

What is an honor code?

An honor code is a way of life. Is it a pledge, contract or agreement that each student within the school commits to, by taking responsibility for his/her behavior. By agreeing to abide by certain guidelines students have the good of the learning community in mind. The Honor Code is created by students, governed by students and is for all students to respect and abide by. The Honor Code is based on the simple idea that, when given the chance, people will do the right thing. Traditionally, the Honor Code is implemented in many universities across the United States.

Why would students spearhead such an initiative at ACS Athens; K-12 educational institution?

Because, as they see it, in light of the current chaotic world events that they must live with, ***students are interested in creating a microcosmic model of ethical behavior.*** ACS students would like to influence one another to do the right thing, and ultimately to influence others toward the same direction. This implies that each person takes responsibility for their behavior and acts according to an internal value system rather than an external reward/punishment system.

How will the process of developing an Honor Code work?

Currently, a group of ACS Academy students are spearheading focus group discussions with all students in the Academy. Faculty and counselors serve as advisors and guides but do not intervene directly in the process. The first step is for students to discuss the meaning of an Honor Code and agree on a set of standards/values that everyone at ACS Athens would like to live by. They are answering questions such as: what would an ideal school look like and what would the principles and values of such a school be? What kind of person would I like to be and what kind of life would I like to live? Why do we want to implement an Honor Code at ACS? What would the cafeteria, library, campus look like if we each took responsibility for our behavior? What would I do if I witnessed the person next to me cheating/stealing/ bullying etc.? How would an Honor Code help in such situations?

Following steps...

Once students come to a common understanding of what and how to implement an Honor Code, the committee of students initiating the groups will write up the Honor Code for the school. Middle school and Elementary school will eventually be incorporated into the process.