



**Middle School  
Student and Family Handbook**

**2009-2010**

*The entirety of this handbook has been approved by the Board  
of Trustees of Innovation Academy Charter School, summer  
2009*

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September 1, 2009

Dear Innovation Family,

Welcome back to the Innovation Academy Charter School. With a new year, come some new policies and a few changes to past policies to better meet the needs of our school community.

Please read over *Innovation Academy Charter School Student and Family Handbook* and sign the *Middle School Student and Family Covenant* form signifying that you have read, agree to abide by, and support the policies within. This form needs to be returned to the school no later than Monday, September 21, 2009.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kathleen J. Seward, Middle School Principal, 7/8 or Erin Attfield Quinlan, Middle School Principal, 5/6.

Best,

Kathleen J. Seward  
*Middle School Principal, 7/8*

Erin Attfield Quinlan  
*Middle School Principal, 5/6*



### **Middle School Student and Family Covenant**

*All families are asked to sign a family covenant at the beginning of the school year signifying their support for school policies, including the Student and Family Handbook. This year's family covenant reads as follows:*

*"I understand that all members of the school community must behave in a way that supports the essence, values, mission and character of the school. Thus, while a parent/guardian of a child enrolled at the Innovation Academy Charter School (IACS):*

- 1) I will abide by school rules and policies and will support the mission of Innovation Academy Charter School through actions such as encouraging inclusion and embracing diversity.*
- 2) I will actively communicate with other members of the school community openly, directly, promptly and constructively without resorting to gossip and rumor.*
- 3) I will model appropriate ethical behavior for my children and others and will exemplify integrity, inclusion, compassion and respect for all.*
- 4) I will ensure that our family supports the Work Completion Center policy.*
- 5) I will fulfill my volunteer obligations and will be an active participant in educational opportunities for parents for a minimum total of 25 hours throughout the school year.*
- 6) I will commit to reading and responding to oral and written communication from the school, including school publications such as the Connection and Student and Family Handbook as well as the school website and X2 database.*

*I understand that my signature below indicates that I will adhere to the items listed in this covenant and in the Family Handbook for the duration of this school year.*

*I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to abide by the policies in this handbook and recognize my responsibility as a parent/guardian of a student in this school to support and follow the guidelines in this handbook and Parent/Guardian covenant.*

Parent/Guardian, please sign your name here:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Additionally, I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to abide by the policies in this handbook and recognize my responsibility as a student in this school to support and follow the guidelines in this handbook.*

Student, please sign your name here: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Table of Contents

I.	Contact Channels for Questions or Concerns	7
II.	Academic Program	
	a. Mission Statement	11
	b. Social Outcomes	12
	c. Curriculum	13
	d. School to Home Partnership	14
	e. Grading	14
	f. Assessment/Interim Reports	15
	g. Awards and Distinctions	16
	h. Homework	16
	i. Work Completion Center	16
	j. Extra Help	17
	k. Late Work Policy	17
	l. Academic Probation 7/8	18
	m. Academic Probation 5/6	18
	n. Planners	18
	o. Field Trips	18
	p. Presentations of Student Work	19
	q. Promotion, Non-Promotion and Contingent Promotion	20
	r. Sexuality Education:Parental Notification	21
	s. The Reading Log	21
III.	Student Codes of Conduct & student Life	
	a. Middle School Codes of Conduct	22
	b. Classroom Expectations for Students	22
	c. Code of Conduct – Violation of General Expectations	24
	d. Code of Conduct & Severe Misconduct	24
	e. Code of Conduct – Education Reform Act Of 1993/Dangerous Weapons Policy	25
	f. Code of Conduct & the Drug Free School Policy	26
	g. Code of Conduct and Students with Special Needs	27
	h. Code of Conduct and the Policy on Cheating and Academic Integrity	27

i. Code of Conduct and Dress Code	28
j. Special Dress	29
k. Dress Code Violations	29
l. Code of Conduct and Truancy	29
m. Code of Conduct and Expulsion	29
n. Code of Conduct and Office Visits	30
o. Code of Conduct – Suspension Appeal Process	31
p. Code of Conduct and Search & Seizure	33
q. After School Social Events & Attendance at Events	34
r. All School Meetings	34
s. Lunch & Recess	35
t. Petitions and Surveys Circulated by Students	35
u. Student Visitation Policy	35

#### IV. Policies, Safeguards and Family Information

a. Civil Rights and Non Discrimination	36
b. Access to Board	37
c. Attendance	37
d. Class Changes/Requests	39
e. Community Association of IACS	39
f. CORI	40
g. Copy Requests for Make Up Work and Cumulative Files	40
h. Enrollment Policy and Requirements	41
i. Emergency School Closings	42
j. High School Transition	42
k. Information Dissemination Policy for Families with LEP and Policy on Translation	42
l. Medication	42
m. Pick Up Policy	43
n. Necessary Student Restraint Policy	43
o. School Day Schedule	43
p. Student Services	44
q. Adult Visitation Policy	44
r. Wellness Policy	45

#### V. Technology

a. Acceptable Use Policy	47
b. Internet	47
c. The School Network	47

## **Contact Channels for Questions or Concerns**

### **(Who should I call?)**

In order to ensure that issues or concerns are dealt with in a direct and expeditious fashion, parents and students should adhere to the following guidelines when expressing concerns and asking questions. All teachers and staff have email and voicemail and will do their best to get back to you as soon as possible.

#### *Student Academic Questions, Comments or Concerns*

1<sup>st</sup> Contact: Teacher of the subject in question

2<sup>nd</sup> Contact: Erin Attfield Quinlan – Middle School Principal for 5/6 or Kathleen Seward - Middle School Principal for 7/8

#### *Student Behavior Questions, Comments or Concerns*

1<sup>st</sup> Contact: Teacher or staff member who initially contacted you about the behavior

2<sup>nd</sup> Contact: Erin Attfield Quinlan – Middle School Principal for 5/6 or Kathleen Seward - Middle School Principal for 7/8

#### *General Questions, Comments or Concerns Regarding School Policy*

1<sup>st</sup> Contact: Erin Attfield Quinlan – Middle School Principal for 5/6 or Kathleen Seward - Middle School Principal for 7/8

#### *Questions, Comments or Concerns Regarding School Mission or Philosophy*

1<sup>st</sup> Contact: Erin Attfield Quinlan – Middle School Principal for 5/6 or Kathleen Seward - Middle School Principal for 7/8

#### *Questions regarding Special Education/Student Services*

For students currently receiving services:

1<sup>st</sup> contact: Student Services Teacher

2<sup>nd</sup> contact: Aimee Voleti, Student Services Director

For students who currently do not receive services:

1<sup>st</sup> contact: Aimee Voleti, Student Services Director

#### *Questions Regarding School Governance (Board of Trustees)*

Contact: Walter Landberg, Executive Director who will share questions, comments or concerns with the Board Chairman.

## II. Academic Program

### Mission Statement

To provide students with a challenging, interdisciplinary education that will prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century through an emphasis on holistic learning, higher order and critical thinking skills, and practical application and integration of curriculum areas.

### Core Values

- Students should be challenged to approach their maximum potential as social and intellectual individuals.
- Comprehensive learning is best achieved through hands-on participatory instruction.
- Education must constantly adapt to an ever-changing world.
- Education should produce enthusiastic, life-long learners.
- Effective administration of education must include continual reassessment of curriculum, teaching methods and student and teacher performance.
- Critical thinking, problem solving and examination of problems through systems analysis are the basic foundations of learning which will carry students into the future.
- Community and parental involvement are essential to student success.
- Anything worth doing is worth doing well.
- Social and emotional developments in middle school are as important as academic development.

*The Motto: Think. Connect. Apply. Innovate.*

Our students are challenged to think critically and creatively through a project based, interdisciplinary curriculum. Students learn how to effectively approach their work both individually and in teams. We ask students to actively engage in ideas and examine topics through multiple perspectives.

Our students learn to recognize the connections between academic disciplines and applications to the outside world. Skills and concepts are not taught in isolation; students and staff collaborate to form a highly connected community of learners. We hold a belief that increased connection and collaboration in our school fosters a richer learning experience.

Our students are required to put their knowledge and skills into context through authentic project assignments. Additionally, they are expected to create and present their work publicly via oral presentations as well as portfolio presentations.

An innovator is someone who improves and who sees possibilities and solutions when others do not. Innovation Academy Charter School works to foster a climate where students develop the skills and passion for learning that will make a difference.

## **Social Outcomes**

In alignment with the school charter, the Innovation Academy Charter School staff members assess students based on a set of social outcomes. While we believe that academic achievement is of greatest importance, we also believe that successful students are problem solvers, effective communicators, self-directed and understand what it means to be a community member. The following outcomes are stressed throughout the school's curriculum and will be demonstrated by students:

### **PROBLEM-SOLVING:**

- ◆ thinking systemically, considering all factors when solving a problem
- ◆ investigating multiple options prior to decision making
- ◆ testing mental models and challenging their assumptions
- ◆ developing and asking relevant and clarifying questions
- ◆ making decisions based on adequate data
- ◆ applying knowledge to real world situations

### **SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING:**

- ◆ taking initiative, setting goals and working to meet challenges
- ◆ asking questions when they arise
- ◆ seeing mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow
- ◆ expecting work to be challenging, interesting and engaging

### **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:**

- ◆ using a variety of technologies to share their ideas and understandings
- ◆ showing that they have researched all possibilities prior to presenting their understanding
- ◆ writing using proper structure and form
- ◆ speaking in a clear and direct manner
- ◆ considering their audience when they are speaking or planning a presentation

### **COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP:**

- ◆ working cooperatively in groups
- ◆ managing conflicts through discussion
- ◆ helping others to be successful and make good decisions
- ◆ recognizing and acting upon the needs of the community beyond the walls of Innovation Academy Charter School

## Curriculum

### 5/6 Coursework

#### *5<sup>th</sup> grade*

5 <sup>th</sup> grade Math	Full Year/5 days/55 min.
5 <sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts	Full Year/5 days/55 min.
Social Studies	Half Year – double block
Science	Half Year – double block
5/6 Spanish or Math Enrichment	Full Year/4 days/55 min.
5/6 Challenge/Health	Full Year/ 3 days/55 min.
5/6 Creative Arts	Full Year/two 55 min. blocks

#### *6<sup>th</sup> grade*

6 <sup>th</sup> grade Math	Full Year/5 days/55 min.
6 <sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts	Full Year/5 days/55 min.
Social Studies	Half Year – double block
Science	Half Year – double block
5/6 Spanish or Math Enrichment	Full Year/4 days/55 min.
5/6 Challenge/Health	Full Year/ 3 days/55 min.
5/6 Creative Arts	Full Year/two 55 min. blocks

### 7/8 Coursework

#### *7<sup>th</sup> grade*

7 <sup>th</sup> grade Math	Full Year/5 days/55 min.
7 <sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts	Full Year/5 days/55 min.
Social Studies	Half Year – double block
Science	Half Year – double block
7 <sup>th</sup> grade Spanish or Math Enrichment	Full Year/4 days/55 min.
7 <sup>th</sup> grade Challenge/Health	Full Year/3 days/55 min.
7 <sup>th</sup> grade Creative Arts	Full Year/two 55 min. blocks

#### *8<sup>th</sup> grade*

8 <sup>th</sup> grade Math	Full Year/5 days/55 min.
8 <sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts	Full Year/5 days/55 min.
Social Studies	Half Year – double block
Science	Half Year – double block
8 <sup>th</sup> grade Spanish or Math Enrichment	Full Year/4 days/55 min.
8 <sup>th</sup> grade Challenge/Health	Full Year/3 days/55 min.
8 <sup>th</sup> grade Creative Arts	Full Year/two 55 min. blocks

## School to Home Partnership

To assist students in meeting their maximum potential as learners, teachers, families and students must communicate regularly regarding student progress. To achieve this goal, Innovation Academy Charter School teachers work to provide consistent feedback to families, comprehensive quarterly assessments and twice a year Student Led Conferences.

In sum, the Home to School Partnership consists of the following:

- *Student Led Conferences twice a year*
- *Phone calls, emails and/or notes home as needed.*
- *Regular access to students' current grades and assignments on X2 database*
- *Instructional information posted on the IACS website*

## Grading

IACS Middle School Grading – “The swimmer analogy”

Students at the Innovation Academy Charter School are assessed in their achievement of the pre-determined benchmarks and standards using the following “grades”: Novice, Apprentice, Proficient or Distinguished. The underlying belief is that **all students**, with the right amount of effort, may achieve proficiency.

To explain this system of grading, it helps to consider the following “swimmer analogy” as each level is described. While this analogy is not perfect, we do believe that it will assist you in understanding what each of the grades mean.

**Distinguished:** A student who receives a Distinguished grade is a swimmer bordering on Olympic competition, a swimmer that creatively and, seemingly effortlessly, achieves a proficient and is then able to go the extra mile. Distinguished grades are extremely difficult to achieve.

**Proficient:** A student who receives a Proficient grade is a swimmer worthy of life guarding. They know what needs to be done and can explain their understanding to others. They are practiced and in shape, ready for further challenge.

**Apprentice:** A student who receives an Apprentice grade is like a swimmer who has mastered the basics and knows what to do in order to stay afloat and swim safely in deeper waters. While not an expert, an apprentice shows signs of proficiency.

**Novice:** A student who receives a Novice grade is much like a beginning swimmer, just getting lessons and spending a lot of time practicing their form. In no way is a Novice swimmer a failure, rather they are demonstrating their knowledge as a beginner and progressing.

**Warning:** A student who receives a warning is a student who is not getting in the pool. The student is making little or no progress. A warning is a failing grade and students who receive this on their assessment will be put on academic probation (see below) and may face summer school and/or non-promotion.

**See Below:** In the case of a medically excused absence or some other extenuating circumstance deemed so by a Middle School Principal, a student may receive an assessment with a “see below.” In some cases, students will have the opportunity to make up the work. In others, they will be excused from the work altogether.

For some assignments, numbers are used for grading rather than letters. Below is a table listing the number ranges that correspond with the N,A,P,D grades. While some teachers may use different number systems for their individual grade books (these are explained in individual teacher grading policies), all grades are translated into this Middle School Grading system for posting to quarterly assessments and for transcripts that are sent to future schools.

<b>IACS Grade</b>	<b>Percentage Equivalent</b>
See Below (SB)	Incomplete for an extenuating circumstance
Warning (W)	59% or lower
Novice (N)	60-69%
Novice/Apprentice (N/A)	70-75%
Apprentice (A)	76-82%
Apprentice/Proficient (A/P)	83-89%
Proficient (P)	90-96%
Proficient/Distinguished (P/D)	97-99%
Distinguished (D)	99% +

Teachers at Innovation Academy Charter School operate on the belief that student achievement and ability is based on the effort of the student, not a pre-determined ability level. If students are willing to make the effort and have the appropriate parental and teacher support, they will learn. This said, it should also be noted that not all students come to the table with the same set of skills and experiences. Innovation Academy Charter School teachers recognize this and work to differentiate and modify curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all students.

### **Assessments/Interim Reports**

Students receive assessments on a quarterly basis roughly two weeks after the close of the quarter. Additionally, halfway through the quarter, those students who are not meeting academic standards will receive interim reports in the class where the student is having difficulty. Please see the year long calendar posted on our website for the exact end of quarter dates as well as dates in which interim assessments will be sent home. Do note that due to school cancellations, quarter dates often change throughout the year.

## **Awards and Distinctions**

Students at the Innovation Academy Charter School may receive the following honors for academic achievement on a quarterly basis. Students will be recognized during all school meetings and in the local newspapers.

**Distinguished Honors** – Distinguished Honors is awarded to students who earn at least one distinguished assessment in application or comprehension and at least two proficient assessments in application or comprehension in English Language Arts Skills, Math Skills, Spanish or Project. Students must have no less than Proficient assessments (P) in all other classes including the IACS outcomes.

**Honors** – Honors is awarded to students who achieve at the proficient level on at least two assessments in application or comprehension for English Language Arts Skills, Math Skills, Spanish or Project. Students must receive at least apprentice/proficient (A/P) marks in all other classes including the IACS outcomes.

*Other awards/recognitions will be given out at the discretion of staff at various times throughout the year.*

**Academic Improvement Awards** - Academic Improvement Awards are given throughout the year (typically at the end of academic quarters) to students demonstrating significant academic improvement.

Additionally throughout the year, students are recognized in all school meetings for other noteworthy accomplishments including improvement on All School Testing, extra curricular activities and the like.

## **Homework**

Homework at Innovation Academy Charter School supports classroom activities and assignments and prepares students to be responsible for their own work in the future. It is the expectation that students use their school planner to document work each and every night. When students miss homework, it impacts their ability to fully participate in the work of the class. Please assist the IACS staff by ensuring that homework is completed and turned in at the beginning of every class period. Those students who exhibit patterns of missing work will be placed on the WCC.

If students are having trouble with homework, they should ask for help from a family member and have an adult call the proper teacher's voicemail to let them know the level of difficulty.

## **Work Completion Center**

It is the expectation that Innovation Academy Charter School students complete homework as assigned by their teachers. When students don't complete their homework and classwork as directed or miss deadlines for rubriced pieces, they are expected to stay after in the Work Completion Center (WCC) from 3:00-4:00pm where they will be given the opportunity to complete missing work.

In order for a student to stay, a call will be placed from the main office to the family of a student who has missing work. Unlike in years past, referral to WCC will not be done on a daily basis but during arranged periods of time when a student is exhibiting the need for it. In order for a student to stay, a call will be placed from the main office to the family of a student who has missing work. The family will need to confirm that their child is able to stay until 4pm for the required period of time.

*Please note: Work Completion Center is **not** an alternative to the after school program or as a means of childcare. Students who need after school care at IACS must be registered for Springboard, the after school program. Additionally, if a child is pre-arranged to stay for an extra-curricular activity but is on a list for WCC, no call will be made home and the student will automatically be sent to WCC as it trumps all other after school activities with the exception of pre-arranged Extra Help.*

### **Extra Help**

Students who are having difficulty in school as demonstrated by their standardized test scores or by teacher generated assessments **may be required to stay after school for extra help**. Families will be notified when this is the case, via phone call, email and/or letter. If families have concerns for progress they should contact the appropriate teacher directly to make necessary arrangements for their child to stay at one of the designated extra help times. Students are not permitted to stay at extra help unless they have been invited by the teacher and/or their parent has made arrangements with the teacher 48 hours in advance. If students are at school and are not on the extra help schedule, they will be sent to Work Completion Center. The extra help schedule will be published following the first week of school. Please note that in some cases students may also be required to stay in for recess for additional extra help as deemed necessary by faculty members.

### **Late Work Policy**

Students at Innovation Academy Charter School are expected to adhere to the guidelines set forth by their teachers regarding when and how assignments should be turned in. When students miss deadlines, it is their responsibility to meet with their teachers to formulate a plan for turning in all missing work.

Work that is late is marked down half a grade for each day that is late (i.e. if the student's assessment would have been a Proficient but it was one day late it would be recorded as an Apprentice/Proficient).

Work turned in after 7 days will not be given credit but will need to be completed for portfolio purposes. Exceptions are made in the case of students who are sick, have a family emergency or other extenuating circumstances. In such cases, students are generally given one extra day for each school day missed. All of these cases will be considered and approved by the Middle School Principal.

### **Academic Probation – 7/8**

In preparation for high school, seventh and eighth grade students are placed on academic probation when they receive one or more novice level or lower assessments in any area on a quarterly assessment. When a student is on academic probation as noted on the quarterly assessment it is the responsibility of the family to contact the Middle School Principal or designee to arrange a meeting. During this meeting, a plan is formulated which may include a requirement to attend Work Completion Center and/or extra help. Students may not be able to attend school events and activities. If the family is unable or unwilling to attend an academic probation meeting, a plan will be formulated by the school and students will be required to follow it. Removal from academic probation is contingent upon improved academic standing at the discretion of the Middle School Principal and/or designee.

### **Academic Probation – 5/6**

Fifth and sixth grade students are placed on academic probation when they receive one or more warnings in any area on a quarterly assessment. When a student is on academic probation as noted on the quarterly assessment it is the responsibility of the family to contact the Middle School Principal or designee to arrange a meeting. During this meeting, a plan is formulated which may include a requirement to attend Work Completion Center and/or extra help. Students may not be able to attend school events and activities. If the family is unable or unwilling to attend an academic probation meeting, a plan will be formulated by the school and students will be required to follow it. Removal from academic probation is contingent upon improved academic standing at the discretion of the Middle School Principal and/or designee.

### **Planners**

All students are required to maintain an IACS issued planner in which they document their homework assignments and other important information. Additionally, the planner serves as a student hall pass as teachers will be filling out the hall pass sheets located toward the back of the planner when students need to leave class for any reason. All students are required to purchase an IACS planner at the start of the school year. The cost is \$5.00. If students lose their planners they will need to purchase another. The cost of planners will increase after the beginning of the school year. They will be available for purchase at the school store.

### **Field Trips**

Throughout the year, opportunities arise with the curriculum to take students beyond the campus of Innovation Academy Charter School to experience learning in another place. Where possible, we keep the cost of field trips at a minimum for families. Students on field trips are expected to adhere to the same standards of behavior that they would on a regular school day. School rules and policies apply.

Students who have been absent from school for more than five days in a quarter or whose tardies/lates and absences equal more than 5 per quarter may not be eligible to attend field trips. Students whose absences extend beyond 15 in a year may also not be eligible. Students with any discipline record may not be considered eligible for trip participation at

the discretion of the administration and staff. Specific field trips will have behavioral expectations which must be met in order to participate in the trip. More information will follow.

If a field trip is planned, families will be notified no less than one week in advance. Permissions and payment must be returned at least 24 hours in advance of the departure time or a child will not be permitted to attend. In the case of some trips, payment may be due significantly earlier.

### **Presentations of Student Work**

Students at Innovation Academy Charter School are required to maintain portfolios of their work. This portfolio is stored at school and will be the focus of the March ILP conference. After two years, all students will have compiled a portfolio that reflects their learning at either the 5/6 or 7/8 level. Students may sometimes be working on portfolios during class or Homebase time, with teacher permission. The exact organization of the portfolio will be discussed with students during Homebase time within the first two months of school. If families would like to review the portfolio, they should make an appointment with their child's Homebase teacher.

In order to adequately assess portfolios, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders participate in one of the school's Jury Days. During Jury Days, students share and defend several pieces of their work to a jury of adults in half hour appointments. In addition to a school administrator, jurors are typically family members of Innovation Academy Charter School students, local business people, graduate students and educators from outside of the school.

In addition to the portfolio presentation, each student writes a letter to the Middle School Principals regarding their promotion. Each assessor will give their opinion as to whether the student has met the standards for each section of the portfolio and whether the student has made significant progress in their work so as to move on to the next grade level. Students who do not meet standards in two or more sections of their portfolio may be considered for retention or another appropriate remediation, including but not limited to additional portfolio work time while school is in session or following the conclusion of school for the summer recess.

Two times throughout the school year, students will participate in Quality Presentations (previously Quality Night). Time will be set aside for students to prepare for these important events. More information will be forthcoming in *The Connection*.

## Promotion, Non-promotion, Contingent Promotion

### *Promotion*

Students are promoted from grade to grade based upon their successful completion of all school work, completion of a portfolio, participation in Quality Presentations and Jury Day defenses (where required) and daily school attendance.

### *Non-promotion*

Innovation Academy Charter School teachers embrace the concept of high standards and individual responsibility for all students. To this end, our non-promotion policy focuses on a student's willingness to make substantial efforts to complete work at the best of their ability. Through the home to school partnership, families are kept informed of student progress regularly, so there should be no surprises at the end of the year. With the input of the teaching staff and the family, Innovation Academy Charter School Principals make the final decision regarding promotion/non-promotion.

One or more of the following **may** result in non-promotion:

- Absence from school for more than 5 days in a quarter or a total of 15 days in a year.
- Excessive tardies/lates (20 or more) in a school year
- Failure to complete assignments for any class, resulting in a warning, see below or novice on the student assessment document.
- Failure to maintain a passing portfolio of student work.
- Failure to attend all Quality exhibitions
- Failure to present during Jury Day
- Poor behavior

### *Contingent Promotion*

If a student, with the support of their family, is making serious efforts to complete assignments, attends extra help hours and/or signs up for tutoring outside of school, and still has difficulty being successful, teachers will consider other alternatives to non-promotion.

Whenever possible or appropriate students will be assigned homework center, summer work or summer school (at a cost to their families) to make up for work not completed or lack of skill demonstrated during the school year so that they may be promoted. Their promotion will be **contingent** on the successful completion of this work or the assigned courses.

If a student is in danger of non-promotion, the school will notify the family at the end of each quarter. No later than the last week of school, a letter will be mailed from the Middle School Principal with a final determination.

All retention/non-promotion decisions will be made by the Middle School Principals.

## **Sexuality Education: Parental Notification**

Reproduction/Sexuality education is part of our overall health and wellness curriculum. The course content will follow the guidelines put forth by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Frameworks.

Parents/Guardians will be notified of course curriculum prior to actual classroom presentation. Parents/Guardians may exempt their children from any portion of said curriculum through written notification to the Middle School Principal. No child so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption.

To the extent practicable, program instruction materials for said curricula shall be made reasonably accessible to parents, guardians, educators, school administrators, and others for review.

## **The Reading Log**

All IACS students are required to maintain a log of books read during the school year. Students will set a yearly reading goal with their teachers in September and enter books in their log as they go. These logs will be checked periodically during Homebase time to ensure that students are making reasonable progress towards their goal. In addition to the log distributed by teachers, additional logs are available online at [www.innovationcharterschool.org](http://www.innovationcharterschool.org). 5/6 students are expected to read 30 minutes a day outside of school. 7/8 students are expected to read 45 minutes a day outside of school.

### III. Student Codes of Conduct and Student Life

#### Middle School Code of Conduct

*Note that the Code of Conduct has been approved by the Board of Directors for Innovation Academy Charter School.*

**Student expectations: Be safe, respect others and always make an effort to do high quality work.**

Every student at IACS should adhere to the following general guidelines for behavior:

**Be safe and know the school rules:** Assist in maintaining a physically and emotionally safe learning environment for all members of the IACS community by learning our school's expectations and by respecting the adults who ensure expectations have been met.

**Respect yourself, others and our environment:** It is the expectation that all members of the IACS community are treated with respect.

**Do high quality work:** Do your best work each day in completing assigned lessons including homework and assignments missed because of absences.

**Regular attendance:** Arrive on time; remain on school grounds the whole school day; don't leave without permission; bring a note from your parents or guardian explaining any absence or dismissal to the front office.

**High personal standards:** Dress appropriately; meet standards of health and cleanliness; be honest and courteous; use respectful language; when you are confused or disagree with an adult talk or write in an open and respectful way.

#### Classroom Expectations for Students

##### **Classroom Expectations**

1. Be prepared with all required materials at the beginning of class.
2. Be attentive and follow directions when given.
3. Work productively to maximize your learning potential.
4. Be polite and respectful.
5. Follow all school rules as defined in the student and family handbook.

**Positive Outcomes** *Positive outcomes are at the discretion of the teacher and may include the following:*

- Praises (verbal, written, etc.)
- Positive feedback to families
- Special attention or privileges (opportunities to go help out around school or for teachers)
- Class-wide attention or privileges (Game opportunities during Homebase, "special" indoor recess)

## **Consequences**

1. Warning
2. Reflection form (completed in class) or completion of work refusal form if violation is work related
3. In class isolated work
4. Loss of recess (or other teacher assigned penalty)
5. Office Referral

## **General expectations for a Productive Learning Environment**

- Gum is not permitted at the school.
- Students must adhere to the dress code.
- Coats are to be stored in a designated area as directed by staff.
- Drinks and food should only be out during lunch time. A water bottle filled with water only may be used throughout the day.
- Energy drinks are not permitted at the school.
- MP3 players/recorders, Ipods/Ipod minis, nanos, palm pilots, game devices, laser lights/pointers and the like may not be on the premises or used at school (in the building or on the grounds of the building, on the school bus) at any time. Digital or video cameras are not permitted unless required by a teacher for a specific project. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged electronic equipment or other personal belongings including those which have been confiscated. Any such things seen at school will be taken away by IACS staff and parents/guardians will need to make an appointment with the appropriate Middle School Principal to come to school to pick up the devices.
- Cell phones are permitted at school with family permission. All cell phones must be turned off from the time students enter the building and may not be used during the duration of the school day. Students using a cell phone (including making calls, texting, taking pictures etc.) or whose phone rings in class and/or interrupts the learning environment in some other capacity will face consequences. Repeated offenders may lose their privilege of carrying a personal communication device. If a student is caught using the phone for any reason or a cell phone is confiscated when it disrupts a class, it will be turned into the Middle School Principal and the family will be required to set an appointment for it to be returned. The school does reserve the right to search the phone for identification purposes or in the case of a disciplinary situation.
- All students must carry a pass (in their planner) when they leave the room without an adult.

- Skateboards and bicycles are not permitted at school unless prior approval has been given by the Middle School Principal.

### **Code of Conduct and the Violation of General Expectations**

A violation of any rule stated herein may result in disciplinary action, including detention, suspension and expulsion.

The items of this code are inclusive for all students when properly under the authority of school personnel during a school activity, function, or event whether on property owned, rented or maintained by the IACS or property owned, rented or maintained by another party.

This code shall also be inclusive for the rights to exercise authority and for the personal and private teacher aides, monitors, authorized volunteers, tutors, secretaries, bus drivers or other authorized school personnel.

A student shall be held in violation of this code when evidence proves participation in the following:

1. Physical damage or defacement of school or private property.
2. Theft of school or private property.
3. Use of offensive language (deemed general misconduct and not severe misconduct by the Principal or designee).
4. Horseplay/general fooling around deemed inappropriate by staff.
5. Behavior that endangers oneself or others.
6. Willful cheating/plagiarism of work.
7. Lying.
8. Failure of compliance to repeated directions; insubordination (or reasonable requests of school personnel.)
9. Violation of accepted standards of behavior which any reasonable person would be expected to observe.
10. The wearing of inappropriate dress such as clothing depicting alcohol, tobacco or narcotic related graphics or words or other inappropriate graphics and/or dress which does not adequately cover the body.
11. Truancy, skipping class/school or excessive absence.
12. Chewing gum.

### **Code of Conduct and Severe Misconduct**

A violation of any rule stated herein may result in disciplinary action, including detention, suspension and expulsion. The decision is ultimately made by the Principal or designee as to whether or not the misconduct is considered general or severe.

The items of this code are inclusive for all students when properly under the authority of school personnel during a school activity, function, or event whether on property owned, rented or maintained by the IACS or property owned, rented or maintained by another party.

This code shall also be inclusive for the rights to exercise authority and for the personal and private teacher aides, monitors, authorized volunteers, tutors, secretaries, bus drivers or other authorized school personnel.

A student shall be held in violation of this code when evidence proves participation in the following:

1. Physical damage or defacement of school or private property.
2. Theft of school or private property.
3. Disruption or obstruction to the educational curricular or extra-curricular process by use of intentional or unintentional violence, force, coercion, bullying, threat (written, visual, spoken, drawn, gestured or any other mode of communication) – regardless of the intent, plan/intent to harm, harassment, discriminatory language or intentional disruption of the learning process in spoken or written language.
4. Inappropriate behavior on a bus including throwing things out the window and/or horseplay, assault & battery, fighting, pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing etc.
5. Horseplay/general fooling around deemed inappropriate by staff.
6. Inappropriate use of video, picture, audio, or computer equipment or any other school property.
7. Assault or battery, fighting, pushing, shoving, throwing, tripping, grabbing, choking or any other intentional harm.
8. Excessive use of offensive or inappropriate language or content including vulgar language or dangerous content toward a staff member, another adult in the building or a student in the form of written word or drawings.
9. Behavior that endangers oneself or others.
10. Willful cheating/plagiarism of work.
11. Transmission, concealment, creation, handling or use of dangerous weapons and instruments.
12. Possession, use, transmission, soliciting, offering/asking or concealment of tobacco, narcotics, alcoholic beverages, drugs, prescription medication and counterfeit drugs.
13. Inappropriate display of sexual or sexually-related behavior, including sexual harassment (kissing, inappropriate hugging and touching as determined by staff are not acceptable).
14. Failure of compliance to repeated directions.
15. Any unauthorized use of fire (e.g. cigarettes, candles, incense, firecrackers, etc.) on school property
16. Leaving the school grounds or school function/activity location without the permission of a staff member.
17. Skipping detention.
18. Violation of accepted standards of behavior which any reasonable person would be expected to observe.

### **Code of Conduct and the Education Reform Act of 1993/Dangerous Weapons Policy**

Please be advised that the passage of the Education Reform Act of 1993 has necessitated that the possession of a weapon, controlled substance, or an assault on school personnel may now result in the **expulsion** and not the **suspension of a student**. This change will have serious and profound effects upon any students who break the

law, in that their very right to attend Innovation Academy Charter School may be taken away. We urge parents/guardians to discuss with their child the importance of a safe and secure school environment as well as the possible consequences for students who violate this law.

**The Reform Act specifically states:**

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Executive Director.
- (b) Any student who assaults any member of the faculty or staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Executive Director.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing. The student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Executive Director to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b); provided, however, that any school designee who decides that said students should be suspended shall state in writing to the school committee its reasons for choosing the suspension instead of the expulsion as the most appropriate remedy. In this statement, the Executive Director shall represent that, in his/her opinion, the continued presence of this student in the school will not pose a threat to the safety, security and welfare of the other students and staff in the school.
- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Executive Director. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Executive Director of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Executive Director. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- (e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section and applies for admission to another school for acceptance, the Executive Director of the sending school shall notify the Executive Director of the receiving school of the reasons for the pupil's expulsion.

**Code of Conduct and the Drug Free School Policy**

Possession or use of drugs, alcohol, or any illegal substances by students will not be tolerated. Drinking or being under the influence of drugs on school grounds or at any school function will result in suspension for some period of time and may result in further suspension and possible recommendation for expulsion.

Sale of, or distribution of drugs/alcohol will result in immediate notification of parent/guardian and the police will be notified. The student will face suspension and could be expelled from school.

### **Code of Conduct – Students with Special Needs**

*The Code of Conduct as it relates to students with Special Needs (which includes those who are identified under and IEP or a Section 504 plan) follows MGL, Ch. 76, Section 5 of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5 which prohibits discrimination in all public schools on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion and sexual orientation.*

The disciplining of special needs students is governed by federal and state special education laws and regulations promulgated there under. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 91400, et seq.; 34C.F.R. §300.519-529 et seq., and Massachusetts General Laws c. 718.

Special needs students (hereafter to include those on an IEP or those with a section 504 plan) who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current placement for up to ten (10) consecutive school days, to the extent that such a removal would be applied to students without disabilities, without a prior determination as to whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability. Additionally, in certain circumstances, special needs students may be removed for additional periods of up to ten (10) consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct. Any suspension (consecutive or non-consecutive) that extends beyond ten days will require a manifestation determination meeting with the IEP/504 team to determine causes of the misbehavior.

School personnel may also order a change in the placement of a student with a disability to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days if a student: (1) carries a weapon to school or to a school function; (2) knowingly possesses, uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or at a school function or (3) Assaults a member of the IACS staff.

Additionally, a Massachusetts Department of Education hearing officer, under certain circumstances, may order a change in the placement of a student with a disability to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days.

Under the circumstances described in this paragraph, or if the removal of a student will constitute a change in the student's placement, as defined by federal special education law, a student's IEP TEAM or 504 Team may convene to review the student's educational program and the misconduct. For more details on these procedures, you may contact the Director of Student Services.

### **Code of Conduct and policy on Cheating and Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity means having pride in one's work that is done honestly and fairly through one's own personal efforts. Cheating violates an individual's academic

integrity and violates the community's integrity by creating an environment where the value of hard work and individual effort is undermined.

Cheating includes copying another student's class work, homework or test answers with or without their permission, sharing answers with another student from a test that they've not yet taken, allowing another student to copy your work, copying another's words/work without giving credit (plagiarism), forging or signing a permission slip with a parent or guardian's name.

Cheating will not be tolerated and students caught cheating will receive appropriate consequences decided on by the teacher, and/or Middle School Principal that may include detention, suspension and/or other logical consequences deemed appropriate on a case by case basis. Students who are cheating/plagiarizing will not be given credit for the work they do but in most cases will be required to complete the work for portfolio purposes.

## **Code of Conduct and Dress**

### **Dress Code**

Students should dress in a way that fosters a professional, safe and respectful environment while at school. The dress code is in effect from when students enter the school until the end of the school day as well as during field trips and other school-related activities. Students are expected to adhere to the dress code as described below and as directed by the IACS staff.

#### **Tops**

- Shirts should neither be excessively baggy nor revealing (no bra straps may show).
- Tank tops with wide straps and sleeveless shirts are acceptable. Tops with spaghetti straps, shirts that expose the midriff, or halter tops are not acceptable.

#### **Bottoms**

- Appropriate school attire includes pants worn with the waistband at the waist.
- Excessively ripped or baggy jeans/ pants, or leggings are not acceptable.
- Skirts, dresses and shorts which fall below the length of the fingertip at the discretion of IACS staff are permitted.

#### **Footwear/ Headwear**

- Students must wear shoes or sneakers at all times during the school day. Slippers or other soft bottom shoes are not permitted. Shoes with wheels are also not permitted.
- Students must wear sneakers or other activity appropriate shoes on days when they have Challenge.
- Hats, hoods and bandannas are not acceptable during the school day. Students may wear hats and/or hoods during recess and outdoor activities with teacher permission when weather necessitates. They are not permitted to be on while in the school building at any time.
- Hair must be out of the face so that eyes can be seen at all times.

## **Outerwear**

- Students should bring coats/jackets to school during colder months. These are to be worn when going outside and/or as directed by the IACS staff but should not typically be worn in the classrooms.

## **Special Dress**

Students should always consider whether they will be presenting work or engaging with the public when they choose their dress for the day.

Some occasions will require that students attend school wearing more formal attire, such as dressy/ collared shirts, slacks, skirts, and dressy shoes. Such occasions include, but are not limited to Quality Night and Jury presentations.

## **Dress Code Violations**

Any student wearing an outfit or article of clothing which is deemed inappropriate by staff will either call home for an alternative outfit or will wear clothing provided by the school. Conversations are documented and may result in an office referral. Families of students who violate the dress code will be notified.

## **Code of Conduct and Truancy**

Truancy may result in an immediate phone call to parents/guardians or to police if the parents/guardians cannot be reached and may result in a loss of privileges within the school in addition to other external consequences. A student is “truant” when he/she is absent without the prior permission of his/her parents or guardian, such as when a student:

- Leaves school without being signed out by the Nurse’s office or by the Main office staff;
- Is absent from school without prior permission from his/her parents or guardian;
- Does not report to class (skips class);
- Obtains a pass to go somewhere in the building and does not go there, or goes to another part of the building along the way or afterwards
- Becomes ill and goes home or stays in restroom without permission;
- Reports to the school, but does not attend classes.
- Does not report to required after school help, Work Completion Center or another after school event previously arranged by parent or guardian and the school.
- Is excessively absent from school with no reason.

The Middle School Principals act as the truancy officers for the middle school.

## **Code of Conduct and Expulsion**

A student will face an expulsion hearing following an investigation during which it was found that the student committed one of the following acts on school premises, or at a school sponsored or school related event, such as an athletic game, field trip, etc.:

1. Possession of a dangerous weapon;
2. Possession of a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94C of the General Laws (Note: this does not include alcohol);
3. Assault upon any school staff or faculty member; and
4. Circumstances in which a student has been charged with or convicted of a felony.

The Middle School Principal or designee will conduct an investigation of any of the above and the student will be sent home suspended until an expulsion hearing is conducted.

### **Code of Conduct and Office Visits**

For general violations, the following progressive consequences may result (each level equals one visit to the office):

Level 1: Student sent to the Middle School Principal. Student may remain with the Principal for the remainder of the class period and a call will be placed home. Additionally, the student may receive another appropriate consequence (deliver an apology/apology letter, replacing or repairing damaged or stolen property, loss of lunch/recess, community service, etc.)

Level 2: Student sent to Middle School Principal for remainder of class period, call home to family and other appropriate consequence (such as delivering an apology/apology letter, replacing or repairing damaged or stolen property, loss of lunch/recess, community service, etc.) and serve a detention either during the school day or after school. If the student is not in school on the assigned day, the student will serve detention on the following day or a day suitable for the administration and the student/family.

Level 3: All of Level 2 consequences and loss of “privileges” for one week (privileges may include recess, snack and other privileges deemed appropriate when possible including after school activities). Detention for students who have reached level three is held after school.

Level 4: Call home and out of school suspension for the remainder of the day and the next day. At the discretion of the Principal, this suspension may be extended beyond 1.5 days.

Level 5: Call home and 2.5 days out of school suspension. At the discretion of the Principal, this suspension may be extended beyond 2.5 days.

Level 6: Call home and 3.5 days out of school suspension. At the discretion of the Principal, this suspension may be extended beyond 3.5 days.

Level 7: Call home, extended suspension and recommendation of expulsion/exclusion to the Board of Trustees by the Executive Director/ Principal.

*Note: Infractions which fall under Severe Misconduct in the handbook automatically bring students to a level four in the system above. In such instances, students will receive an automatic suspension (level four or higher depending on previous offenses) and will be required to attend a meeting.*

In all disciplinary situations, the Principal or designee shall determine the length of a student's suspension, based on the leveling system and prior offenses. The student's parents/guardians will be notified via phone (when possible) and in writing of suspension actions taken place. In most cases, letters are mailed home to the student's address. When a student is suspended he/she may not come onto any property under the control of Innovation Academy Charter School or attend any school functions or school sponsored activities. The families of students who receive a detention will be notified via phone. If a suspension or detention should occur on a day where school has been unexpectedly cancelled due to weather or another unforeseen circumstance, the suspension or detention will carry to the next school day.

School days students miss as a result of suspension are considered unexcused absences. As such, students will not receive credit for any work missed but may still be required to complete it depending on the assignment. These decisions are at the discretion of the Principal or designee.

In some circumstances, the Principal or designee may make a call to suspend a student as a result of an incident that is not explicitly laid out in the handbook.

Students who are referred to the Middle School Principal, the Social Worker or the Middle School Principal designee for written or spoken threats of violence or harm to themselves or others in any form will be required to seek a mental health evaluation prior to being readmitted to school.

When a student returns from a suspension, the parent/guardian must accompany him/her to school and meet with the Principal unless a meeting was held upon the issuance of a suspension. During this meeting, expectations of acceptable school behavior will be explained to the student and family before sending the student is able to return to class. Under certain circumstances, this meeting requirement may be waived by the Principal.

Students with office visits, detentions, or suspensions on their record may not be able to participate fully in school activities. Some field trips may not permit students from attending based on a school discipline record.

Students who are suspended will lose the privilege of attending school social events or other activities during a period of a week when they are suspended unless otherwise approved by the Principal.

At times, investigations will need to be conducted so that the Principal can better understand the circumstances surrounding an incident. We expect as part of our community that students will assist when needed and provide information as needed.

*\*\* All student information is confidential and can only be discussed with designated staff members and/or parents/guardians of the student. At no point is the Principal or*

*designee legally or morally able to discuss situations about other students with other families. If a situation occurs where two or more students are involved in an incident, please know under no circumstance can the disciplinary action taken with any other student be discussed.*

### **Code of Conduct – The Suspension Appeal Process**

Purpose: To provide students and families with an opportunity to appeal and remove a suspension from record or arrange for community service to remove a suspension from record.

When a student receives a suspension, there are two routes a family may take to have the suspension removed from the child's record.

#### **Policy on Appeal of Suspension to the Middle School Principal**

*Request for Community Service* – In the case that the family and the student recognizes that the behavior of their child was inappropriate and warranted a suspension based on the code of conduct, and the student has no prior record of suspensions or community service to remove a suspension, they may submit a request for community service. The request must include a proposal for the actual community service work, not less than four hours total, at a local community organization during a weekend and must be approved by the Middle School Principal. The proposal must be submitted to the Middle School Principal, in the form of a letter, by the family within five school days of the suspension. All community service work must be completed within four weeks (28 days) after the incident. Please note that the head of the organization must “sign off” on the work by writing a brief note stating the type of work completed and the number of hours at the completion of the work. Only when this note is submitted to the Middle School Principal, will the suspension be removed from the student's file and record. Completing community service on the premises of the Innovation Academy Charter School is not an option and it is the responsibility of the family and the student to arrange for the community service project. The Middle School Principal reserves the right to deny any request.

#### **Sample Letter From Student Requesting Community Service**

Ms. Kathleen Seward or Ms. Erin Attfield Quinlan  
Middle School Principal  
Innovation Academy Charter School

#### **Date**

Dear Ms. Seward or Ms. Attfield Quinlan:

I am writing to request community service so that the suspension I received on (*insert date*) for (*insert reason for suspension*) will be removed from my record. I recognize that my actions were inappropriate and I served the required (*# of days*) suspension. In the future I will make sure that I do not repeat the behavior and/or other suspend-able behaviors. I recognize that if I am granted the opportunity to remove the suspension

through community service that if I am suspended again, I will not be able to ask for community service and that further suspensions will remain on my record.

I would like to complete my community service at *(insert name of organization)* on the date of *(insert date)*. I have arranged with the head of the organization, *(insert name of organization head/designee)*, to *(explain the work you will be doing)*. The work will take no less than *(insert the # of hours here, remember it must be at least 4)*. *(Insert the name of the organization head or designee here)* has agreed to sign off by writing a note on my behalf once I have completed the work. You may contact him/her at the following phone #: *(insert phone # here)* if you want to.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for community service. I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to make up for my mistake. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

*Your signature here*

*Your name here*

Parent or Guardian Signature of acknowledgement:

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### **Policy on Appeal of Suspension to the Executive Director**

*Appeal of Suspension* – In a case where the family believes a suspension was given unfairly and not in line with school policy, an appeal to overturn the suspension may be made to the Executive Director within 10 school days of the starting date of the suspension. The parent or guardian of the student must submit a written appeal to the Executive Director that notes the original date of suspension; the reason for the suspension (as presented in the letter they received) and the parent or guardian must explain why they believe that the suspension was given unfairly and not in line with school policy. The Executive Director will review the case and provide a written decision regarding the appeal within 10 school days of receiving the letter of appeal.

### **Policy on Appeal of Suspension to the Board of Trustees**

A suspension may be appealed to the Board of Trustees only after an appeal has been denied by the Executive Director of the school. To appeal to the board, a letter must be written to the Executive Director of the school requesting an appeal hearing. The Executive Director will supply the board of trustees with the request for the hearing and the original letter appealing the suspension to the Executive Director. The board will convene a committee to hear the appeal and notify the family of the date and time of the hearing.

## **Code of Conduct and Search and Seizure**

When there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a search of a student's cubby, person, or personal belongings will result in evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school, such a search can be conducted. Students and families should be aware that the law allows the Executive Director, Principal, or designee to search a student's cubby, person, back-pack or other personal belongings. Students who refuse to subject themselves or their property to reasonable search will be suspended from school for a minimum of one to three days. Students and families should be aware that the administration may exercise at any time, the option of obtaining the services of trained dogs in searches.

Listed below are some resources where one may seek further knowledge about student rights:

American Civil Liberties Union: <http://www.aclu-mass.org>

Center for Law and Education: <http://www.cleweb.org>

Office of MA Attorney General, Tom Reilly: <http://www.ago.state.ma.us>

Student Press Law Center: <http://www.splc.org>

### **After School Social Events and Attendance at Events**

Throughout the school year, events are held at the school. Usually, these events will coincide with a fundraiser. These events are typically arranged by parent volunteers, but may be attended by staff. Some of these events are open to the public while others will be strictly for members of the IACS community and sometimes limited by grade. The decision for what is an open vs. closed event will be done on a case by case basis.

During some of the events, students may wish to bring guests from outside of the school. IACS students will be responsible for the behavior and actions of these students. Each guest should bring a permission slip from their own parent or guardian to attend. Students may not bring guests who are of high school age unless prior permission is obtained from the Middle School Principals. Students whose behavior is inappropriate within school will not be allowed to attend.

Students may not attend school events if they have been absent during the school day and/or not been in school for at least four hours unless prior arrangements have been made and approved by the Middle School Principals.

Throughout the year, there are times when events are open to students and their families. In such circumstances, we expect that students adhere to reasonable expectations and remain in contact with their family throughout the duration of the event. At no time are students to be wandering the premises (inside or outside) during such events.

Please check the website periodically, [www.innovationcharter.org](http://www.innovationcharter.org), for an updated list of events.

### **All School Meetings**

One day a week, there will be a 5/6 or 7/8 school meeting during which the students in both teams of the middle school community will be present. During these meetings,

important announcements are shared, students and staff perform music and drama skits, students display their work, and students are presented with awards.

### **Lunch and Recess**

Each day, students will be having a lunch and recess period with their team during. Whenever possible, we do bring students outside so please ensure they are dressed appropriately. Actual lunch and recess times will be noted on student schedules. More information about ordering lunch will be disseminated early in the year.

*Note that recess is a privilege. Students who are behind on work and/or who make poor choices in class in the classroom may be required to spend recess completing overdue assignments.*

### **Petitions and Surveys Circulated by Students**

At certain times during the year, students may circulate petitions or surveys for academic or non-academic reasons. To ensure petitions or surveys do not interfere with learning in class and that they do not compromise the inclusive environment for all students, they must be approved by the Middle School Principal of the school prior to dissemination.

### **Student Visitation Policy**

Students who wish to bring a student-visitor to the school must first obtain permission from all of the teachers they are with on the day of the visit. All teachers must sign a letter drafted by the student to acknowledge permission. Once permission has been obtained by the teachers, the student must turn the form into the Middle School Principal for final permission. Visitors are required to follow all school policies and procedures. Visitors must bring a permission slip from a parent with a home and emergency phone number to attend.

## IV. Policies, Safeguards and Family Information

### Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination

#### Statement on Non-discrimination and School Safety

In order to build an increasing awareness and understanding in all of us of the civil rights afforded all citizens by law, and the responsibilities that accompany them, IACS has developed the document “Civil Rights and Safety Information for School Personnel, Parents and Students” which is available upon request, but summarized here:

- Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: **prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of employment.**
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: **prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of educational programming.**
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: **prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits in educational programs on the basis of sex.**
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: **prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation and denial of benefits based on disability.**
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: **prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on disabilities.**
- MGL, Ch. 76, Section 5 of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5: **prohibits discrimination in all public schools on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion and sexual orientation.**

Additionally, per civil rights afforded to all individuals, students who are pregnant at IACS are permitted to remain in regular education classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non- pregnant students throughout their pregnancy. Pregnant students do not need a note from a physician as documentation to continue attending school. After giving birth, they are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before they participated in before they left.

**The following individuals have been designated to serve as appointed coordinators:**

**Title VI and Title IX:  
Middle School Principal**

**Innovation Academy Charter School  
72 Tyng Road  
Tyngsboro, MA 01879**

**Title I, II and Section 504:  
Director of Student Services  
Innovation Academy Charter School  
72 Tyng Road  
Tyngsboro, MA 01879**

As an educational institution, the Innovation Academy Charter School is committed to creating and maintaining a school environment that prevents discrimination of all types, while at the same time ensuring the health and safety of all that learn at IACS. To ensure your full understanding of the policies we have implemented as a school to ensure that students attend a school that is safe and free of discrimination please go to the Massachusetts Department of Education website at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu) for further information.

It is the role of IACS to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all its students without distinction based on race, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation. Innovation Academy Charter School policies reflect a growing need for schools to make explicit the ways in which our policies adhere to state and federal laws concerning non-discrimination and civil rights. **Discrimination, sexual and bias-motivated harassment, and violations of civil rights disrupt the educational process and will not be tolerated.** Any student who feels they are the victim of harassment or discrimination should report it to a Principal immediately.

### **Access to the Board**

Per board policy, the Board of Trustees welcomes the feedback and opinions of all community members. While the Board of Trustees designates the running of the school to the Executive Director and expects that all comments, questions or concerns regarding the IACS school program be channeled through the Executive Director, the board welcomes community members who want to speak directly to the board to contact the board chair to discuss this as a possibility. The Board of Trustees can be reached via email at: [bot@innovationcharter.org](mailto:bot@innovationcharter.org)

### **Attendance**

Regular school attendance is essential to academic success. Students must be in school unless there is a medical or family emergency. Students are expected to arrive on time (by 8:00 AM) and leave on time (by 3:00 PM) unless there are other arrangements made with staff.

### **Tardies/Lates**

If students arrive at school after 8:00am, they are expected to sign in with the main office. This is considered a tardy.

If students arrive after 8:15am, they are expected to sign in with the main office. This is considered a late arrival.

After five tardies in a quarter, a letter will go home from IACS to the family indicating the concern for tardiness. After ten tardies, the Principal may contact the family to discuss the issue and ensure the student arrives at school on time each and every morning.

**To Report a Student Absent:** If your child will be absent for the day, you must call to report the absence. Prior to 7:30 AM, a parent/guardian should report a student's absence by leaving a message in the general mailbox of the voice mail system. **All student absences should be phoned in by a parent or guardian as early as possible each day the student is absent.** When reporting an absence due to illness, please include the student's symptoms are such as: fever, vomiting, strep throat etc so the information can be forwarded accordingly to the health office. This information is very important to the Health Office and their staff.

**Medically excused absences and doctor's notes:**

Any note from you or a doctor should accompany your child upon his/her return from illness. If we do not receive adequate notification of your child's absence, the absence will be considered unexcused. All family and doctor's notes must be received in the office within 72 hours of the absence. Backdated family or doctor's notes will not be accepted. *Innovation Academy Charter School will not furnish a copy of doctor's notes which have been turned in and filed.*

**Accumulation of tardies, lates and absences:**

Tardies and lates will accumulate to make absences. 10 tardies (arrival after 8:00am but before 8:15am) will equal one day absent. 3 Lates (arrival after 8:15am) will equal one absence.

Students who miss five unexcused school days in one project period may receive a letter from IACS with regard to absences and a meeting may be required to address the concern. **Students who miss more than fifteen days of school in a year may be subject to non-promotion regardless of whether or not the days were excused.**

If you anticipate your child will be out for an extended period of time (more than three days) you must notify the Middle School Principal in writing at least one month in advance, or as soon as possible. The Middle School Principal or designee reserves the right to make final decisions about whether extended absences are excused or unexcused. While IACS reserves the right to make the final decision about what absence is excused and what is unexcused, please use the general guidelines below to help you:

Excused absences: medically documented sickness, medical appointment, observance of a religious holiday, family emergency

Unexcused absences: family vacations/trips, suspensions, camp, or no notification about the reason for absence. Make up work is not issued for unexcused absences. In some cases, students may be allowed to or required to make up work upon their return.

Students must be in school by 10am and stay for the duration of the day in order to be considered present for the day. Students who are dismissed for the day prior to lunch/recess (11:09am) will be considered absent for the day. Any student who arrives after 9am on an early release day or who leaves prior to 10:30am and does not return will be considered absent for the day.

While we encourage families to make medical appointments after 3pm, during vacations and early release days, we understand that this is not always possible. In the event that an appointment is set during the school day, students are excused for that time provided they give the school proper notification and documentation. Please be sure to send in a note with your child if s/he will be getting dismissed prior to 3:00. Note that it is the responsibility of the student to collect and make up work that they miss as a result of an excused early dismissal.

Students who are referred to the Principal or the Social Worker or designee for written or spoken threats of violence or harm to themselves or others in any form will be required to seek a mental health evaluation prior to being readmitted to school. Students who are dismissed due to physical or mental illnesses or general mental concerns may be required to seek medical treatment by IACS prior to returning to school at the discretion of the Principal, Social Worker or designee. If a child has been absent due to hospitalization for a physical or mental illness, the school reserves the right to have an intake meeting upon return to school. Discharge summaries from a hospital and/or other similar institution must be furnished upon request.

Note that students who are not present for school may not attend evening social, academic or any other social event at the school or another school sponsored location.

*Please note: Students who miss more than 15 days of school for the year, regardless if the days are excused or unexcused may face automatic retention at the discretion of the Principal. Also note that by Massachusetts law, it is the expectation of schools that they file on families with the juvenile court system when students miss more than 7 unexcused days of school in half of a school year.*

### **Class Changes/Requests**

Class changes are typically not permitted during the school year unless they are recommended jointly by teachers and families and there is space to move. In this case, the teacher or family members must notify the Middle School Principal in writing to discuss the change. Please note that requests in writing for placement in particular classrooms are not considered.

### **Community Association of IACS (IACA)**

#### *The Mission*

The mission of the Community Association is to support the education of students at Innovation Academy Charter School by:

- Promoting a sense of community among students, staff, and parents at IACS.

- Facilitating communication between the school and home. Supporting programs and activities that will enrich the students' educational and social experience.
- Fostering positive parental and staff involvement in the school and providing opportunities for all IACS members to participate in the community.

### *Volunteering*

Innovation Academy Charter School relies on families to help to sustain our organization. There are multitudes of volunteer opportunities ranging from main office help to data entry, copying and phone calls. There may even be ways we have not yet thought about.

Please contact your child's Principal or a member of the IACA for more information on how to get involved.

### *Fundraising*

Over the years, IACS has had the consistent support of parents in raising funds to support the school's programs and welcomes the continued efforts of parents and community members in this regard. The Board of Trustees has also begun a development campaign aimed at receiving larger donations from corporations and foundations. It is very important that all fundraisers done by parents are approved by the Executive Director of the school and thus are in line with the school's philosophy and are insured to not interfere with the school's development plans. All money raised in the school's name by parents becomes part of the school's operating budget and is used at the school's discretion. If you are interested in assisting in parent fundraising efforts, please contact the Fundraising Chair of the IACA.

### **CORI Checks**

In order to keep our students and staff safe, it is imperative that ALL volunteers and staff are checked through the Criminal History Systems Board of Massachusetts. If you would like to volunteer, please obtain a CORI form from our Business Manager, or on our website [www.innovationcharter.org](http://www.innovationcharter.org) under "forms".

### **Copy Requests for Make Up Work or Cumulative Files**

If your child is absent due to illness, you may request work to be sent home however teachers will need 24 hours notice to provide the work to be made up. It is the responsibility of the family and/or child to contact the teachers directly about making up work which has been missed due to an excused absence.

If your child will be out of school for an extended period of time due to illness or another medically documented reason, staff needs as much notice as possible to prepare work that your child can complete on his/her own. For each day they will be absent, staff will need 24 hours to compile work.

Please note that if a family takes a vacation/trip during the school year, absences are considered unexcused. Make up work is not issued for unexcused absences. In some cases, students may be allowed to or required to make up work upon their return.

Families who need copies of files (health records, cumulative files, special education paperwork, assessments/grades) must put requests in writing: Attention Kathleen Feeney. Copies will be furnished within five school days. Only one copy of the cumulative file will be made per year. Additional copies furnished upon request may be done so at a cost of requesting party.

### **Enrollment Policy and Requirements**

#### **Policy:**

The Innovation Academy Charter School is committed to creating an alternative public school that actively meets the unique needs of each and every student. IACS does not discriminate on any basis. Admission policies adhere to all state and federal regulations including Public School Regulation 603CMR 26.00 and MGL c71/89, which states in part:

Charter schools shall be open to all students, on a space available basis and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, ages, ancestry, athletic performance, special needs, and proficiency in English language or academic achievement.

Charter schools shall place names of students not selected in an enrollment lottery on a waiting list in the order the names were drawn. Students on the waiting list may be enrolled as space becomes available. In cases where the enrollment of a student, who is not a sibling of another previously enrolled student, from the waiting list would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the student should be skipped over but kept on the waiting list. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student already attending a charter school would exceed the district charter school tuition cap, the sibling may be enrolled with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts providing tuition for said sibling, subject to appropriation.

All lotteries shall be conducted in public, with a disinterested party drawing names, and with reasonable public notice given at least one week prior to the lottery.

#### **Requirements for admission:**

IACS admits students on a space available basis in the following order as required by law:

- 1) Priority shall be given first to any students actually enrolled in said school.
- 2) Siblings of currently enrolled students in the region (Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Groton-Dunstable, Littleton, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough and Westford).
- 3) Siblings of currently enrolled students from outside our Region

- 4) All Children within our Region (Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Groton-Dunstable, Littleton, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough and Westford).
- 5) Children from outside our Region but within the State of Massachusetts.

### **Emergency School Closing**

School closings due to poor weather conditions will be announced as soon as possible. All emergency closings will be announced via local radio and television stations. We are listed as Innovation Academy Charter School and are most easily found on WCVB, Channel 5 also on the web at [www.thebostonchannel.com](http://www.thebostonchannel.com)

In the event that IACS closes for a reason other than weather, not in relation to Tyngsboro Public Schools, we will inform people via the Alert Now call system and whenever possible by posting information on our website.

*Please note: IACS reserves the right to adjust the schedule in the case of a delay to meet the needs of the school day.*

### **High School Transition**

With the addition of a high school in the fall of 2007, students who attend Innovation Academy Charter School will be automatically enrolled in the high school unless families make other plans. Please contact Kathleen Seward, Middle School Principal for 7/8, as soon as possible if you have other high school plans.

### **Information Dissemination Policy for Families with Limited English Proficiency and Policy on Translation**

It is essential that information be disseminated to all families associated with Innovation Academy Charter School. In order to assure this, we must be aware of families who speak a language other than English as their primary language. On our enrollment form each family is asked to identify the primary language spoken at home by all guardians. This item provides IACS with the information necessary to determine which languages into which notices must be translated. When families whose primary language is not English are identified, Innovation Academy Charter School will have all documents including, general announcements, counseling materials, notices of extracurricular activities, and information regarding school recruitment and promotion translated into the native language of the parents.

### **Medication**

If your child needs a medication administered during the school day, please follow the IACS policies so we may begin to give the medication as soon as possible. IACS requires that the following forms be on file in your child's health record before we begin to give any medicine at school:

1. Signed consent on the Emergency Form by the parent or guardian to give over the counter medication (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin etc.) and/or prescription medications.
2. Signed medication order for prescription medications. The written medication order for prescription drugs should be completed by your child's licensed prescriber and returned to the school nurse. **This order must be renewed at the beginning of each academic year.**

Prescription medications should be hand-delivered to the school nurse by the parent/guardian in a pharmacy container. Parents/guardians may retrieve the medications from the school at any time.

For further information regarding the health office please refer to the "Health Office Information and Policies" document.

### **Pick-Up Policy**

For the safety of all students, parents, family members, designated adults who transport students must participate in the pick-up line process unless prior arrangements have been made in writing with the Middle School Principal or designee of the school. In the case of a family emergency that precludes you from speaking with the Middle School Principal or designee, please contact the main office as soon as possible and notify them that you have a family emergency and what kind of arrangement you anticipate needing (park, pick up early etc.)

### **Necessary Student Restraint Policy**

As outlined in 603 CMR 46.00, physical restraint MAY be used at the Innovation Academy Charter School under certain emergency conditions:

1. When other non-physical interventions have been tried and failed or are judged to be inadequate to the circumstances.

-and-

2. A student's behavior poses a threat of IMMEDIATE, SERIOUS, PHYSICAL HARM to self and/or others.

All procedures surrounding IACS's implementation of restraint follow the guidelines outlined in regulation 603 CMR 46.00. For further information, visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html>

### **School Day Schedule**

The school day begins at 8:00 AM however students may arrive as early as 7:40 AM. The school day ends at 3:00 PM. Students who are not picked up on time will be sent to Work Completion Center. When a student's family arrives late to pick them up, they are required to park, come into the building and sign out their child with the administrator present at Work Completion Center. Please note that families who consistently pick up their children late will be required to attend a meeting with the appropriate Middle School Principal to discuss next steps.

## Student Services

The IACS Student Services Department is made up of student services teachers, classroom aides and a student services director and has as its focus the learning needs of students who have Individualized Education Plans and students who have 504 plans. To learn more about the policies and procedures associated with student services or to request a copy of the student services manual contact Aimee Voleti, Director of Student Services.

## Adult Visitation Policy

Innovation Academy Charter School encourages families and guests to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our school. Such visits are beneficial in promoting greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school's mission and goals. Please adhere to the following guidelines when visiting the school. The guidelines for classroom and school visits are as follows:

1. Requests for classroom visitations will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we request that such requests be made at least forty eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made. **Volunteers must follow the same guidelines, making arrangements in advance with the school staff that they are assisting. Visitors and volunteers should stay with the staff member with whom they have arranged to visit or assist and should not wander throughout the building. Visitors should refrain from using cell phones while in the building.**
2. Family visits may be approved by a staff member. Non-parent/guardian visitors must obtain approval from the Middle School Principal and be accompanied by the Middle School Principal or her designee at all times. **Requests for visits may be taken via email or over the phone.**
3. The Middle School Principal or designee has the authority to determine the quantity, duration and dates of any and all visits. This will be done in consultation with staff members as needed. Observation visits will be strongly discouraged during the months of September and June and will be denied during some parts of the year such as MCAS when we cannot disrupt the learning environment.
4. For security purposes it is requested that all visitors report to the main office upon entering and leaving the building, sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times and wear a visitor badge for the duration of their visit. **Host teachers will notify main office staff in advance of the time and purpose of the visit. The main office must check the staff visitor sign-in log to be sure the visit has been pre-approved.**

Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered at the main office.

5. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school must ask permission of one of the administrative staff at least 24 hours in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival, the guest must register at the main office per section three.

6. Any guest who fails to comply with these guidelines will be asked to leave the building and grounds immediately.

## **Wellness Policy**

### **Eating in Classrooms**

Eating is not allowed in classrooms. This is to prevent situations with allergies as well as to maintain a clean classroom environment. Additionally, students should only have water in covered containers and should not have other beverages in the classroom at any time. At times during the year, classes do have celebrations that involve food. The following excerpt from the IACS Wellness policy provides more information about food in classrooms and during school events. Please see Gayle Nutile-Pimm with questions regarding the use of food in school.

### **Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus (excerpted from the “Innovation Academy Charter School Wellness Policy”)**

#### **A. Beverages**

- Only fat-free and low-fat white and flavored milk, soy or rice milk, 100% fruit/vegetable juice, and water or flavored water without added sugar, artificial sweeteners or caffeine will be offered during the school day.
- Sports drinks will not be available for purchase anywhere on campus from the beginning of the school day to the end of the last instructional period.

#### **B. Foods**

- **Meals.** Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:
  - Be appealing and attractive
  - Be served in clean and pleasant settings
  - Meet, at a minimum, the USDA Nutritional Standards and the American Dietary Guidelines.
- **Snacks.** Snacks/foods offered during the day or in before/after school care or enrichment programs should meet USDA standards and the a la carte standards for portion size, total fat, % saturated fat, carbohydrates and calories as stated in the A-List provided in the appendix of the policy. Emphasis would be on serving fruit and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage.
- **Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** Students will be discouraged from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children’s diet. The IACS will continue to implement the schools’ Food Allergy Guidelines”.

- **Celebrations.** For any school-wide celebrations fresh fruits and vegetables are welcome. Each celebration may have one baked good which must be store bought and wrapped with the ingredient list available. No potato chips or other fried snack foods are allowed. Administrators in collaboration with the school nurse may make exceptions to this to approve curriculum based food activities. Classroom celebrations that involve food should be limited to no more than one celebration per class per month. When planning any classroom celebration or event that involves food, staff will mark the date, time, and class on the main office calendar. This will allow others to see if the same students are already planning a party in another class that month. All food served at these celebrations must comply with the above stated guidelines.
- **Rewards.** Food will not be used as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment.
- **Fundraising Activities.** To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, any fundraising activities (including outside organizations) during the school day will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages.
- **School Sponsored Events** (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will be encouraged to meet the same nutritional standards for meals or for foods outlined above.

## **V. Technology**

### **Innovation Academy Charter School Middle School Acceptable Use Policy**

The Innovation Academy Charter School computer network is provided for students to conduct research, enhance projects and assignments and to learn the skills necessary to be successful in meeting the state technology frameworks. Students using the network are expected to be responsible and to follow all school policies.

#### **Internet**

Innovation Academy Charter School is using Internet filtering software in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). This software will block websites that contain inappropriate and explicit content. While using the Internet at Innovation Academy Charter School, access will automatically be denied to websites deemed inappropriate and/or explicit in content. While Innovation Academy Charter School is taking every step possible to block inappropriate content, we acknowledge that in rare instances users may have access to unsuitable content. We expect students to act responsibly by reporting such content to the teacher in charge should they come across it.

When students are using internet sources for research, they must ensure they are properly citing work as instructed by their teachers.

Internet use in school is intended to support class work and learning. Students are not permitted to use the school's internet resources for recreation.

#### **The School Network**

Each user is granted a user name and password to access the school network. Students need to keep their passwords private so that the security of the network is maintained. Each student is granted a limited but reasonable amount of space on the school network in which to save school related work. At the end of each academic year, students are required to save any work they wish to archive to a CD or thumb drive.

