

Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School K-8 Recess Guidelines

The benefits of recess for children have been widely reported. Recess improves students' physical, mental and emotional health and enhances their learning opportunities. According to the Journal of Pediatrics, the 2009 study "School Recess and Group Behavior" found that daily recess of at least 15 minutes improved students' classroom behavior. A 2009 paper published by the Alliance for Childhood, cites nine major studies, which identify play as a crucial factor in young children's social-emotional development.

ANCS recognizes the importance of these benefits of recess and considers it an essential part of its school day. There are, however, times when, within appropriate guidelines (not whole class, not whole time), it is within a teacher's or staff member's discretion to restrict a student's recess privileges.

At ANCS, *recess* is defined as a scheduled time during the school day which provides students the opportunity to take a break from their class work, engage in social play with their peers, and participate in unstructured and/or guided activities under the supervision of school faculty members.

Under certain circumstances, in the professional judgement of a faculty or staff member, it may be appropriate for a student to be kept from recess as a part of a disciplinary consequence. Specific examples of behavioral incidents which could result in recess restriction (social play) include, but are not limited to:

- Attempting to or threatening to cause physical harm to another
- Fighting
- Engaging in, or attempting to engage in a verbal altercation
- Disrespectful conduct towards staff member or classmate
- Use of profanity
- Unsafe behavior during recess (rough play, throwing objects such as stones or sticks, and deliberate acts which could harm others)
- Consistent disruptions during instructional time; intentional off-task behavior which resulted in a significant amount of loss instructional time

Please note that some actions listed above may be coupled with additional consequences (classroom or dean of students/principal referral) along with a recess restriction as determined by a teacher and school administrators.

There may be isolated instances which warrant a teacher to keep a student from a portion of recess for academic assistance. Whenever possible, other venues for academic assistance will be sought to avoid keeping a student from recess.

It is the expectation that all teachers maintain open lines of communication regarding students' academic and behavioral performance. Therefore, if a student is kept from recess for any amount of time on more than one occasion, the parent will be notified regarding the matter by the teacher or advisor.

Physical Activity during a Recess Restriction for Behavioral Incidents

Efforts will be made to encourage a student who has had a recess restriction for behavior infraction to be permitted an alternative physical movement opportunity (walking or running laps, jumping jacks, jump rope, etc.).