not only informs the offending child that they have interfered with another child's rights but also begins to make the environment safe again for the “injured” child.
- 5) Encourage students involved to **resolve the conflict** by including the following:
  - i. clearly state the problem
  - ii. generate options for correcting the problem
  - iii. select the solution
  - iv. follow up to be sure that the solution is working
- 6) **Go to another staff member** when a student's behavior is beyond the resources of staff or parents involved.
- 7) Repeated, irresolvable conflict means something's wrong and it's our job to **find out** what it is. It may be a mismatch of child to school or classroom or task: it may be family problems; it may be physical illness; etc. As a collaborative, respectful program, the staff and parents of ANSER are responsible for seeking advice from one another and, in some cases, outside resources (e.g., nurse, counselor, etc.). This information is always gathered in a caring and confidential manner.

Policies and procedures for handling student discipline issues with all students are designed to achieve these goals.

## **When Discipline Crosses Boundaries and Becomes a Major Offense**

All students have the right to learn in an atmosphere that is safe, conducive to learning, and free from disruptions. The school shall enforce provisions of the code of conduct and discipline so that students demonstrating major disciplinary behaviors and their parents understand that such behavior shall not be tolerated and shall be dealt with according to the code and requirements of law.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity and development, acting with due regard for teachers and others acting in a supervisory role, the educational purposes underlying all school activities, the widely shared use of school property, and the rights and welfare of other students. Conduct which disrupts or threatens to disrupt the operation of the school, which interferes in any way with the public or private rights of other students or citizens, which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person, or which damages property will not be tolerated and will result in immediate disciplinary action and consequences.

Students are entitled to the proper recognition and preservation of their constitutional rights, and allowance for such rights, including freedom of expression, personal appearance, and the right to petition, personal property, due process, and involvement in school and community affairs. These rights are not unlimited, and must be balanced against the rights of others and the overarching purposes of the school.

## **Attendance Policy**

To fulfill ANSER's goal of educating the whole child in a collaborative learning environment, regular and punctual attendance is vital. Students must be present in order to maximize their experiences and success, as well as the successes of their classmates. Punctuality and attendance are important skills designed to prepare students for the workplace. Further, because ANSER's funding is dependent upon student attendance, frequent absences can damage the school's fiscal stability.

***Attendance Requirements:*** Students may not have more than nine (9) absences per semester, or the number of absences permitted by the Boise School District, whichever is fewer. For purposes of this policy, semester dates will be established in the ANSER annual school calendar. Absence from class for any reason, including family convenience, shall be counted in this total. If a student misses more than nine school days during a semester, the Education Director/Principal/principal may deny promotion for the student or drop him/her from ANSER's enrollment. This is in accordance with ANSER's Attendance Policy.

***Excused Absences:*** Absences from school with the knowledge and approval of a student's parents/guardian are excused absences, but such absences are counted toward the maximum allowed per semester. In order for an absence to be excused, oral or written communication from the student's parents/guardian must be received within 48 hours of the last day of the absence.

***Notification of Absences:*** Parents/guardians will be notified of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> absences during a semester. Notice of the 6<sup>th</sup> absence may include an invitation for the parents/guardian to meet with the Education Director/Principal/Principal to discuss ways to address the student's attendance problem. Notice of the 10<sup>th</sup> absence may inform the parent/guardian of the denial of promotion or loss of enrollment at ANSER and will outline the appeals process. The Education Director may deny promotion to the next grade, drop the student from ANSER enrollment, or develop an attendance contract with the parents/guardian.

***Grounds for Appeal:*** Students, parents, and/or guardians who believe that all, or part of the absences, are the result of extraordinary circumstances may appeal the Education Director's decision. Extraordinary circumstances may include, but are not limited to, verified illness or medical treatment, death in the family or death of close friends, and medical or dental professional appointments.

**Attendance Appeal Process:** If a parent/guardian wishes to appeal the decision of the Education Director in regard to a student’s attendance, the following policy applies:

1. The parent/guardian has five (5) school days from the date shown on the notification to appeal the denial of promotion or removal from ANSER’s enrollment.
2. The appeal process begins with the Education Director. If the Education Director denies the appeal, the parent/guardian may appeal to the ANSER Board. The decision of the ANSER Board is final.
3. In each step of the appeals process, the Education Director, ANSER Board, and the parent/guardian have five (5) schools days in which to respond to the appeal or the decision. All appeals and responses shall be in writing.

**Re-enrollment:** Any student who is dropped from ANSER’s enrollment because of excessive absences may re-enroll for the next school year; however, he/she will be required to undergo the same initial enrollment procedure as any other potential student, in accordance with ANSER’s adopted enrollment policy.

### **DROP-OFF/PICK-UP PROCEDURES at ANSER Charter School**

Below you will find the procedures for ANSER pick up and drop off of students. Please be aware that our primary concern is for the safety of our students. The practices we have implemented are meant to reduce the contact between students and cars, as well as decrease emissions, and wait times. We ask that you follow these procedures to help us insure the safety of our students. If you have any questions about the procedures please contact the main office.

#### **Drop off and pick up along the playground fence line**

Vehicles enter through North Entrance. **No left turns from 42<sup>nd</sup> St. into the drop off line are allowed.** Those wishing to load/unload students should move as far forward into the “Drop-off/Pick –up lane as possible. **Students should exit only from the right side of their vehicle** and use the pedestrian walkway to travel to the playground. After loading/unloading drivers may pull out of the “Drop-off/Pick-up” lane, proceed forward and exit the property at the South exit. No cars may be left unattended in the Drop-off/Pick up” lane.

Parents may also choose to park in the parking spaces adjacent to the Drop-off/Pick up lane and walk in with their students. Please use the **sidewalk** after exiting your car, and walk to the South exit, where you may cross the exit lane and walk behind the red painted curbing to proceed to the playground.

#### **Courtesy reminders:**

- Please do not park for more than **2-3 minutes** in the Drop-off/Pick-up lane. This will impede traffic. If you remain longer, a staff person may ask you to leave the pickup line.
- If you plan to use the Drop-off/Pick up Lane, please instruct your students to wait for you on the blacktop area, so that you do not delay other families.
- Please do not allow your students to walk through the traffic lanes to get to the sidewalk or crosswalk.

### **Drop off ONLY at the Front Entrance**

*Please note that the traffic lane that leads behind the school to the playground has been permanently closed.*

If you plan to drop off in the morning at the front entrance you will need to **park your car and walk in with your student**. No children may enter the building un-accompanied by an adult before 8:10am. Please note that you will not be able to pull around the back of the building to exit the parking lot.

There is no afternoon pick up from the front of the building. **Please do not ask your students to wait for you in the front parking lot as this creates a hazardous situation for drivers.**

### **Street Parking and Crosswalk**

Please be aware that a new crosswalk is being installed, directly south of the exit to the drop off/ pick up lane. An ANSER crossing guard will be on duty from 7:40 am-8:15am and from 2:55pm-3:35pm. We ask that you please cross 42<sup>nd</sup> st only at the cross walk. This will increase safety and teach our students safe habits.

### **CBC/Electives Drop off**

Please drop students off along the playground fence line, using the procedures listed above. Please direct CBC students to enter the building through the gym door. Electives students may enter through the JH doors. No drop off of CBC/Electives students at the main entrance unless an adult parks their vehicle and escorts their students into the building.

- During **inclement weather** students will be allowed to come into the building and go directly to the mezzanine area where they may play quiet board games, visit, or read.

Special circumstances occasionally require that children be dropped off prior to 7:45a.m. **Arrangements need to be made with the office**. Children should then be dropped off at the office door. Children will be expected to go directly to the library and visit quietly or read until the playground volunteer arrives at 7:45. At this time they will go directly to the playground.