

# Independence Charter School



*“Opening Worlds of Opportunity”*

Parent and Student Handbook  
*Grades K-8*

Revised September 2011

# **HELP us CELEBRATE!**

Independence Charter is celebrating  
**10 yrs of educational excellence**

and

**100 yrs of history at Durham**

**You can help us celebrate!**

The anniversary celebration will be year long and will include activities for families and community members. Keep an eye out for announcements regarding these events.

Some the events we have planned are:

- ❖ Community forums
- ❖ International film festival nights
- ❖ Student arts showcases
- ❖ Global education showcases
- ❖ 1910-2010 History detectives club
- ❖ Celebrations: November and May

If you are interested in helping to facilitate some of these events, please contact Monika Kreidie at [monikak@icscharter.com](mailto:monikak@icscharter.com) or 215-238-8000 ext. 2430

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# **Independence Charter School**

## **The Mission**

**Independence Charter School (ICS) is a community-based K-8 public charter school of academic excellence, centrally located in Philadelphia and serving a diverse community of learners. ICS provides an intellectually-stimulating curriculum with a global focus, designed to develop independent, thoughtful global citizens. We emphasize second language acquisition and integrate arts, ideas and histories from around the world.**

## **We believe...**

1. We believe that all children can be successful in a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment.
2. We believe that all members of our school community bring unique and valuable perspectives.
3. We believe that students must be provided with a diverse set of learning tools to reach their fullest potential.
4. We believe that by learning other languages and about other cultures, children gain the skills needed to be active global citizens.
5. We believe that we are responsible to a larger community and to one another. We strive to be active stewards of the local and global community.
6. We believe that to reach excellence we must continue to nurture a reflective school community whose members contribute their talents, insights, and hard work in service to our students and to the larger community.

## **Nondiscrimination in Services**

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**TO: Students and Parents of Independence Charter School**  
**FROM: Jurate Krokys, CEO**

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of students shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

School services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to: Equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

Independence Charter School  
1600 Lombard Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19146

Department of Public Welfare  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Room 223, Health and Welfare Building  
P.O.Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

PA Human Relations Commission  
Philadelphia Regional Office  
Room 711, Philadelphia SOB  
1400 Spring Garden Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19130

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights  
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building  
150 South Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Southeastern Regional Office  
Room 1105-B, Philadelphia. SOB  
1400 Spring Garden Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19130-4088

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

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It is policy that Independence Charter School complies with the Child Protective Services Law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This law makes it mandatory for ICS employees to report suspected cases of physical abuse, neglect, mental injury, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation to the school counselor or administrator, who must file a report with the Department of Human Services. Compliance with the laws of Pennsylvania and the policies of ICS serves to protect all parties involved.

## **Title I Notification**

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As a public charter school, ICS receives local, state and federal funding. As a school-wide Title I funded site, ICS must remind you that you have the right, as a parent or guardian, to request and receive timely information regarding the professional qualifications of your child/ren's classroom/subject teachers.

If you would like to know this information, please notify the CEO in one of the following ways:

- Email [ceo@icscharter.com](mailto:ceo@icscharter.com), or
- Write a note with that request sent to the front office

## **Special Education Services**

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In compliance with state and federal law, Independence Charter School will provide to each protected handicapped student and student with disabilities (without discrimination or cost to the student or family) those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program (and extracurricular activities) to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

Independence Charter School also provides a full continuum of services to students with disabilities who qualify for Special Education or related services. These services include but are not limited to counseling, occupational therapy, speech therapy, Learning Support, and remedial reading instruction with a reading specialist.

If you are concerned about your child's academic, social or behavioral performance or their progress in school, please speak to your child's teacher about your concerns. As a school, we monitor our student's academic, social and behavioral progress closely. If you believe that your child may have special needs please contact our Special Education Coordinator to discuss the options that Independence Charter School can offer.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students or students with disabilities, contact:

**Barbara Zisk, Special Education Coordinator at 215-238-8000 x 5038 or**  
**[barbaraz@icscharter.com](mailto:barbaraz@icscharter.com)**

Special Education is designed to meet the diverse learning needs of individuals with differing abilities. At Independence Charter School we offer a full continuum of services to meet the needs of all our students. Currently, we have three full-time special education teachers and one part-time teacher. In addition, we contract with Pediatric Therapeutic Services for speech, occupational and physical therapists. We also have a consulting school psychologist.

ICS has related services designed to assist children with specific delays. These related services include Speech and Language Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Occupational Therapy.

- Speech and Language Therapy is designed to assist children who have articulation or language delays.
- Occupational and Physical Therapy is designed for children who have delays in fine and/or gross motor function and who may have sensory motor integration challenges.

If you have specific concerns about Special Education, related services, and/or if your concerns of learning success coincide with a family history of learning disabilities, please call:

Barbara Zisk, Special Education Coordinator  
215-238-8000, x5038  
[barbaraz@icscharter.com](mailto:barbaraz@icscharter.com)

### **What should you do if you have academic, social, or emotional concerns about your child, but your child does not qualify for special education?**

- Speak to your child's teacher. In most cases those concerns may be handled with extra support within the classroom.
- You may also consider contacting the ICS School Counselors. Middle School: Anne Hall ([anneh@icscharter.com](mailto:anneh@icscharter.com)) or Lowe School: Julie Fialkow ([julief@icscharter.com](mailto:julief@icscharter.com))

Independence Charter School offers connections to Community Based Behavioral Health Systems. Our school counselors can address various needs.

ICS also has a reading specialist and an English as a Second Language specialist, who works with students who need extra support with literacy development or with English language development.

### **English as a Second Language (ESL)**

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ESL (English as a Second Language) Services are provided to students who both speak a second language at home and require additional language support to be academically and socially successful in school. Services are determined based on specifically designed state testing, teacher input and ongoing assessments. Students who qualify for services receive pull-out (small group) or push-in (in-class) support based on grade level and individual needs. Independence Charter School works to ensure that parents have access to all school information, regardless of English language ability. Interpreters are provided for report card conferences and translations of important documents are sent to parents in a timely manner. Parents who are concerned about their child's English language development or who would like to request that an interpreter be present at a teacher meeting or other school function should contact the ESL Coordinator, **Luz Angela Bolivar Poveda** (215-238-8000, x5092 or [luza@icscharter.com](mailto:luza@icscharter.com)).

## 2011-2012 Student Calendar

STUDENT CALENDAR DATE	EVENT/NOTES
Wed, Sept 7th	First Day for <b>1<sup>st</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> Graders</b> (NOT Early Dismissal)
Thur, Sept 8th	First Day for <b>Kindergartners</b>
Wed, Sept 14th	EARLY DISMISSAL WEDNESDAYS Start
Wed, Sept 21st	BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT Grades K-4
Thur, Sept 22nd	BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT Grades 5-8
Mon, Oct 10th	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY ( <b>No School for Students</b> )
Thur, Nov 10 <sup>th</sup>	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY ( <b>No School for Students</b> )
Fri, Nov 11th	Veterans' Day Holiday- SCHOOL CLOSED
Thur & Fri, Nov 24 <sup>th</sup> & 25th	Thanksgiving Holiday- SCHOOL CLOSED
Tue, Wed & Thur, Dec 20 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup>	REPORT CARD CONFERENCES ( <b>Students dismissed <u>at noon</u> each day</b> )
Fri, Dec 23 <sup>rd</sup> - Mon, Jan 2 <sup>nd</sup>	WINTER BREAK ( <b>No School for Students</b> )
Tue, Jan 3rd	Students return from Winter Break
Mon, Jan 16 <sup>th</sup>	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday/ICS Alumni Day
Fri, Feb 17 <sup>th</sup>	Charter School Teachers' Professional Development Day ( <b>No School for Students</b> )
Mon, Feb 20 <sup>th</sup>	Presidents' Day Holiday- SCHOOL CLOSED
Fri, Mar 30 <sup>th</sup>	REPORT CARD DAY ( <b>No School for Students</b> )
Mon-Fri, Apr 2 <sup>nd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup>	SPRING BREAK ( <b>No School for Students</b> )
Mon, May 28 <sup>th</sup>	Memorial Day Holiday- SCHOOL CLOSED
Fri, June 15th	Last Day for Students (Wed, June 20 <sup>th</sup> - Last Day for Students if additional days are needed due to unplanned school closings)

## Parent-Teacher Communication Guidelines

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The teachers and staff at Independence Charter School strive to maintain open and positive lines of communication with parents. Our high expectations for staff include dedicating 100% of their time to the instructional setting. Therefore, in order for communication with parents to be effective, it should take place at a suitable time and in an appropriate setting.

Types of communication fall into the categories of **informal** and **formal**:

<p><b>Informal communication</b> is suitable for everyday situations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Your child forgets his/her lunch or book bag</li><li>✓ Confirming the date of an upcoming classroom event</li><li>✓ Confirming that a teacher received materials you sent in with your child</li><li>✓ Planning a birthday celebration</li></ul> <p>Appropriate forms of <i>informal</i> communication include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email message</li><li>• Written note</li><li>• Phone message</li><li>• <i>Brief</i> conversation in passing</li></ul>	<p><b>Formal communication</b> is necessary when a parent or teacher needs to communicate about a more serious and ongoing issue or concern. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Your child is struggling in a subject area</li><li>✓ Your child is not feeling challenged in class</li><li>✓ You have questions or concerns about your child's curriculum</li><li>✓ Your child does not feel safe at school</li><li>✓ Your child needs extra emotional support due to changing circumstances at home</li></ul> <p><b>Often, scheduling a meeting to resolve the issue will be necessary.</b></p> <p>Appropriate forms of <i>formal</i> communication include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email message</li><li>• Written letter</li><li>• A <i>pre-arranged</i> phone conversation or meeting</li></ul>
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Teachers and staff will make every effort to respond to your formal concerns as quickly as possible. Sometimes you will receive an immediate response. It is often not possible, however, for a teacher to check and thoughtfully respond to phone and email messages during the school day.

**We have created minimum guidelines so that both teachers and parents know what to expect when communicating back and**

- 1) **Teachers CANNOT take phone calls during the school day because they are engaged in instruction.** If you call the office you will be transferred to the appropriate voicemail. If you have regular Internet access, email is the generally preferred form of communication.
- 2) **Teachers will check email and phone messages once daily on school days between 3:30 and 4:00 P.M.**
- 3) **You will receive a confirmation of receipt of the message by the end of the next full school day.** (For example, if you send an email on Monday at 12:00 P.M., you can expect a confirmation of receipt no later than Tuesday at 4:00 P.M. Or, if you send an email on Friday at 12:00 P.M., you can expect a confirmation no later than Monday at 4:00 P.M. *The confirmation will outline next steps and when to expect further information regarding your inquiry.*)
- 4) **If you do not receive a confirmation of receipt within the expected timeframe, try one alternate form of communication in case there is a technical problem.** (For instance, your email could have gone to a junk folder or your phone message could have been directed to an incorrect mailbox.)
- 5) **If you still do not receive a confirmation of receipt, contact your Principal.**

## Understanding the Changes at Independence Charter

In the last 24 months, Independence Charter has been preparing for our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by undergoing a careful process that has looked at:

- ❖ How we teach kids and prepare them for high school and beyond
- ❖ How we support teachers and staff members in this process
- ❖ How we include parents and the community in this process
- ❖ How our framework of administrators and other support staff help in making this process work well

It became clear that we had to work on a smoother process for managing in the school. We had to create a clearer message for ICS staff and for parents/guardians about who to go to when you had questions, concerns, and ideas. We worked together in teams and came up with the following. Below, you will see some descriptions of new and old positions that have been reconfigured.

### ❖ **Two Principals: a Lower School Principal and a Middle School Principal:**

As a larger school with goals to support student achievement and teacher development, we needed to provide academic leadership that was intense and available for frequent observation of teacher practice, reflection with teachers, and interaction with parents. A search for Principals was undertaken by a school-based search committee that included parent, Board and staff representation. We were very successful in appointing Curriculum Coordinator Kristen Long to the Middle School Principal's position from among a number of candidates. We were not able to appoint a lower school Principal and will begin that search once again in the early fall. We are very fortunate to have the experienced and talented Interim Principal Richard Trzaska. Welcome Principal Richard Trzaska and Principal Kristen Long!

### ❖ **Student Achievement/Testing Coordinator and Math Intervention Specialist:**

Teacher Odamis (Coord.) and Teacher Barb Kay (Interv. Specialist) will focus on designing extra supports for students such as through in-house tutoring and assessment of students.

❖ **Teacher Leaders:** Following a thorough self-study, ICS has recognized the importance of providing teachers with opportunities for leadership and sharing best practices with colleagues. Three teachers, chosen by a teacher panel, will support colleagues with best practices and mentoring while maintaining 50% of their teaching schedule. Welcome Teachers Lindsay, Lynn, and Mary Beth to these new duties.

❖ **Compliance Manager** State, federal, and school district requirements for compliance increase each year. Megan Steelman oversees compliance as well as the lottery process.

❖ **Data Specialist** The amount of data input that state and federal governments require is staggering. Ingrid Schafroth is the Data Specialist and in charge of student attendance.

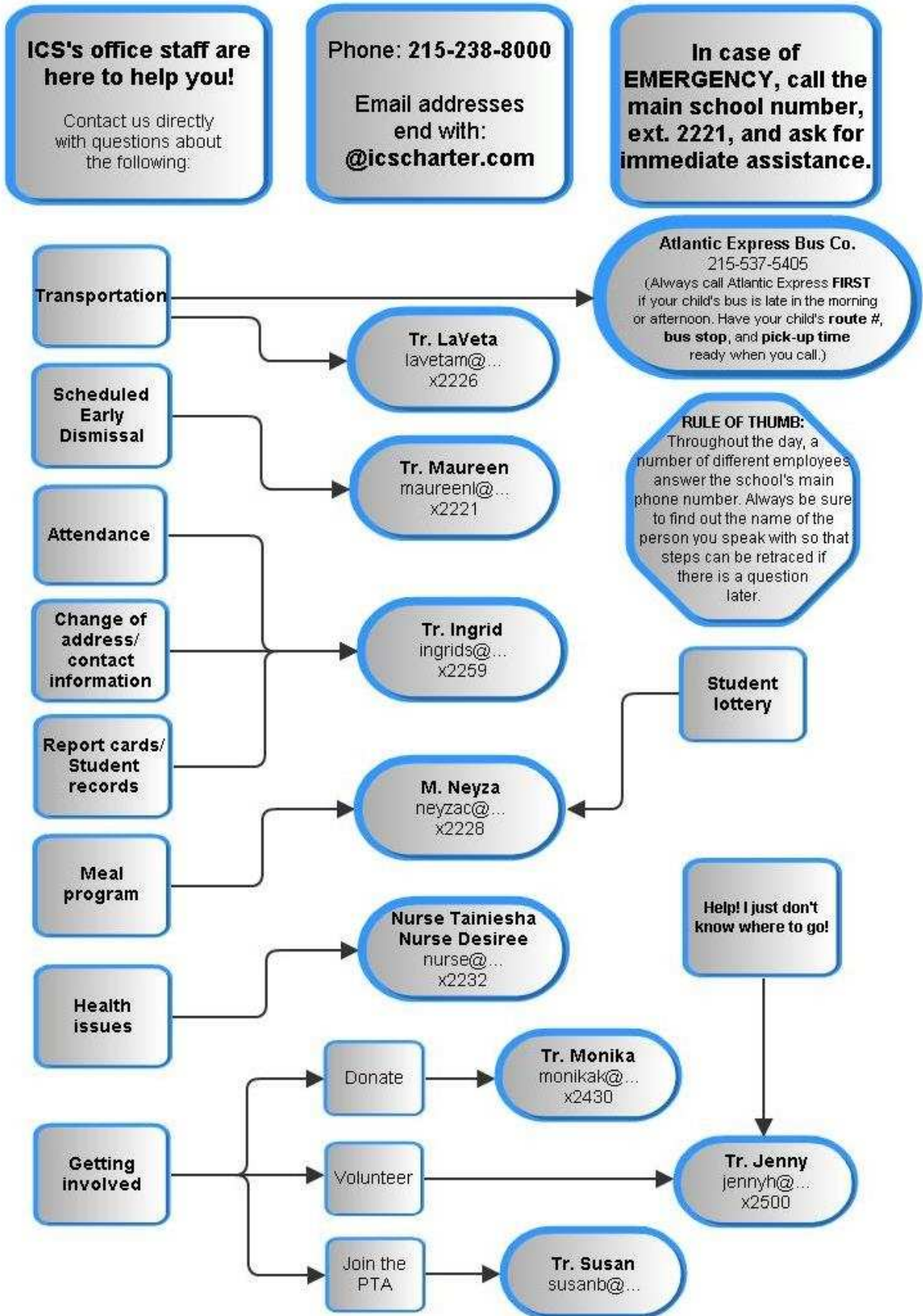
❖ **Family and Community Liaison Coordinator** This position was established in 2010 and exists to provide improved communications between the school, parents, and the community. It is also a resource-generating engine for staff and families. Jenny Hoedeman-Eiteljorg has defined this role.

❖ **Language Coach** This position was established in 2009 for the purposes of providing a support person for all of our teachers who are involved with language instruction: Spanish Immersion, Spanish FLES, and Arabic. Leonor Jimenez is that expert who works closely with administration in teacher support and curriculum.

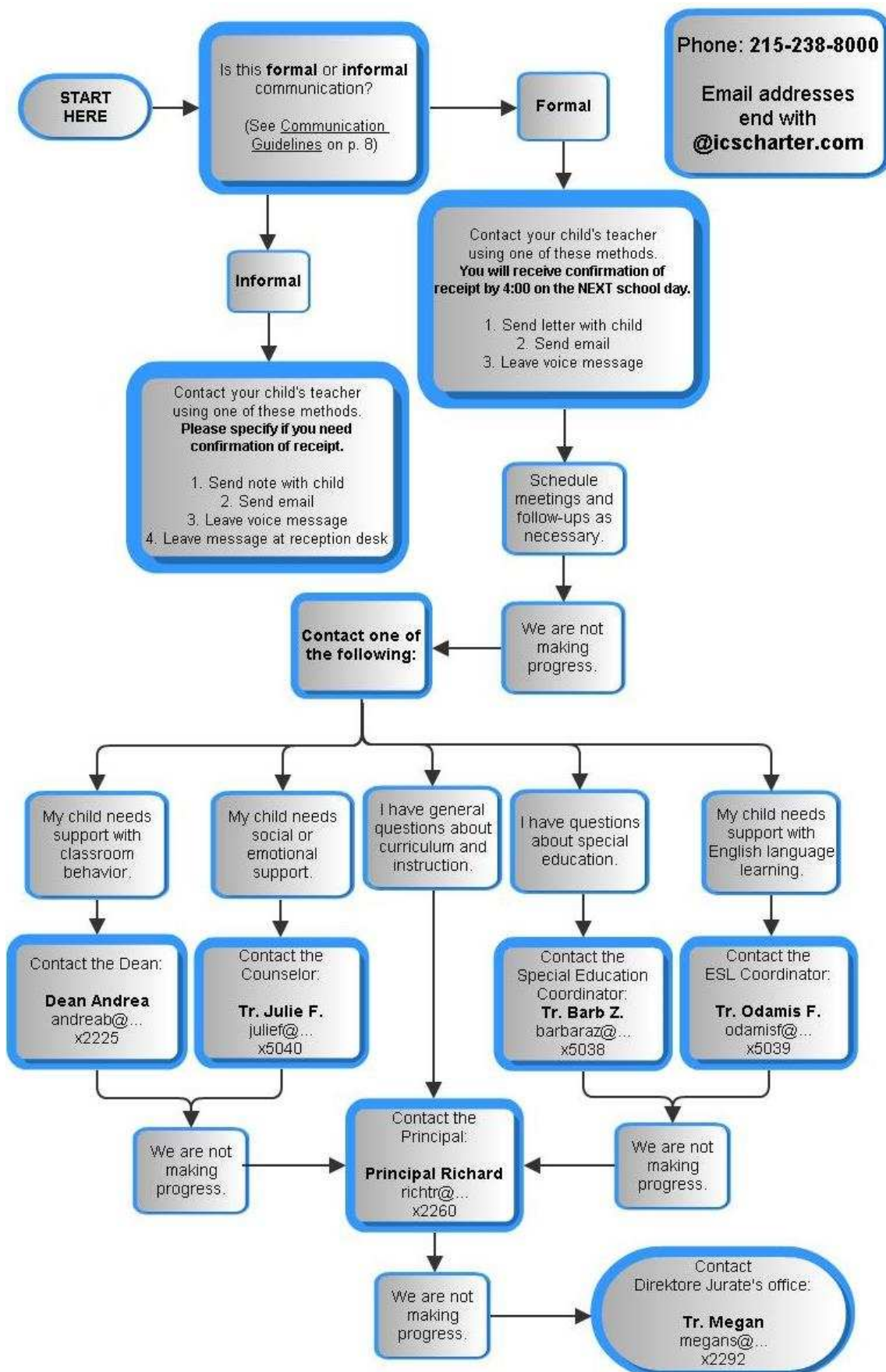
❖ **Operations Director** The Operations Director Ramzy Andrawos oversees the day to day functioning of the building, the non-teaching support staff, the food service, oversees safety, manages the student activities account and recommends renovations and repairs.

❖ **CEO Chief Executive Officer** CEO Jurate Krokys is responsible for the successful functioning of the school in student achievement, staff performance, compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations, and fiscal viability. The CEO is a fundraiser, seeks community support and resources and is the liaison to the School District of Philadelphia. She reports to the ICS Board of Trustees.

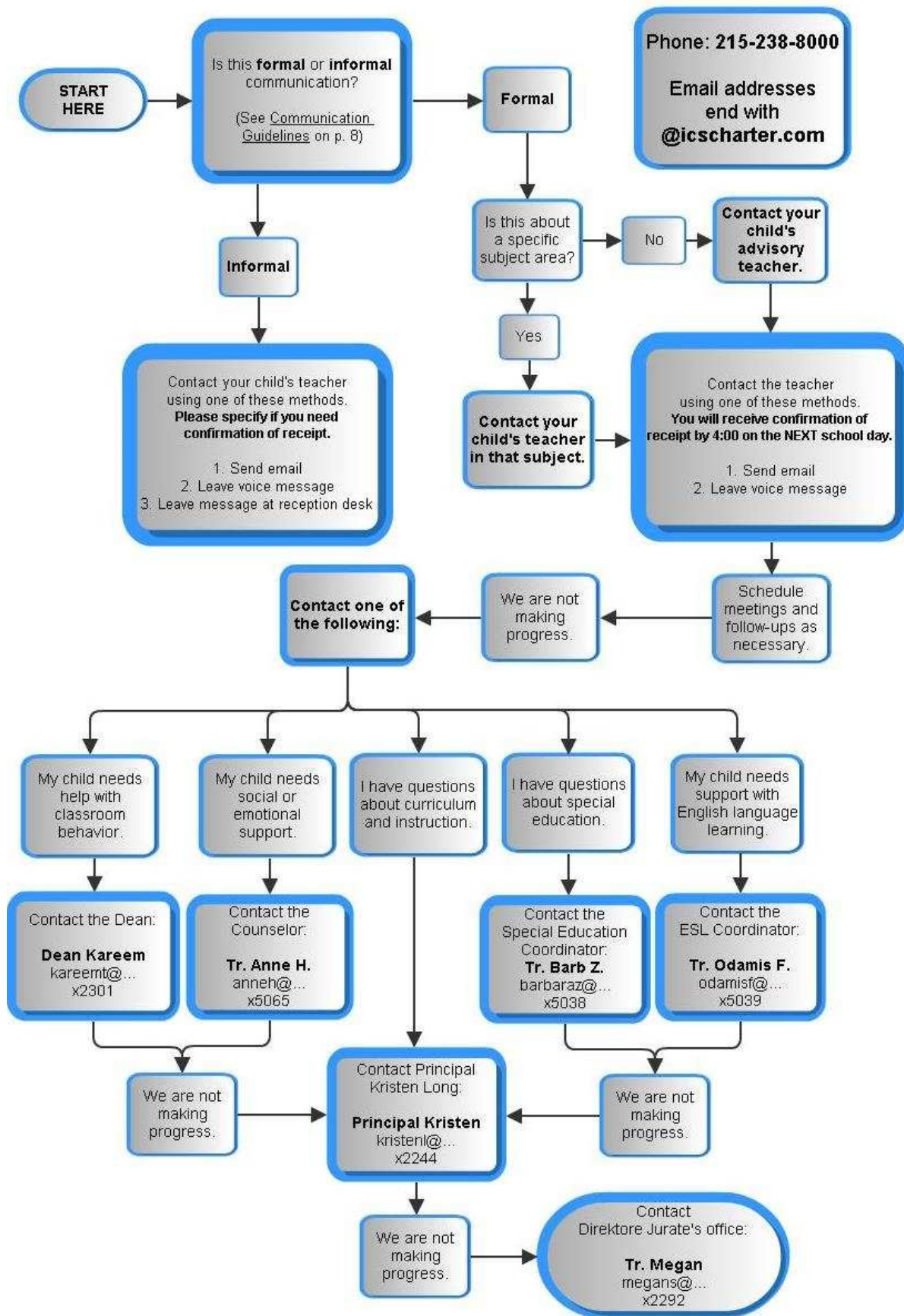
# Office Staff Contact Tree



# Lower School (K-4<sup>th</sup>) Teacher Contact Tree



# Middle School (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) Teacher Contact Tree



## Staff Directory (also available on-line)

First Name	Last Name	Position	VM X	E-Mail	Rm#
Adriane	Polen	NTA	5071	adrianep	Front Office
Adrienne	Keen	Teacher - 4th Gr Enhanced	5045	adriennek	208
Adrienne	Lindstrom	Teacher - 4th Gr Immersion	5021	adriennel	209
Alison	Stumacher	Teacher - 3rd Gr Enhanced	5043	alisons	202
Amaya	Shoup-Mendizabal	Teacher - 1st Gr Immersion	5013	amayyas	115
Amy	Leigh	K-8 Reading Specialist & ESL	5035	amyl	204B
Anais	Brutus	Teacher - 2nd Gr Immersion	5023	anaish	109
Andrea	Brock	Dean of Students - Lower School	2225	andreab	110A
Andrea	Ringklib	Teacher - Middle School English Language Arts	5055	andrear	300
Anne	Hall	Counselor - Middle School	5065	anneh	315B
Anthony	Martinez	Teacher - 1st Gr Immersion	5017	anthonym	116
Antonia	Jauregui	Teacher - Middle School Spanish Language Arts Immersion	5061	antoniaj	303
Auston	Adams	Assistant 1st/2nd Enhanced (Tr. Erika/Tr. Jennifer J.)		Austona	117/108
Barbara	Kay	Teacher - 5th Gr Math Enhanced & Math Intervention Specialist	5029	barbarak	213
Barbara	Zisk	Special Education Coordinator & K-2 Gr Special Education	5038	barbaraz	104D
Begoña	Munoz	Teacher - 3rd Gr Immersion (Doris Naffah long-term sub)			
Ben	Steele	Assistant 3rd/4th Enhanced (Tr. Ali/Tr. Adrienne K.)		bens	202/208
Brian	Flynt	Teacher - 3rd-4th Gr Special Education	5037	brianf	210
Caitlin	Dion	Assistant 3rd/4th Floating		caitlind	
Cassie	Boland	Assistant Kindergarten Enhanced (Tr. Jeff)		cassieb	102
Chris	White	Teacher - MS Social Studies/World through Technology & 5th Gr Computers	5028	chrisw	309
Claire	Landau	Teacher - 1st Gr Enhanced	5030	clairel	114
Connie	Post	Assistant 1st/2nd Immersion (M. Anthony/M. Anais)		constancep	116/109
Dana	Spadotto	Teacher - 3rd Gr Enhanced	5019	danas	200
Darlene	Porter	Teacher - Middle School Math & Science	5051	darlenep	312
David	Peterson	Technology Coordinator	5058	davep	319
Desiree	Speicher	Nurse	2232	nurse	104B
Doris	Naffah	Long-Term Sub. - 3rd Gr Immersion	5042	dorish	201
Elaine	Latimer	Teacher - Middle School Special Education and Middle School Math	5045	elainel	315
Elisse	Santiago	Teacher - 5th Gr Math & Science Immersion	5054	elisses	215
Ericka	Morris	Teacher - 4th Gr Enhanced	5008	erickam	211
Erika	Saunders	Teacher - 1st Gr Enhanced	5004	erikas	117
Gail	Linder	NTA		gaill	Front Office
Hafez	El Ali-Kotain	Teacher - Middle School Global Arts		hafeze	Library
Ingrid	Schafroth	Data Specialist	2259	ingrids	Front Office
Ismael	Rodriguez	Assistant Kindergarten Enhanced (Tr. Pam)		ismaelr	100
Jeff	Garreston	Teacher - Middle School Spanish Enhanced	5064	jeffg	304
Jeffrey	Rahman	Teacher - Kindergarten Enhanced	5002	jeffreyr	102
Jennifer	Ahaghotu Franks	Teacher - 2nd Gr Immersion	5003	jennifera	113
Jennifer	Jutzi	Teacher - 2nd Gr Enhanced	5006	jenniferj	108
Jennifer	Kwecinski	Occupational Therapist	5069	jenniferk	010
Jenny	Cox	Assistant 1st/2nd Immersion (M. Amaya/M. Jennifer A.)		jenniferc	115/113
Jenny	Hoedeman-Eiteljorg	Family and Community Partnerships Coordinator	2500	jennyh	Front Office
Jose	Rodriguez	Building Engineer	5001	joser	004C
Julie	Fialkow	Counselor - Lower School	5040	julief	111A
Julie	Lenard	Teacher - Middle School English Language Arts	5062	juliel	301
Jurate	Krokys	CEO	2223	ceo	214C

Kareem	Thomas	Dean of Students - Middle School	2301	kareemt	310
Karen	Frager	Student Support		karenf	
Karen	Minnick	Teacher - 2nd Gr Enhanced	5010	karenm	112
Kate	Bowes	Teacher – 6th-8th Gr Fitness	5049	Kateb	315
Kate	Dean	Teacher - Middle School Social Studies & World through Technology	5024	kated	308
Kate	Marquez	Teacher – 3rd-5th Gr Spanish Language Arts Enhanced	5044	katem	204A
Kate	Spiller	Assistant 1st/2nd Enhanced (Tr. Claire/Tr. Karen)		katherines	114/112
Kelly	Acuña	Assistant 3rd/4th Immersion (M. Doris/M. Meagan)		kellya	201/212
Kelly	Friedman	Speech Therapist	5069	kellyf	010
Kerry	Routh	Teacher - Middle School Math	5066	kerryr	316
Kristen	Long	Principal - Upper School	5007	kristenl	314
Kristy	Hack	Physical Therapist	5069	kristyh	010
Lacey	Boland	Teacher - Middle School English Language Arts	5063	laceyb	302
Lance	Lukasiak	Teacher – 3rd/4th Gr English Language Arts Immersion	5059	Lancel	210
Larry	Elliot	Mobile Lab Assistant		larrye	319
Laura	Schofield	Teacher - K-2nd Gr Spanish Enhanced and K-2 Gr Geography Immersion	5034	lauras	104A
LaVeta	Meaux	Transportation Coordinator & NTA	5016	lavetam	Front Office
Leonor	Jimenez Moreano	World Languages Coach, 1st-2nd Gr Geography Immersion	5068	Leonorj	111B
Lindsay	Allen	Teacher Leader - 2nd Gr Computers, 5th Gr Spanish Language Arts	5074	lindsaya	004
Luis	Barrios	Assistant Kindergarten Immersion (M. Luz Marina)		luisb	101
Luz Angela	Bolivar	K-8 Reading Specialist & ESL	5072	luza	104B
Luz Marina	Guevara-Conde	Teacher - Kindergarten Immersion	5026	luzg	101
Lynn	Eckerman	Teacher Leader - 8th Gr Science	5020	lynne	004
Marcela	Arango- Ortiz	Teacher - 3rd Gr Immersion	5012	marcelao	203
Maricarmen	Urdaneta	Teacher - Kindergarten Immersion	5031	maricarmenu	103
Mary Beth	Kronnick	Teacher Leader - 4th-5th Gr Science	5048	Marybethk	004
Maureen	Long	Receptionist	2221	maureenl	Front Office
Meagan	Ingerson	Teacher - 4th Gr Immersion	5056	meagani	212
Megan	Steelman	Compliance Manager	5033	megans	214B
Monika	Kreidie	Development Associate	2430	monikak	214
Nabila	Simms	NTA		nabilas	Front Office
Natalie	Henderson	Teacher - K-5th Gr Art	5011	natalieh	012
Neyza	Cabrera	Food Services Coordinator & Student Lottery & Registration	2228	Neyzac	Front Office
Nicholas	Vacca	Teacher - Middle School Math Procedure	5060	nicholasv	317
Noira (Marie)	Marmolejo	Assistant 3rd/4th Immersion (M. Marcela/M. Adrienne L.)		Mariem	203/209
Odamis	Fernandez-Sheinbaum	Student Achievement & Assessment Coordinator	5039	odamisf	214D
Pamela	Meachem	Teacher - Kindergarten Enhanced	5000	pamm	100
Ramzy	Andrawos	Director of Operations	5025	ramzya	004B
Raymond	Tralie	Teacher – Special Education & Middle School Math	5020	Raymondt	204C
Richard	Taggart	Teacher - Middle School Math	5052	richardt	318
Richard	Trzaska	Interim Principal - Lower School	2260	richtr	111C
Ronith	Epelbon	Teacher - K-5th Gr Music	5015	ronithe	011
Roxana	Graulau	Assistant Kindergarten Immersion(M. Maricarmen)		roxanag	103
Scott	Craig	Teacher – 5th Gr English Language Arts & Social Studies	5036	scottc	217
Selene	Romero	Student Support		selener	
Shavon	Norris	Teacher - K-5th Gr Dance/Movement	5014	shavonn	005
Solimar	Pinto Sanchez	Student Support		solimarp	

Steve	Bellizzi	Teacher - Middle School Spanish & Social Studies	5070	steveb	311
Susan	Burrows	Assistant 3rd/4th Enhanced (Tr. Dana/Tr. Ericka)		susanb	200/211
Tainiesha	Smith	Nurse	2232	nurse	104B
Tarek	Albasti	Teacher - Middle School Arabic	5047	tareka	014
Tienne	Martin	Teacher - K-3rd Gr Science & 1st Gr Computer	5121	tiennem	013
Tom	Harker	Assistant 1st/2nd Floating		thomash	
Tracey	Hill	Secretary & Purchasing Agent	2222	traceyh	Front Office
Tracey	Kohl	Teacher – 5th Gr English Language Arts & Social Studies	5032	Traceyk	216
Vivian	Ng	Teacher – Middle School Math & Science	5053	viviann	313
Yerodin	Lucas	Teacher – Special Education & English Language Arts	5027	yerodinl	210

## **2011-2012 Board of Trustees**

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Contact the Board of Trustees: [feedback@icscharter.com](mailto:feedback@icscharter.com)

As the governing body of Independence Charter School, the Board of Trustees has authority to make decisions regarding the operation of ICS, including budgeting, curriculum, facilities, and operating procedures, as well as the employment of both professional and nonprofessional employees, all in the service of fulfilling the Mission of the school.

The ICS Board of Trustees includes two parent seats. Parents from the school community may run for a parent seat. These seats have two-year terms and the elections are usually every other year unless a member resigns before the term is completed.

Parents, ICS Staff, community members and the general public are welcome to come to any and all Board Meetings. There is a public comment period scheduled at each meeting. The meetings occur on the second Wednesday of each month (unless otherwise noted) at 7pm. Please make every attempt to arrive by 6:55pm so that we can easily admit you to the building. Please check the school website at [www.independencecharter.org](http://www.independencecharter.org) to monitor schedule changes. Attending the Board meetings are the Chief Executive Officer, the Principals, ICS teacher representative, PTA representative, our Business Manager and any other interested parties.

### **Schedule of Board of Trustees Meetings**

2011-2012 School Year  
7pm at ICS, 1600 Lombard St.

September 14, 2011  
October 12, 2011  
November 9, 2011  
December 14, 2011  
January 11, 2012

February 8, 2012  
March 14, 2012  
April 11, 2012  
May 9, 2012  
June 20, 2012 (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday)

## Dress Code

<b>Bottoms: K-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Loose-fitting navy trousers/slacks, capris worn at the waist</li> <li>▪ Navy jumper, skorts, skirts and shorts - must be knee-length or longer</li> <li>▪ No jeans or jeans-like pants, no exercise/leggings-like pants</li> <li>▪ No ripped or intentionally-distressed pants</li> <li>▪ Solid navy sweatpants on dance/movement, fitness/movement days only</li> </ul>
<b>Tops: Middle School (5-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Red polo shirt purchased from ICS-approved vendor (long- or short-sleeve)</li> <li>▪ Shirt-tails may not extend below fingertips</li> </ul>
<b>Tops: Lower School (K-4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Red or navy polo* shirt (long- or short-sleeve)</li> <li>▪ LOWER SCHOOL students are <b>not</b> required to have logo wear</li> </ul>
<b>Outerwear: K-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Solid navy sweater, pullover or vest</li> <li>▪ No hoods or “hoodies” may be worn</li> <li>▪ Solid <i>white</i> shirt worn underneath polo shirt for warmth (gr.5-8)</li> <li>▪ Solid red, white or blue shirt worn underneath polo shirt for warmth (gr.K-4)</li> </ul>
<b>Socks: K-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Socks, tights or leggings <i>underneath skirts or shorts</i> may be worn and may be any color or design</li> <li>▪ No intentionally-distressed tights and leggings</li> </ul>
<b>Shoes: K-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Closed shoes, sneakers or boots</li> <li>▪ No sandals</li> <li>▪ Toes and heels must be covered</li> </ul>
<b>Dance/Mvmt Fitness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Solid navy sweatpants may be worn all day</li> <li>▪ Shorts must be worn under skirt/jumper</li> <li>▪ Dress code polos required</li> <li>▪ Athletic shoes must be worn for MS Fitness and Movement class</li> </ul>
<b>Accessories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stud earrings, not extending below or wrapping around ear lobe</li> <li>▪ 1 watch, 1 simple ring, 1 simple necklace tucked under shirt/blouse</li> <li>▪ No bracelets</li> <li>▪ No hats or scarves unless for religious reasons</li> <li>▪ Hair accessories may not be hazardous or distracting</li> </ul>
<b>Field Trips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students must remain in dress code for all trips unless otherwise indicated by the teacher due to nature of field trip</li> </ul>
<b>Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Upper school wears ICS-approved vendor polo shirts; lower school not required</li> <li>▪ Length of skirts, shorts, skorts and jumpers must be knee-length or longer</li> <li>▪ Dance/Mvmt/Fitness pants must be solid, no stripes or designs on sweatpants</li> <li>▪ NO logos other than ICS logo on any polos, no matter how small</li> </ul>
<b>Recess</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students will go outside in all weather, between 15° and 95°, including light rain and snow</li> <li>▪ Rain coats and ponchos, no umbrellas</li> <li>▪ Under 40°: winter coat, hat, gloves and neck warmers required</li> </ul>
<b>Dress Down Days</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All tops must have a sleeve and fully cover the midriff</li> <li>▪ All bottoms must be knee-length or longer</li> <li>▪ No hoop or dangling earrings</li> <li>▪ No hoods or “hoodies”</li> <li>▪ No inappropriate or derogatory language, images or messages on clothing</li> </ul> <p>School administrators will use their discretion to determine whether or not the clothing is appropriate for school. If the clothing is inappropriate or does not conform to the above expectations, the student will call home for a change of clothing and will lose future dress down privileges.</p>

\* Polo shirt means collared, three-button shirt, knit-type material (cotton or polyester/cotton blend)

LOWER SCHOOL students are not required to have logo wear, although parents may choose to purchase logo wear. Parents of students in all grades may purchase polo shirts from *Cramer’s Uniforms*, *Triple Play Sports* and *Land’s End* as well as may bring appropriate polo shirts to *Triple Play Sports* for embroidery. See next page for detailed vendor information.

**ATTENTION ICS FAMILIES: Please NOTE our updated Dress Code information**

**You may now use one of 3 vendors (see below) for dress code shirts. Also, we have added the option for students in all grades to bring their own 3-button, collared polo shirts to *Triple Play Sports* to have the logo embroidered onto the shirt. See below for all vendor information.**

**VENDOR INFORMATION**

**Cramer's Uniforms:**

Center City: Gallery II, 3<sup>rd</sup> level - 215-238-1400

Northeast: 4533 Frankford Avenue - 215-743-0750

South Philadelphia: 1704-06 E. Passyunk Ave. - 215-468-2400

Suburbs: 2868 DeKalb Pike, Northtowne Plaza, East Norristown, PA 19401 - 610-239-9160

New Jersey: 2465 South Broad Street, Trenton, NJ - 609-888-4004

[www.cramersuniforms.com](http://www.cramersuniforms.com)

**-for purchasing**

- polos WITH logos (required grades 5-8, optional grades K-4)
  - other items (pants, skirts, jumpers, shorts, sweaters, etc.)
- 

**Triple Play Sports:**

827 South 9th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147

215 923-5466

[www.tripleplaysports.com](http://www.tripleplaysports.com)

**- for purchasing**

- polos WITH logos – all grades
  - polos WITHOUT logos – grades K-4 only
  - other items (pants, skirts, jumpers, shorts, sweaters, etc.)
  - embroider ICS logo onto a red or navy polo shirt you provide
- 

**Land's End (online ordering):**

[www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com)

School Number 9001-1654-2

**-for purchasing**

- polos WITH logos – all grades
- polos WITHOUT logos - grades K-4 only
- Choose from the following shirts in CLASSIC NAVY or RED only:
  - School Uniform Kids' Short or Long Sleeve Solid Performance Interlock Polo
  - School Uniform Kids' Short or Long Sleeve Solid Mesh Polo
  - School Uniform Girls Short or Long Sleeve Feminine Fit Interlock Polo
- other items (pants, skirts, jumpers, shorts, sweaters, etc.)

## Arrival and Dismissal

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*Independence Charter serves over 780 students who come from 46 zip codes in the city of Philadelphia. Safety is the most important factor in all of our work. It is important that parents and students help contribute to safety and order by following these rules for arrival and dismissal.*

**\*\*Please note that parents who arrive after 3:45 are required to pay a late fee of \$10 for the first student and \$5 for each sibling. Fines not paid within 48 hours will be billed to students' meal accounts.\*\***

### ARRIVAL

#### **Schedule:**

- Children should arrive to school between 7:45 and 8:25am. No children are to arrive before 7:45am.
- Between 7:45 and 8:25, children will enter through the Lombard Street school yard (the gate) entrance.
- After 8:25 students must enter through the Lombard Street main entrance (the blue doors).
- Students must be in their classrooms or advisories by 8:30. Students who arrive to class later than 8:30 will be marked late even if they entered the building just before 8:30.

#### **Late or Absent Students:**

- If your child is arriving to school late, you must accompany him/her to the front office to sign in and obtain a late slip.
- If your child is returning to school after being absent, the parent MUST submit a note or send an email, explaining the absence to **Tr. Ingrid**. Please note that we are required to report children who are chronically late or absent to the Department of Human Services. (You will receive a warning prior to this action.)

#### **Arrival Procedures:**

- Parents/guardians who are driving should pull up to the school side curb to drop off children. Children MUST use the curb-side door to exit the vehicle.
- It is recommended that parents make every effort to avoid driving up 16<sup>th</sup> Street at any time, as school and SEPTA busses use 16<sup>th</sup> street for loading and unloading.
- No cars will be allowed on Naudain Street during arrival or dismissal.
- During arrival parents/guardians are NOT allowed to enter the school yard. Parents/guardians will leave children at the school yard gate.
- Parents/guardians who have an appointment with a teacher or who have other office business must FIRST drop children off in the school yard and THEN use the front door on Lombard Street to check in at the office.

**If you have any questions, contact Tr. Ingrid Schafroth at 215-238-8000, x2259 or [ingrids@icscharter.com](mailto:ingrids@icscharter.com).**

## **DISMISSAL**

*Please note the changes to dismissal times for Kindergarteners.*

### **Schedule:**

- Kindergarten dismissal begins at 3:00 and ends at 3:15pm.
- 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade dismissal begins at 3:15 and ends at 3:30pm.
- Every Wednesday, beginning on 9/15/10, Kindergarten students are dismissed from 2:00-2:15 and 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade is dismissed from 2:15-2:30.
- Kindergarten students who travel with older siblings will be picked up by those siblings.
- Kindergarten siblings who wait with older siblings for Walker and Driver parents will dismiss with those siblings by 3:30.

### **Late Pick-up:**

- If you arrive after 3:45pm (2:45pm on Early Dismissal days) to pick up your child, he or she will be sent to a pre-determined classroom to wait for pick up. All children will be supervised by a staff member until a parent arrives. Parents/guardians must come to the front office and pay the per incident \$10 fee (plus \$5 each for additional siblings). If the full amount due is not paid within 48 hours, the balance will be deducted from your child's meal account. The front office will call the classroom and the child will be escorted to the front office. If late pick-up becomes chronic, the Principals, Deans of Students and/or School Counselors will be assigned to the case as necessary. (Please note that the fee will defray the cost of the additional staff person assigned to this role.)

### **Dismissal Procedures:**

#### **Drivers**

- ALL PARENTS who have identified as Drivers will receive one color-coded placard to keep in the front of the car during pickup.
- Parent Drivers who are picking up ONLY Kindergarten students will have a RED placard and may arrive between 2:55 and 3:15pm to pick up students. Kindergarteners will arrive at 3:00 to be escorted to cars.
- Parent Drivers of students in grades 1-8 or multiple grades including K will have a BLUE placard and must arrive between 3:15 and 3:30 for pickup. Your children will be escorted to your car.
- Drivers MUST stay with their vehicles at all times and should continue pulling forward as space allows so that new arrivals can pull in smoothly behind them. Parent Drivers must NEVER leave their vehicles unattended or double parked as they will cause safety concerns and may be ticketed by the police or PPA.
- If there is no space available curbside, consider parking in a nearby metered space and walking, which can often be faster.
- 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders are dismissed at the back of the building. If you are a driver of middle school students ONLY, consider arranging a consistent meeting spot with your child (for instance, on South St.) to avoid driving down Lombard St. Do not idle on 16<sup>th</sup> Street.
- It is recommended that parents make every effort to avoid driving up 16<sup>th</sup> Street at any time, as busses use 16<sup>th</sup> street for loading and unloading.
- No cars will be allowed on Naudain Street during arrival or dismissal.

## Walkers

- Parents of students who are Walkers will locate their children on Lombard Street in front of the school.
- Parents of Walkers will NOT be allowed to drive up and park their cars in front of the school. If you drive occasionally due to inclement weather or changes in schedule, you must PARK your car in a nearby metered or free parking space and walk to the school from there to pick up your child.
- We understand that dismissal is a convenient time for you to connect with other families. Our priority, however, must be to maintain maximum student safety at all times. The sidewalk directly in front of the school must be kept clear so that we can find students easily and bring them to their cars safely. To this end, we ask that parents of Walkers NOT congregate directly in front of the school, but instead move in the direction of 17<sup>th</sup> and Lombard as a place to meet with each other after picking up students.

## **Special Early Dismissal:**

- Early dismissals are permitted in the following cases:
  - ✓ Medical or family emergency
  - ✓ Medical or dental appointment that could not be scheduled outside school hours
  - ✓ Religious education or event
- If you require your child to be dismissed early for one of these reasons, you must call or email Tr. Maureen (x2221 or [maureenl@icscharter.com](mailto:maureenl@icscharter.com)) before 12:00 noon to schedule the dismissal. Classroom teachers cannot make these changes.
- Due to the importance of a *full* instructional day, every day, for the success of all students, the front office WILL NOT be able to call your child's classroom unless you have contacted Tr. LaVeta ahead of time for a planned early dismissal. This includes the time between 2:30-3:30pm, as instruction continues until the students are officially dismissed.

## **Transportation Changes:**

- Changes to transportation or dismissal are permitted in the following cases:
  - ✓ Medical or family emergency
  - ✓ Medical or dental appointment that could not be scheduled outside school hours
  - ✓ Religious education or event

***\*\*No other transportation changes will be accepted unless they are permanent.\*\* There are no exceptions.***
- If you require a permanent transportation change for your child, you must call or email Tr. LaVeta (x2226 or [lavetam@icscharter.com](mailto:lavetam@icscharter.com)) to schedule the change. Office receptionists and classroom teachers cannot make these changes.
- If you have a temporary change, parents (or another person authorized to pick up your child) must arrive to school in time to pull their child from their usual dismissal line.
  - ✓ **Anyone who is not a regular Driver (i.e. does not have a red or blue placard):** If you must drive, please park your car in a nearby metered or free spot (not in front of the school) and walk to the school yard.
  - ✓ **After School:** If you do not want your child to attend an outside agency after-school program for which he/she is signed up, please walk to the school yard gate at 3:15 to pick him/her up from the program.
  - ✓ **Bus:** If you do not want your child to ride the school bus, please walk to the southwest corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Lombard at 3:15 and WAIT for your child's bus line teacher. You must sign your child out of the bus line.
  - ✓ *If you change **who** will be picking up your child due to an emergency you must contact Tr. LaVeta with the information. The person picking up must present identification to verify his/her identity.*



Additionally, conduct resulting in a suspension from the bus may also result in disciplinary action in the school. This may include, but is not limited to, Saturday school and community service or out-of-school suspension. Furthermore, you may be liable for property damage or injury caused by your child.

The above examples of the incidents are only a guideline and are not fully inclusive. Therefore, Independence Charter School reserves the right to modify/change the above policies.

**INDEPENDENCE CHARTER SCHOOL WILL DO THE FOLLOWING TO ENSURE STUDENTS FULLY UNDERSTAND THE BUS RULES AND POLICY:**

1. Hold a meeting for all bus students in September and January to discuss and remind all students of the rules. Parents will receive a letter to notify them that their child has attended a meeting and what the meeting covered. Parent signature will be required to ensure receipt of the notice.
2. Bus Line Teachers will remind students of behavior expectations, daily.
3. Students involved in an incident will have a meeting with the Dean of Students. This meeting will involve a reminder of all rules, discussion of possible “strategies” and mediation (when necessary).

**HELPFUL HINTS FOR A POSITIVE SCHOOL BUS EXPERIENCE...**

1. Remind your child of the school bus rules DAILY.
2. Send your child with a favorite chapter book or “bag of books”. Please write your or your child’s name in the covers.
3. If your child does not have a chance to eat breakfast, please have him or her save the food and drink until arrival at school. He or she will be given an opportunity to eat and drink before going to class.
4. Electronic music devices (MP3’s, IPODS, etc.) and personal electronic devices may be used when traveling on the school bus. We cannot, however, guarantee the security of such items on the bus or in school.
5. If you have questions or concerns about a bus incident PLEASE contact **Tr. LaVeta** (x2226 or [laveta@icscharter.com](mailto:laveta@icscharter.com)) immediately.

## **Bathroom Use**

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*School safety for students includes planning how and when bathrooms may be used by students.*

### **Lower School (K-4)**

- Each K-4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher will schedule a classroom bathroom time. This is a time where the teacher and/or assistant will escort the class in groups or as a whole to the basement bathrooms.
- Kindergarten students will use the in-class bathrooms whenever possible.
- Students on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor (K-2) will be sent with a same gender partner to the floor bathrooms between 9:00 – 2:00. Students may use the floor bathrooms twice per day. Students will be reminded that they must use the basement bathroom before they come to class in the morning and during lunch (not recess).
- Students on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (3-5) will be sent to the bathroom individually. No more than one student will be sent to the floor bathrooms at a time. Students may use the floor bathrooms once per day. (Staff will provide for emergency situations.)
- Between 2:00 and 3:00, students needing to use the bathroom will be sent in pairs (no more than two) to the basement bathroom: no more than one boy pair and one girl pair at a time.
- ALL STUDENTS may use (and should be encouraged to use) the basement bathrooms during arrival, during their lunch (not recess) and between 2:00 – 3:00.
- Students should not use the bathroom at dismissal. ALL bathrooms will be locked during dismissal.

### **Middle School (5 – 8)**

- 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students may use the floor bathrooms twice per day. They must sign out each time with the NTA on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor.
- Students may not use the bathrooms during the first 10 minutes of class.
- Students may not use the bathrooms during the last 10 minutes of class.
- No more than one student may be sent to the floor bathrooms at a time.
- ALL STUDENTS may use (and should be reminded to use) the basement bathrooms during arrival and during their lunch (not recess).
- Students may not use the bathroom at dismissal time. ALL bathrooms will be locked during dismissal.

\*\*\*Some students may have a note from their physician stating that they be allowed to use the bathroom whenever necessary. This note must be delivered by parents to the nurse. These students will be allowed to use the bathroom as necessary. If this becomes an issue, parents should speak to the nurse about their concerns.\*\*\*

## Homework Guidelines

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The Curriculum Committee of the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees, working with teachers and parents of ICS, has developed Homework Guidelines in order to:

- \* provide specific guidelines on homework for teachers, parents, and students
- \* promote continuity and consistency with homework practices throughout the school
- \* foster positive attitudes about and experiences with homework
- \* help new teachers, parents, and students adjust to homework practices at this school
- \* facilitate communication between home and school

ICS teachers assign homework to promote good study habits. The amount of homework given, as well as the responsibility given to students to complete the homework, increases as students move up in grade level and prepare for high school. Homework also provides parents an opportunity to see what their children are working on in class. Homework is not intended to be a burden on families.

**ICS recognizes that becoming a good reader is a key to success. Reading enrichment at home is a major ingredient to this success. Therefore, ICS expects that students are reading at home with a family member or independently for at least 20 minutes each night.** In addition, the following total maximum minutes per school night (Monday - Thursday) should be spent on homework. Teachers are not obligated to assign this much homework every night; rather, they will strive to assign meaningful work for students to do at home as a complement to the learning that is taking place in the classroom. At times, more time may be needed to study for tests or prepare for special projects.

Times below do not include reading for enrichment noted above.

Kindergarten: 15 minutes maximum (does not include reading for enrichment with a family member) (Kindergarten homework may begin later in the fall.)

Grade 1: 15 minutes maximum

Grade 2: 20 minutes maximum

Grade 3: 20 minutes maximum

Grade 4: 30 minutes maximum

Grade 5: 40 minutes maximum

Grade 6: 40 minutes maximum

Grade 7: 70 minutes maximum

Grade 8: 80 minutes maximum

The time limits established are in agreement with the amounts of homework recommended by the National PTA and the National Education Association (NEA).

Parents and teachers should work together to meet the individual needs of each student through homework. For example, students who need or want more homework should have other projects to choose from. Some students may be assigned more or less "drill" homework depending on their mastery of the topic. Teachers at ICS also realize the uniqueness of each child in the school and his/her needs. Whereas these guidelines are based on the "average" child, individual differences among children must be taken into consideration by parents and teachers. Exceptions to these guidelines, therefore, must be expected with children with special needs. The importance of clear and concise communication between home and school cannot be over-emphasized, especially in these situations.

## **Middle School Procedures and Routines**

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The utilization of the following procedures and routines helps to set an environment conducive to optimal learning:

### **1. ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

#### *1. Entering the Room*

- Students are given a total of 3 minutes to transition from one class to the next. During the last minute of the transition, students will line up outside the classroom in a quiet, orderly line facing the teacher.
- Teachers will greet each student individually and ensure that are all calm before entering the class.
- Teachers may use this time to take attendance, check for homework, or remind students about class procedures and expectations.

#### *2. Homework Collection*

- All teachers will collect homework in the beginning of class.
- Students should take out work as soon as they get to class and place it in the middle or front of the table
- Teachers may choose to mark homework for completion and then return to students to use during the class period or teachers may decide to collect the homework to grade and return later.

#### *3. “Warm-Up”*

- There will be a prompt displayed (in the same place every day)
- This prompt will be worded such that students can get started without explanation or directions or questions.
- Warm-ups can include (but are not limited to)
  - Independent Reading
  - Journaling / writing prompts
  - Writing about a topic about to be covered (accessing prior knowledge)
  - Writing about a topic recently covered (assessment)
  - Problem of the day
  - Collecting opinions from students
  - Addressing current events
  - Vocabulary work

## **2. STUDENT PLANNERS**

Students are given planners and are explicitly taught how to enter items into their planners. This practice helps to build time-management and organization skills. Students will be provided time to write down any assignments, homework, or reminders in each class period. If there is no homework for a particular class, students should write “no HW” in the appropriate box in the planner.

Teachers will sign or initial each student’s planner after the student has copied the homework or written “no HW” in the appropriate box. This then lets the parents know whether the student has appropriately copied the assigned work for that day. If there is no signature, then the student may not have properly listed his or her assignments.

Parents should review the planner with their children, and also sign that they have seen the assignments, homework or reminders written in the planner. This system helps parents know if their children are completing all required work, and informs teachers that parents are reviewing the work. Parents should encourage their children to review their own planners regularly, in an effort to keep them up-to-date, and to use them on a regular basis.

## **3. POSTING THE DAILY AGENDA**

The plan for each lesson or teaching period is posted in a consistent location. This practice allows students, visitors, support staff, and the teacher to easily keep track of what’s next, what’s already been addressed, etc.

## **4. MIDDLE SCHOOL CALENDAR**

A large calendar will be posted in the middle school hallway. Teachers will add important dates such as:

- Unit/chapter tests
- Project due dates
- Field trips
- Any important deadlines

This practice allows the entire Middle School community to share an awareness of when students and colleagues are likely to become overwhelmed with many significant tasks falling on the same day or during the same week.

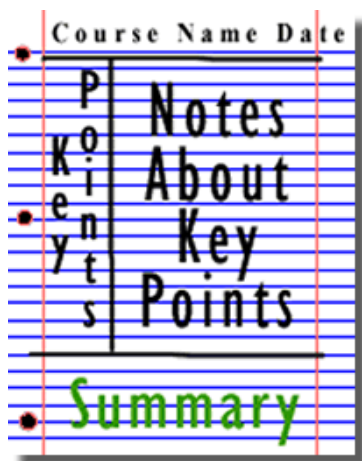
## **5. STUDY SKILLS**

Prior to all major assessments, teachers will schedule review sessions. During these review sessions teachers will:

- inform students about the content that will be covered on the assessment and the format of the assessment.
- lead students through creating a study guide.
- provide time IN CLASS for students to study independently, in partners, or in groups.
- teach a variety of study methods and will encourage students to use them at home in order to continue preparing for the assessment.
- have students write a study reminder in their planners. (Students should have already written the test reminder on the appropriate date in their planner well ahead of time.)

## 6. NOTE-TAKING

The Cornell note-taking system helps students take notes and prepare to study in a more concise and logical fashion. It essentially helps students to create a study guide as they go along, instead of waiting until it's time to cram for the test.



The **heading** area is for student name, advisory #, date, class.

The **Main Notes** section is for writing the material that is presented during class and can include (but is not limited to) definitions of key terms, examples of math problems/solutions, important dates in a timeline, key events in a story plot, etc.

The left column (sometimes called the cue column) is meant for important **vocabulary** and/or **questions** about the notes in the main notes section.

The portion at the bottom of the page should include a **summary** of the information presented. This could be a few sentences, some important bullet points, etc.

(Image from [www.century.adams12.org/Cornell%20Notes.htm](http://www.century.adams12.org/Cornell%20Notes.htm))

## 7. BOOK-LENDING

Reading is one of the most important aspects of your child's education. It is a skill that is constantly reinforced in school and one that requires limitless practice at home as well. To that end, teachers are sending students home with books that belong to the school. Students should be reading these books as per their assignments both to foster their reading skills and to keep up with classwork. In order to continue allowing children to take these books home, it is imperative that students return their

borrowed books to school. We can only maintain the lending system as long as we have books to lend. **Therefore, if a student loses or damages a book, he or she will be responsible to pay the school the face value of the book so that we may replace it in our lending library.** When your child brings a book home, please help him or her keep track of it so that it can be returned to the school when it is due. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for helping us to foster a love of reading in all our students.

## **8. HEALTHY SNACKS**

In order to maximize learning potential we recommend that parents support students bringing a healthy snack. Attention and concentration will wane on an empty stomach. Healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, granola bars, yogurt, dried fruit and nuts, and water provide extended hours of energy for learning, whereas sugary snacks provide only short term energy with a "crash". **Candy, seeds and any drinks other than water will NOT be allowed during snack time or during any other time in the classroom.**

## **9. MAKING UP WORK AFTER BEING ABSENT**

ICS has created an **Absentee Form** that encourages students to conference with their teachers upon returning to school after an absence. The form provides space for students to take notes on any missing work and the due date(s) for submission. It is available to students in all middle school classrooms throughout the school year.

Teachers will regularly remind students about the availability of the **Absentee Forms**. Students should then take the form and use it appropriately to conference briefly with each of their teachers throughout the day.

At ICS, we strive to teach our students to manage their own academic responsibilities. Therefore, while the teachers will support the students by providing all necessary information and/or materials, it is chiefly the responsibility of the student to take and use the form upon returning to ICS after an absence.

## **Academic Integrity**

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As stated in our Code of Conduct, “we know that a child’s educational experiences help to lay a foundation for future successes. We also understand that an effective instructional program requires an orderly environment in which students and faculty know and abide by reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior while respecting the rights, person and property of others.” We believe this framework applies to academic integrity as well as social integrity.

### **What is plagiarism?**

Plagiarism is claiming someone else’s words and/or ideas as one’s own. The Modern Language Association defines plagiarism as “Using another person’s ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source....[To] plagiarize is to give the impression that you wrote or thought something that you in fact borrowed from someone....” (from Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook*, ch. 2)

Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to):

- copying another student’s work (test answers, homework assignment, classwork, computer files, etc.) and submitting as your own
- working on an assignment with another student and then submitting the assignment as if the student completed it individually
- quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing another person’s words (from a book, article, speech, other source) and not crediting that source
- copying words from an Internet source and not crediting that source
- using another’s wording or phrase, paraphrasing another’s argument and submitting in, in part or in its entirety, as one’s own
- falsifying documentation of a source (Bibliography/Works Cited sources falsely listed)

### **Why is plagiarism wrong?**

Plagiarism is unethical and antithetical to our mission and vision. We expect honest behavior from all of our students, and strive to foster a strong learning community built on respect for one another’s ideas, words, and intellectual property. Plagiarism also breaks copyright laws and cheats the student out of learning the required material. When one plagiarizes, he or she is not crediting the person who is responsible for the original work, and therefore not properly acknowledging another’s ideas or work. Perhaps most importantly, however, is how plagiarism affects the student’s learning experience. When one reads, listens to, and understands the ideas of others, and then uses those ideas to help form his or her own ideas, one learns. A well-developed understanding of and respect for the process of properly gathering, organizing, critically analyzing, and documenting outside information is representative of integrity of the ICS community.

### **Our Responsibility**

Our goal at ICS is to ensure that we provide students with the tools to learn. We are responsible to teach the ethical foundation as well as skill set necessary for appropriate documentation. ICS teachers will teach students the research and documentation skills necessary to maintain academic integrity in their work. In turn, we are setting the expectation that all Middle School students, once taught this skill set, are responsible for such appropriate documentation of the ideas and words of other people.

## **Consequences for Plagiarizing**

5<sup>th</sup> Grade and Trimesters 1 and 2 of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- teacher contacts parent within one day of acknowledgement of plagiarism
- teacher ensures student understanding of expected skills and behaviors and re-teaches if necessary
- student re-submits assignment with necessary changes within 5 calendar days of teacher acknowledgment of plagiarism for a grade not to exceed “70.” If student does not re-submit assignment within 5 calendar days, he or she receives a grade of “0” for the assignment
- teacher notifies dean

Trimester 3 of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grades:

- teacher contacts parent within one day of acknowledgement of plagiarism
- teacher ensures student understanding of expected skills and behaviors
- student re-submits assignment within 3 calendar days of teacher acknowledgment of plagiarism for a grade not to exceed “60.” If student does not re-submit assignment within 3 calendar days, he or she receives a grade of “0” for the assignment
- teacher notifies dean

**If a student repeatedly plagiarizes, the student may be subject to more serious consequences as outlined in the ICS Code of Conduct.**

## Food Services

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If you have any questions, contact our Food Services Coordinator, Maestra Neyza Cabrera at x2228 or [neyzac@icscharter.com](mailto:neyzac@icscharter.com).



Children need healthy meals to reach their full learning potential. Our school meals program offers our students healthy breakfast and lunch options every day. Your child will be able to choose from at least two lunch options each day. **Full-priced breakfast costs \$1.25; full-priced lunch costs \$2.30**; monthly menus are posted on the ICS website and in the ICS newsletter. *A la carte* items (i.e. snack items) are available for purchase with cash only.

Families must complete the annual financial meal application to find out whether their child/ren qualify for free or reduced-priced meals. **The reduced meal price is 30¢ for breakfast and 40¢ for lunch.**

We ask that all families, regardless of income, complete an application. Please do not write “NOT ELIGIBLE” on the form if you know your family does not qualify. Instead, simply enter an income (from the chart) that is over the eligibility limit.

Completed applications should be returned to Tr. Neyza Cabrera, Food Services Coordinator at the school. You may bring it in or mail it to 1600 Lombard St., Phila., PA 19146. You may also complete the application online at: [www.compass.pa.state.us](http://www.compass.pa.state.us). If you apply on-line, you need to contact Tr. Neyza to confirm whether or not ICS received your family’s determination from the COMPASS system. If your household income changes at some point within the school year, you can complete a new application to find out if your family’s meal payment status has changed.

Every student has an account for meal purchases; parents of students paying reduced or full price need to submit a “request for activation” form and must start the year with a positive account balance. To add funds to a student’s meal account, parents go on-line and pay via credit card, or up to \$20 **in cash or money orders** (checks are NOT accepted) can be sent with their child on any day; parents wanting to bring in higher amounts must bring the payment to Tr. Neyza themselves.

There are two ways to access the LunchTime Portal via the Internet:

- Direct: <http://mms.icscharter.com/lunchtime/default.aspx>
- Indirect: Log into the MMS Parent Portal and click on 'View Cafeteria Account'.

For information about how to set up your LunchTime Portal Account, contact Tr. Neyza.

Parents are responsible for keeping track of their child’s account balance information to ensure that funds are sent in as necessary.

## **School Nurse**

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Guidelines from the school nurse's office at ICS:

- All students should have breakfast every morning and come to school well rested. Independence Charter offers a breakfast program so that your child can purchase breakfast at school. Breakfast starts at 7:45am and ends when the last child arrives to school.
- Students should not be sent to school if they have a fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. In addition, students must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- If your child needs to have medication administered during school hours, you **MUST** complete the **In-School Medication Administration** form that was included in the back-to-school packet that was mailed home. If you need another copy of the form you can download it from the website or contact me. No medication will be administered without a completed form on file.
- Vision, height, weight, and immunizations will be monitored throughout the school year. Parents will be notified if further follow-up is needed.
  - All newly admitted students who are in Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade will need a complete physical.
  - Dental exams are mandated by the state for students in Kindergarten and/or 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. All students will have the opportunity to participate in the Smiles program ([www.mobiledentists.com](http://www.mobiledentists.com)) later in the school year. Parents will be notified of this date in advance.

**Nurse's office hours are as follows:**

9:00-10:00am:	Scheduled screenings only
10:30am-12:30pm:	Non-emergency cases
1:30-2:30pm:	Non-emergency cases (evaluated on a case-by-case basis)

To contact the school nurse's office, call 215-238-8000 x2232 or send an email to [nurse@icscharter.com](mailto:nurse@icscharter.com).

## Counselor Services

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Often, a child's mental health affects his/her level of success in school. If a child is feeling anxious, angry, or upset, his/her ability to focus on academics is compromised. On the other hand, when a child is content and at ease, he/she is able to concentrate and participate in learning. Our job at Independence Charter School is to support your child's academic and mental health. In doing so, we are here to assist your family as well.

The following outlines the ways that we can serve your child and family, ICS will:

- Work with individual students as needed
- Provide small group guidance and counseling for students with similar concerns
- Conduct interesting and relevant classroom guidance lessons on an as-needed basis
- Conduct follow-up consultation with teachers, parents, guardians and staff
- Utilize and refer parents to outside services and agencies in the Philadelphia area
- Provide parent education through workshops
- Assist students in making the transition into and out of ICS
- Maintain a library of pertinent materials and information and make them available to students, staff, and parents
- Coordinate the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Partnership
- Begin the high school search and application process with seventh and eighth graders

Contact the counselor (see staff directory for contact information) for your child's grade level if you have any questions, needs, or concerns about your child at Independence Charter School. Your concerns might include changes in your family, stress in your home, a sudden shift in your child's behavior, your child's peer relationships, or support in parenting.

## IMPORTANT RESOURCES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Contact ICS Counselors for additional resources in our community.

<i>After School Programs / Tutoring / Child Care / Search Engines</i>	<i>Phone Number / Website</i>
<b>After School Activities Partnership</b> (Search by neighborhood to find after school programs)	215-545-ASAP (2727) <a href="http://www.phillyasap.org">www.phillyasap.org</a>
<b>Attic Youth Center</b> (Creates opportunities for LGBTQ youth (12-21) to develop within a safe and supportive community.)	215-545-4331 <a href="http://www.atticyouthcenter.org">www.atticyouthcenter.org</a>
<b>Child Care Information Services of Philadelphia</b> (Information on child care in the greater Philadelphia area)	1-888-461-KIDS (5437) <a href="http://www.philadelphiachildcare.org">www.philadelphiachildcare.org</a>
<b>Mighty Writers</b> (Provide one-to-one tutoring and writing workshops ages 7-17 at 15 <sup>th</sup> & Christian)	267-239-0899 <a href="http://www.mightywriters.org">www.mightywriters.org</a>
<b>Philadelphia Department of Recreation</b> (Information on city run recreation and after school programs)	215-683-3600 <a href="http://www.phila.gov/recreation">www.phila.gov/recreation</a>
<b>Philly SOS</b> (Search by zip code, agency, etc. for mental health/counseling, basic needs, education (support services/programs), health care, individual & family life, legal services, income security, and other human service categories.)	<a href="http://www.phillysos.org">www.phillysos.org</a>
<b>Police Athletic League of Philadelphia</b> (Free youth program featuring sports, education and trips for children age 6 to 18.)	215-291-9000 <a href="http://www.phillypal.com">www.phillypal.com</a>
<b>TutorsTeach</b> (Find qualified teachers and in-home tutors specializing in a wide range of subjects at every level.)	1-888-20-TEACH <a href="http://www.tutorsteach.com">www.tutorsteach.com</a>
<b><i>Family and Mental Health / Human Services</i></b>	
<b>Bureau of State Child Support Enforcement</b> (For information about the child support process in Pennsylvania)	1-800-932-0211
<b>Childline (State Child Abuse Registry)</b> (To report suspected child abuse or request child abuse history clearance)	1-800-932-0313
<b>Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)</b> (Provides health insurance to all uninsured children and teens who are not eligible for or enrolled in Medical Assistance.)	1-800-986-KIDS <a href="http://www.chipcoverspakids.com">www.chipcoverspakids.com</a>
<b>Community Behavioral Health</b> (Services for behavioral health, counseling and other mental health services)	1-800-545-2500 <a href="http://www.phila-bha.org">www.phila-bha.org</a>
<b>Community Legal Services</b> (Free legal services to low-income Philadelphia residents)	215-981-3700 <a href="http://www.clsphila.org">www.clsphila.org</a>
<b>Department of Human Services</b> (Works to protect children from abuse, neglect and delinquency; and to strengthen families by enhancing community-based prevention services)	215-683-4DHS <a href="http://www.phila.gov/dhs">www.phila.gov/dhs</a>
<b>Health Choices Hotline</b> (For information about Medicaid managed care programs) Southeast – Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties	1-800-440-3989 1-800-618-4225 (TTD/TTY)
<b>Home &amp; Community Based Services</b> (For information about programs to help persons with disabilities)	1-800-757-5042
<b>Office of Mental Health / Mental Retardation</b> (Information on MH/MR services in Philadelphia for families in crisis)	215-685-6440 <a href="http://www.phila.gov/health/units">www.phila.gov/health/units</a>
<b>Parents Involvement Network of Pennsylvania (PIN)</b> (Network for families of children with emotional or behavioral disorders, receiving mental health system devices, receiving special education services or are in the juvenile justice system)	1-800-688-4226 215-751-1800 <a href="http://www.pinofpa.org">www.pinofpa.org</a>
<b>Statewide Adoption Network</b> (For information about adoption in Pennsylvania)	1-800-585-SWAN
<b>Welfare Helpline</b> (For general information about Pennsylvania's public assistance programs – cash assistance, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Liheap, etc.)	1-800-692-7462 1-800-451-5996 (TDD)

## **Student Success Team (SST)**

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At Independence Charter School we are committed to ensuring the success of every child. The Student Success Team (SST) is an interdisciplinary team that uses a comprehensive, school-wide process to address the educational, behavioral, and/or medical needs of students. The SST works collaboratively with classroom teachers to identify and remove barriers that may be interfering with a child's success in school. SST members include the child's teacher(s), parents/guardians, school counselors, deans, nurse, and other support specialists and administrators. The members involved depend on the child's progress at each level.

### **Level I**

The Level I intervention is designed to identify and address the needs of groups of students with similar barriers to learning. At this level, teachers informally receive support from grade level partners, colleagues or support personnel to identify and implement strategies in the classroom.

### **Level II**

Individual students may still struggle in a particular area and need more targeted support. Level II is designed to address such needs and develop a support plan that will improve and monitor the child's progress. At Level II, a core group of support personnel (including the referring teacher) meets to identify the child's strengths and needs. After the SST meets and decides that a support plan is necessary, the child's parents/guardians are notified and join the SST Coordinator, referring teacher, and any other necessary SST members. This process enables the parents/guardians and SST members to develop a support plan that will improve and monitor the child's academic progress. Students often make adequate improvement over time and stay at Level II while SST members monitor their progress.

### **Level III**

Level III focuses on more documentation and in-depth data collection. This ranges from targeting new strategies, observing the child in multiple environments, conducting informal screenings, or a possible formal evaluation.

## **Join the PTA**

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### **What is the PTA anyway?**

The National PTA is one of the largest volunteer child advocacy organizations in the world with over 6 million members. Locally, the ICS PTA is made up of ICS families working together towards a common goal: to create a better school community for our families and a better educational experience for our children. We accomplish these by offering educational programs for families (like workshops) and supporting enrichment opportunities throughout the year (such as theatre trips for all grades, orchard visits, author readings & dance demonstrations).

### **Aren't PTAs just about fundraising?**

ICS PTA is more than just fundraising; it's about community. True, fundraising is a necessary evil, but we try to conduct these efforts in family-friendly ways. True, many requests come your way and some feel a bit overwhelmed by the requests. However, we don't expect you to participate in every fundraiser and that's why we try to offer a variety to choose from. Whether it's coupon books, wrapping paper, solar flashlights, cheesecakes, cookbooks or pizza, we hope there's something that fits your budget and your interests. It is our privilege that we are able to provide support, equipment and various activities to students and teachers that our school budget does not cover.

### **How do I get involved?**

- **Join** the PTA for only \$5 during back-to-school nights, or anytime for that matter. Joining the PTA shows your support for our efforts; it doesn't automatically mean you have to volunteer.
- **Sign up** for the PTA Yahoo Group list serve: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ICSpta> to receive meeting and PTA updates and connect with other PTA members. Be sure and visit our web page, [www.icspta.org](http://www.icspta.org) for additional information.
- **Attend** one of our monthly meetings held the first Thursday of every month at 5:30. Dinner and childcare are available for only \$2.
- **Volunteer.** There are countless ways you can help, whatever your level of flexibility. Look for the "School Volunteer Form" in this packet, or during back-to-school nights at the PTA table. Whether you have 30 minutes or a couple of hours, your ideas, your time, and your talents are truly needed and greatly appreciated!

### **PTA 2011/2012 Officers**

President: **Maureen Eagen**, [moeagen@comcast.net](mailto:moeagen@comcast.net), parent of 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> graders  
Vice President: **Annette Earling**, [earling@zaza.com](mailto:earling@zaza.com), parent of <sup>th</sup> grader  
Co-Treasurers: **Stephanie Kindt**, [stephaniekindtpvps@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniekindtpvps@gmail.com), parent of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders  
**Marc Hensley**, [mwhensley@comcast.net](mailto:mwhensley@comcast.net), parent of 1<sup>st</sup> grader  
Membership: **Caroline Masters**, [carolinemasters375@hotmail.com](mailto:carolinemasters375@hotmail.com), parent of 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> graders  
Secretary: **Denise Wilbanks**, [moniegirl2@verizon.net](mailto:moniegirl2@verizon.net), parent of 1<sup>st</sup> grader  
Communications: **Susan Burrows**, [sjeburrows@earthlink.net](mailto:sjeburrows@earthlink.net), parent of 6<sup>th</sup> grader

**To leave a phone message for the PTA, contact the ICS front desk at 215-238-8000 x2221.**

## **Volunteer**

Every excellent school relies on partnerships with committed and enthusiastic parents to lend support at every stage of their children's learning journey, and ICS is no exception. We encourage family members to share their time, talents, and ideas with us through volunteer work for the school. Volunteering can take many shapes that will fit into almost any family's busy schedule (because we know every family is very, very busy!):

- ❖ The first and BEST way to get involved is to start right in your child's classroom. Your child's teacher will need support throughout the year that might range from chaperoning a field trip, sharing a favorite book, working with small groups, contributing food for a celebration or fundraiser, being a "Room Parent", or organizing a community gathering, just to name a few! Watch the classroom newsletter for announcements about upcoming events and ways you can help, or contact the teacher to let him/her know your availability and interests.
- ❖ Watch for requests for help in Wednesday Communication flyers, weekly email updates, PTA communications and meetings, or the *ICS Link*.
- ❖ Call or email ICS's Volunteer Coordinator or PTA President anytime to find out what is available or to share an idea for a project you'd like to lead.

## **Volunteer Log**

Please always record your hours in the **Volunteer Log** in the front office. It is important that you sign in every time you come to the school to volunteer so that we can acknowledge your contribution and capture data about the achievements your efforts helped make possible! When you complete projects from home or forget to sign the log, you can send the information to the Volunteer Coordinator to log for you. Please include: **1) Your name, 2) Approximately how many hours you worked, and 3) The name or description of the project or job**

## **Volunteer Requirements**

All volunteers who will be working with students on a regular basis must obtain and submit to the school the clearances listed below. The total cost is \$53 (not including the TB test). Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator if these costs present a hardship.

- **FBI Background Check:** Visit [www.pa.cogentid.com](http://www.pa.cogentid.com) and click "PA Department of Education" for complete information. (The cost is \$33.)
- **PA Criminal History Check:** Visit <http://epatch.state.pa.us> and click "Submit a new record check." (The cost is \$10.)
- **PA Child Abuse Clearance:** Visit [www.dpw.state.pa.us](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us) and click "Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Form" on the right-hand side of the screen. (The cost is \$10.)
- A **TB Test** with a "negative" result.

## **Volunteer Expectations**

1. Report to the front office to sign in and out.
2. Wear a "Volunteer" identification badge while participating in volunteer activities.
3. Turn off or silence cell phones and remove Bluetooth headsets while in the building.
4. Avoid bringing younger siblings without notifying and receiving permission from the project manager.
5. Arrive on time and leave as scheduled to avoid confusion or disruption. Notify school staff when a scheduled commitment cannot be kept.
6. Remember that supervising and disciplining students are the responsibility of school staff.
7. Avoid interrupting ongoing instruction. Wait for an appropriate break if you have a question or need more guidance.
8. Understand that volunteer hours cannot be used to discuss spontaneously an individual student's progress or other personal matters with teachers and staff. Feel free to schedule an appointment that coincides with your volunteer schedule, however.
9. When working in your child's classroom, treat your child as you would any other child in the class. Too much interaction can be disruptive to your child as well as to his/her classmates.
10. *Keep confidential all matters or information concerning students, teachers, or the school.*

**Volunteers MAY NOT sign children out for early dismissal when exiting unless it has been previously scheduled at the front desk and is for an approved reason (see "Dismissal" in Handbook).**

## **Make a Donation**

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### **A Culture of Giving at Independence Charter School**

Since Independence Charter School (like other Philadelphia charter schools) receives only 75% of the funding of a traditional public school we need the help of families to raise funds to provide a rich learning experience for our kids. There are many way in which families can help. Below are just a few of the many ways for you to join our Culture of Giving and support Independence Charter's fundraising efforts:

- Volunteer for Independence Charter's Double Anniversary Celebration Committee (see below\*)
- Attend or volunteer for *Independence Charter 365* – the annual fundraising event premiering the World Holidays Calendar showcasing the artwork of Independence Charter's students
- Participate in PTA fundraising initiatives, including the Silent Auction and Fall Friendraiser (see "Join the PTA" on p. 38)
- Make a donation to the annual appeal
- Provide a matching gift from your employer
- Help us network with those who can donate funds or provide in-kind service
- Support student- and teacher-led fundraising efforts, such as Dollar Dress Down Days, Walk-a-Thons, and Bake Sales

ICS staff actively seeks public and foundation grants, corporate contributions and individual donations to supplement our operating budget. In 2010 Independence Charter became the recipient of a large federal grant to expand Arabic language studies.

\*In November 2011 Independence Charter will host a double celebration, the ten year anniversary of the school's founding and the 100 year anniversary of our building, the former Thomas Durham Elementary School.

As Independence Charter approaches the double anniversary milestone, we are launching a number of exciting fundraising initiatives that will advance our mission to educate a high performing, globally competent, bilingual student including:

- Expanded Access to Technology
- Extended School Day/Extended School Year Programming
- Teacher Professional Development
- Facilities Enhancements

We rely on your help with fundraising to reach our goals. ICS is a top school in part due to the support we receive from our families.

For more information about any of the opportunities listed above, contact:

**Monika Kreidie**  
Development Associate  
(215) 238-8000, ext. 2430  
[monikak@icscharter.com](mailto:monikak@icscharter.com)

## Learning Journey

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Independence Charter School (ICS) has developed a world-class curriculum that reflects the high expectations and goals we have for each and every student. The Board of Trustees and staff have selected rigorous educational standards that complement those provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education while supporting the global studies Mission and Vision of Independence Charter

Charter Schools, by law and by intent, are called to innovate and reform education and as such have the independence to determine the philosophical and curricular framework that will guide teaching and learning at their school. Charter School Boards of Trustees are responsible for making decisions regarding this framework, selecting curriculum which compliments the Mission and Vision of the School as written in the respective charter school application.

Independence Charter School recognizes that students come to school with varying levels of experience and readiness. Furthermore, ICS understands that students need a rich and varied learning environment that recognizes the multiple learning modalities of students. The curriculum and curricular approaches adopted by ICS address learners diversity while promoting a high level of excellence.

### Global Citizenship

“Education for Global Citizenship gives children and young people the opportunity to develop critical thinking about complex global issues in the safe space of the classroom...[It] encourages children and young people to explore, develop and express their own values and opinions whilst listening to and respecting other people’s points of view. [It aims to teach them how to make]...informed choices as to how they exercise their own rights and their responsibilities to others...[and] learn how decisions made by people in other parts of the world affect our lives, just as our decisions affect the lives of others.

“Education for Global Citizenship uses a multitude of participatory teaching and learning methodologies...and is relevant to all areas of the curriculum, all abilities and all ages. Ideally it encompasses the whole school, and is explicit not only in what is taught and learned in the classroom, but in the school’s ethos. It would be apparent, for example, in decision-making processes, estate management, purchasing policies, and in relationships between pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community.” (*Education for Global Citizenship: A Guide for Schools*, p.2 Oxfam, 2006)

During the 2008-2009 academic year, ICS staff, parents and Board members met to research and discuss the future of global education at our school. This initiative grew out of *the Independence Charter School Strategic Plan: 2007-2009* which reiterated our commitment to continually reevaluating, revising and strengthening our curriculum. In addition, the plan outlines the importance of teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills so that our students become life-long learners. Finally, the plan requires that we “revise, develop, and improve our international/world cultures curriculum so that it is a model program.” The Global Education Task Force (initially the World Cultures and Languages Task Force), a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, embarked on its work by investigating broader trends in the field, and quickly agreed that our goals should be focused on formally integrating global education principles into our current design.

As a result of our research of the cutting edge and relevant resources, in February 2009, the ICS Board of Trustees, upon the committee’s recommendation, approved the adoption of the *Oxfam Curriculum for Global Citizenship* as “a foundational and guiding philosophy (though not a limiting one) for the school” (from the *Curriculum Committee Report to the Board of Trustees*, February 2009). These guidelines outline the Knowledge and Understandings; Skills; and Values and Dispositions students need so that they are enabled to develop into global citizens. To learn more about the Oxfam

principles, please log on to Oxfam.org or, for a specific explanation of the Oxfam principles, go directly to [http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/gc/files/education\\_for\\_global\\_citizenship\\_a\\_guide\\_for\\_schools.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/gc/files/education_for_global_citizenship_a_guide_for_schools.pdf) Beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year, all school planning considered these guidelines when planning units of study and student experiences at ICS.

### **Fine Arts**

ICS students emerge as sophisticated, critical consumers and producers of the arts. Grades K-5 students attend weekly art classes where they begin to understand art through the artist and his or her work.

Students learn the language of art and the techniques for producing various styles of art. Students also discuss the influence of culture and historical events on the artist. Where possible, the fine arts program integrates aspects of ongoing global studies, thereby reinforcing the study of global diversity. In the past, students have studied artists and movements from many global areas including the Impressionists, Frida Kahlo, Peter Sibanda, and many others. Students spend an average of six weeks studying one artist. Students in Grade 7, who plan to apply to high schools which require art portfolios, meet with the art teacher to prepare such portfolios.

### **Music**

At ICS, music in grades K-5 has two components:

- 1) *General music knowledge and Spanish vocabulary*: Students in grades K-5 learn about concepts like sound, rhythm, melody, musical dynamics, tempo, form, musical instruments, texture and musical mood. By listening, singing, expressing themselves, improvising, exploring, creating, categorizing, criticizing, playing different instruments and dancing, the students internalize those musical concepts and are able to make appropriate musical choices. The music curriculum is taught in both English and Spanish in order to support the ICS Spanish language instruction (which demonstrates a strong commitment to immerse the school in world culture, through second language acquisition).
- 2) *Music around the world*: Based on the ICS social studies curriculum, the music curriculum integrates general music knowledge with the music culture of the countries that are being studied. For example, if the Kindergarteners are learning about China in their classrooms, they will simultaneously be learning a song from or about China (or about musical instruments, composers and singers from China) in music class.

Students in grades 6-8 meet in weekly seminars in Global Arts including focusing on drumming traditions of many nations and cultures. The PTA supports bringing guest musicians to ICS and student attendance of concerts in the community.

### **Dance/Movement and Fitness**

Our dance and movement program allows students in grades K-5 to develop aerobic and muscular strength, expand their cultural studies with ethnic and period dances, and develop a better kinesthetic awareness of their bodies. Research shows that about 85% of school-aged children are predominantly kinesthetic, or physical, learners. Using movement in the learning process helps many students retain and retrieve information more efficiently. Students in grades 6-8 participate in fitness programming which includes introductions to various team sports and individual health education.

### **Spanish Enhanced Program**

The Spanish Enhanced program at ICS includes all classes where English is the primary language of instruction. Typically, parents have chosen this program for their children with the knowledge that their children will also receive an intense daily infusion of Spanish instruction. These daily Spanish FLES classes are taught by teachers who have a native or near-native fluency. Primary instruction goals are to build conversational Spanish utilizing TPR (Total Physical Response) including singing, dancing, acting and the like. Students also learn to read and write in Spanish. In the upper grades, they begin to use middle-school-oriented textbooks and focus more intensely on grammar. Students graduating from ICS in the FL ES program should take entrance exams for Spanish in high school because many may qualify for mid-level entry in Spanish II or Spanish III. Lower grade FLES students will receive daily Spanish instruction of 30 minutes per day for a total of 150 minutes weekly. Upper grade student schedules include four 50-minute Spanish classes for a total of 200 minutes per week of Spanish instruction. Research has shown that second language acquisition is beneficial for elementary and middle school students affecting all subject areas including math, science, and language arts.

### **Spanish Immersion Program**

Students enrolled in the Spanish Immersion program usually enter Immersion in K or first grades. Most students do not speak any Spanish upon entry. The goal of the program is to facilitate successful learning using Spanish as the medium of instruction. This immediate and intense immersion into the language produces students who are fully bilingual (speaking) and biliterate (reading and writing). Homework, outdoor walks, celebrations, discussions, mathematics: all are conducted in Spanish. Parents are sometimes concerned regarding the development of reading skills in English. Parents are expected to read to their children in English at home for 15 to 30 minutes daily, sitting side-by-side. Most students in Immersion absorb English from the dominant culture and media and are reading in English by second grade without any direct instruction. This is in large part due to the ease of transition from a Spanish alphabet/sound system to English. English is formally introduced in Kindergarten as a bi-weekly 30-minute class. By fifth grade, about 50% of an Immersion student's classes are in English. Spanish immersion is maintained through eighth grade. K-4 studies ALL subjects in Spanish (excluding some "specials" such as science and art). In grade 5, students study social studies and language arts in English, and math and science in Spanish (along with a 45-minute daily Spanish language arts class), and students in grades 6-8 have social studies, computers (World Through Technology), Global Arts and Spanish language arts in Spanish, with math and science in English (along with an English Language Arts, Fitness and Movement, and a Social/Emotional/Instructional (SEI) class).

### **Other World Languages**

Starting in grade 6, students are introduced to another language in addition to Spanish. Students in grades 6-8 will all learn Arabic language and culture. This study allows them to compare and contrast linguistic similarities and differences, further understand linguistic details, and appreciate cultural traditions in great depth. Arabic is considered a critical language today as it is spoken by approximately 250 million people around the world. It is expected that in the short-term, students will build a strong foundation for the language as well as develop a deep understanding of the cultural and historical background of its speakers; in the mid-term, graduates will be able to continue their Arabic studies in the area high schools offering Arabic in Philadelphia; and in the long-term, graduates will be able to complete their pursuit of Arabic fluency in college and use this skill to succeed in a globalized world.

## English and Spanish Language Arts

**Reading - English, K-2** - Independence Charter's K-2 teachers in the Enhanced program use the *Treasures* Program from Macmillan/McGraw-Hill. The program addresses state and Common Core standards in reading language arts. The *Treasures* program uses high-quality literature, coupled with explicit instruction to supply students with the tools necessary to become lifelong readers and writers. Students read and write in leveled small groups, as a whole group, and independently to reinforce reading and writing skills including those skills necessary to strengthen phonemic awareness.

### **Reading – English, 3-8**

The English language arts program in grades 3-8 employs authentic literature to reinforce those reading skills and habits learned in grades K-2 and to address the core and state standards and PSSA assessment anchors. We do this by exposing our students to a variety of genres. In addition, in order to reach the variety of skill levels present in each classroom, students in grades 3-5 are assigned to reading groups at their appropriate reading levels thereby allowing students to progress at their own pace. The 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers also draw upon the *Making Meaning* program to teach students comprehension strategies such as visualizing and understanding the text structure in expository literature. Students in grades 5-8 read books at their reading levels independently through the *100 Book Challenge* program. Students must read, read, read to reach their reading goals!

Students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade complete research projects for *Need in Deed*, students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade participate in a partnership with the Rosenbach Museum, and students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade become playwrights by participating in the *Young Playwrights* program.

In grades 3-8, the curriculum has been coordinated in such a way that, wherever possible, a theme or country being studied in social studies is paired with a language arts reading book. For example, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade study of Afghanistan is enhanced by their reading of *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis. In addition, teachers in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade use supplemental phonics resources to enhance their guided reading program. Another component of the grades K-8 reading curriculum is the reading of core books, which are books to which we believe all children in grades 3-8 should be exposed. These books provoke discussion, provide a vehicle through which a life lesson or a fundamental/foundational skill can be taught, are of high interest to the age group reading them, and serve as an experience that unifies a class and contributes to class culture. Students read up to five core books per grade level. At least one book ties into that grade's country studies to further support our global education mission.

K-2 Students in the Spanish Immersion program are exposed to English-language literature and basic English reading fundamentals through a 30-minute English class two times per week. The main purpose of this class is to introduce students to English reading and writing principles. Students more formally engage in English language arts instruction in grade 3 with a 60-minute daily English class. Grade 4 students have a daily 75-minute English class, grade 5 students have a 90-120 minute daily English class, grade 6 students have a 50-minute English class three times per week, and grades 7 and 8 students have a 50-minute English class 4 times per week.

**Reading - Spanish K-3** - The main K-4 language arts program in the Spanish Immersion classroom is *Lectura*, a Spanish-language literacy program that focuses on the immersion reading standards outlined by ICS and is aligned to state standards of literacy. The learning plan includes skills and strategies that provide a literacy foundation in Spanish through reading, comprehension, vocabulary, phonics, word study, spelling, oral language, writing, grammar, literary basics, research, and study skills. We complement this program with reading and writing activities from different resources and literature published for native speakers.

**Reading - Spanish 5-8** - Grades 5-8 Immersion students continue the Spanish language arts program using a variety of Spanish language resources. Some of the resources used by teachers are Santillana's *Nuevo Siglo*, chapter books, and, in grade 4, the *Junior Greats Books (Conversaciones)* program. We use Pearson's *Español escrito* and the *100 BookChallenge (100 Book Challenge en Español)* program in 6-8. Students practice Spanish through writing, reading, and oral communication in literature and across the curriculum.

**Writing - K-8** - We believe that writing is an integral part of learning in all content areas. Therefore, ICS teachers support their students' writing efforts across the curriculum and to address core and state standards. From free writing in journals, to writing explanations in math, to structured essays that undergo revision and editing, students are constantly developing their writing skills. Students compile writing folders that follow them from one grade to the next. The writing program is primarily guided by the belief that all children can learn to write, that teachers can help students become better writers by creating a supportive, risk-taking environment in the classroom, and that frequent writing is the key to writing development. Teachers use a variety of resources to guide their teaching of writing, including, but not limited to, *Being a Writer*, *Lectura*, *Step-Up-To-Writing*, and the *6 + 1 Traits of Writing*.

### **Mathematics**

**Grades K-5** - ICS has chosen a grades K-5 curriculum that provides a spiraling approach (the material builds upon previously learned skills and concepts) to mathematics learning. Hands-on manipulatives and opportunities for drill, complement "problem of the day," flexible grouping and other kid-friendly practices. The primary resource for the K-2 math curriculum is the *Scott Foresman* elementary series. Both *Scott Foresman* and the *Investigations* curriculum are used in grades 3-5. These programs address PSSA assessment anchors and are aligned to state and Common Core standards. The combination of both programs allows students to apply math skills to word problems. *Investigations*, which we are also piloting in grade 1, encourages student use of skills to explore and solve problems.

**Grades 6-8** - The middle school math program at ICS includes two rigorous courses for students: Math Problem Solving and Math Procedures. The Math Problem Solving class uses the *Connected Mathematics 2* program, among other supplemental problem-solving materials, with a heterogeneous group of students. *Connected Mathematics 2* is a problem-centered curriculum in which important mathematical concepts are embedded in engaging problems. Students develop understanding as they explore the problems individually, in a small group, or with the class. Students hone their problem-solving ability, conceptual understanding, and proportional reasoning. The curriculum is aligned to state and Common Core standards.

In order to meet the diverse needs of our students, the Math Procedures class is used with the instructional approach of flexible-ability grouping. This class uses the *Prentice Hall Mathematics* curriculum (courses 1, 2, 3 and algebra); the grades 6-12 companion to the *Scott Foresman* elementary series used in our K-5 program. This allows for continuity in programming for ICS students. The

*Prentice Hall Mathematics* program is organized around the major strands and specific objectives in the *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2005 Assessment Specifications* and the *NCTM Principles and Standards for School Mathematics 2000*. It teaches these standards through real-world connections, ongoing assessment, constant review within instruction, support for reading and writing in math, and test prep for high-stakes testing.

### Science

ICS has dedicated science teachers for grades K-5, and science/math subject teachers for grades 6-8. Because the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has an extensive list of goals in science set for public school students, we have adopted an approach that combines text-based learning with hands-on experimentation. ICS uses *Delta Science Modules* and *Pearson* textbooks to form the foundation.

**Grades K-5** - Our K-5 science curriculum uses an exploratory based curriculum to cover earth, life, physical, and space sciences. To achieve this goal, ICS teachers ensure that students not only learn scientific concepts and theories, but experience them through exciting, hands-on, age-appropriate experiments and activities. Students in grade 5 also participate in the Science Fair (read paragraph below).

**Grades 6-8** - The Pennsylvania State Standards and PSSA Assessment Anchors provide the foundation for the scope and sequence of the ICS Middle School science curriculum. ICS Middle School science teachers primarily use the *Prentice Hall Science Explorer* program to teach this content. This program offers labs and activity options that provide inquiry opportunities throughout the study of earth, life, and physical sciences. Through these opportunities, students think like scientists, constantly asking why and searching for answers. Other activities focus on content acquisition. ICS's focus on student scientific inquiry is manifested in its Science Fair. During the Science Fair, students begin with a question, design an investigation, gather evidence, formulate an answer to the original question, and communicate the investigative process and results.

### Social Studies

**Grades K-5** – We believe students are ready for studying the world—locally and globally—at a much earlier age than is typical in most public elementary schools. **All grades begin the year with an intensive geography unit.** Our grades K-5 social studies curriculum is divided into three units: one which is locally or US-based and two in-depth country studies. The foci of the country studies are determined according to our global education goals. Students in grades K-5 study the local or US based unit from September through December, and then embark on their country studies beginning in January and running through June. Students are required to examine all areas of our world with the initial goal of becoming aware of the wider world and gaining a sense of their own roles as world citizens. The table on the next page outlines the major global citizenship understandings we expect each student to have at the end of each year of study.

<b>Kindergarten – All About Me, Mexico, China</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand that they are part of a wider world.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will gain a greater awareness of the similarities and differences between people.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand the connections between different places.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand how individuals are unique.</i></li> </ul>
<b>First Grade (Families and Neighborhoods, Japan, France)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand that we can have a positive impact in our community and in our world.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand that there are links and connections among different communities in the world</i></li> </ul>
<b>Second Grade (Democracy in Action - Philadelphia, India, Chile)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Through the study of trade, students will understand the interdependence of countries.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand the relationship between people and their environment.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand their potential to change things.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Third Grade (State Studies - Pennsylvania, Russia, Kenya)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand that things can be better and that individuals can make a difference.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand the relationship between people and their environment.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand that many resources are finite.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will understand their potential to change things.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Fourth Grade (US Unit - Native Americans, African Americans, 13 Colonies, Independence), Ghana, Australia</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The students will understand how power contributes to conflict.</i></li> <li>• <i>The students will learn strategies for tackling conflict and for conflict prevention.</i></li> <li>• <i>The students will understand what Independence means for a country.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Fifth Grade (US Unit - Slavery, Civil War, Civil Rights), Afghanistan, South Africa</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The students will develop a concern for civil rights.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The students will identify minority and majority groups and recognize how this might lead to inequalities.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Students will identify strategies for tackling conflict and for conflict prevention.</i></li> </ul>

**Grades 6-8** - Our middle school curriculum engages students in developing social studies and literacy skills, as well as understanding the big ideas of the past and the present. Students see themselves as decision makers and actors in the curriculum and in history. Students publicly demonstrate their ideas and skills through participation in the National History Day competition. This competition enables students to hone their research, reading, writing, and speaking skills while engaging in primary source-based research.

All grades use components of the *History Alive!* program; however, this program is supplemented by the curriculum written by ICS staff and professionals in the field. The curriculum is largely focused on global citizenship objectives. For example, each grade focuses on a different theme which will be integrated throughout all subject areas in those grades. The themes are as follows:

**Grade 6** – *How do peace and conflict lead to change?*

**Grade 7** – *What role does diversity play in the story of our world?*

**Grade 8** – *How do different understandings of justice affect our world?*

**Course Titles - Gr. 6:** *Classical History, Cultures, and Geography*, **Gr. 7:** *History, Culture and Geography of the Common Era from 1000 – 1600*, **Gr. 8:** *U.S. and Western Hemisphere History and Geography*

Through the study of history, there is an ongoing integration of the study of people and cultures around the world that have impacted and influenced the world. For example, when studying the American Revolution, our students will study other revolutions past and present (such as the Haitian Revolution) to compare and contrast the ideas and events that precipitate revolt.

## Learning Journey

The grade 6 and 7 multicultural curricula are chronological and global. They introduce students to the **GREATS** of civilizations—**government, religion, economics, the arts, architecture, technology, society**—as well as ethical decision making. Students have to grapple with the rise and fall of civilizations and consider the legacy of civilizations and their influence on current values and understandings. The 8th grade course, *U.S. and Western Hemisphere History and Geography*, consists of a multicultural curriculum that is thematic while maintaining a chronology. It is unique because it places the study of U.S. history within the context of the western hemisphere. Each unit's theme includes a *U.S. Connection, Americas (North, Central and South) Connection*, and a *Philadelphia/Pennsylvania Connection*. It focuses on social and political movements and how all people may bring about change. Each unit in the three curricula ends with *Real World Connection* ideas to help students relate what they've studied with current issues/ideas.

### **Technology**

ICS has multiple mobile computer labs and classroom computers that may be used for math tutoring, second language acquisition practice, and reserved by teachers for in-class research. Computer instruction begins in Kindergarten and continues through grade 8. Our computer instruction follows guidelines from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In keeping with the mission of our school, the Computer curriculum incorporates the lessons that students are learning in their social studies classes. Our computer science teacher works closely with classroom teachers to create lessons that build on the instruction these teachers are providing, as well as to help students make real-world connections to their social studies content. In addition, we use a number of online resources to enhance the regular curriculum. Many of these resources can be accessed from home computers as well. Classroom teachers in grades 3-4 conduct at least one weekly computer class with the mobile lab. Older students learn to use the Internet responsibly and for effective research. Teachers integrate the use of LCD projectors, document cameras, and utilize a host of educational websites to support the curricula.

### **Special Education**

Our team of special education teachers works closely with grade-level teachers and specialists to provide identified students with specialized instruction in the classroom (push-in) or in a resource room setting (pull-out). ICS practices full inclusion and provides support within that model to benefit the individual student. ICS special education students participate in all classes and school events. Parents who are wondering if their child may need special education services should contact the Special Education Coordinator, Barb Zisk.

### **Gifted Education**

ICS does not run a separate, pull-out program for students identified as "gifted." Students may be tested and identified as gifted, an identification that remains with the student even after leaving ICS for high school. The ICS curriculum is already an enriched one, providing arts education and second language acquisition for all students. We have transitioned from a more traditional pull-out program to one that focuses on providing more enrichment activities for all ICS students. We suggest that students seeking enrichment outside of the classroom join clubs such as *Odyssey of the Mind* and *Drexel Physics*, which encourage critical thinking and problem solving. In addition, we will hold regular "Enrichment Challenges" for all ICS students in the form of challenge questions and activities at all grade levels. Finally, and most importantly, the most current research in education promotes the idea of differentiating instruction to meet all students' individual needs, a skill which we are developing in all of our teachers. While there is no specific program or teacher dedicated exclusively to students who are identified as "gifted," all teachers will receive regular professional development on meeting the enrichment needs, as well as other individual learning needs, of each student.

### **Experiential Learning**

Students at ICS, from Kindergarten through eighth grade, are provided with various opportunities to enrich learning experientially. ICS partners with various community members such as the International Visitors Council, The South Asian, African, and Middle East Centers at the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, The Science and Clay Mobile, Outward Bound, Need in Deed, Odyssey of the Mind, The Rosenbach Museum, and similar other institutions and programs. All students at ICS attend at least one theatre production each year.

### **Tutoring**

Sometimes students need extra support outside of the classroom to best meet their learning objectives. Students may be recommended for tutoring in reading, math, or Spanish language. Tutoring runs throughout the year based on student need.

# ICS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

## Core Beliefs and Framework

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We know that a child's educational experiences help to lay a foundation for future successes. We also understand that an effective instructional program requires an orderly environment in which students and faculty know and abide by reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior while respecting the rights, person and property of others. This framework also helps parents and guardians support their own children's success. Therefore, Independence Charter School will focus on building communities within each classroom, each grade level and school wide. Independence Charter School believes that students learn best in a positive social environment.

ICS has created an environment that will foster *Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy and Self-Control (CARES)*.

- Students begin each day with a *Morning Meeting* (grades K-4) or *CPR* (Circle of Power and Respect – grades 5-8). Morning Meeting and CPR help to foster CARES through a greeting, activity, sharing and daily message. This process builds and maintains community within each classroom.
- Students have weekly (and sometimes daily) behavior curriculum lessons. All Lower School Students use *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program* where children learn ways to understand and manage their feelings, discover ways to make friends and be a friend, and ways to solve social problems. In grades 6-8, students participate in an *SEI* (Social/Emotional/Instructional) course which focuses on developing and strengthening students' interpersonal and organizational skills. Students may also use "*Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program*" where children learn ways to be assertive yet not aggressive.
- Teachers focus on fostering classroom organization and creating clear expectations about daily routines. Teachers model and practice all expectations with students. The entire ICS staff focuses on consistent follow-through with the understanding that responding to the seemingly smaller issues helps students understand the specifics of daily procedures and classroom expectations, therefore preventing larger issues from occurring.
- Child development is taken into account when choosing effective and appropriate consequences for students. This means that because developmental levels vary greatly in the earlier grades, discretion is used when working with our early childhood students (K-2). Sometimes, students in this age group will receive modified or more gradual consequences as we work with them to build the skills needed for self-control and responsibility.

**ICS Community Guidelines**

In addition to the classroom rules, ICS has five school wide rules, or *ICS Community Guidelines*. The guidelines are informed by two basic themes. First, is the understanding that all individuals in the ICS community will treat others with dignity, respect, kindness, and understanding. This is consistent with ICS’s mission to act as global citizens, learning from and about peoples and cultures throughout the world. It is also consistent with a child’s right to receive an education in an environment free of conflict. The second is the idea that behavior, whether appropriate or inappropriate, is a choice, and all members of the ICS community will be responsible for their choice of behavior.

**Independence Charter School Community Guidelines**

**An “ICS” Citizen...**

- 1. ...uses “ICS words”**
- 2. ...uses “ICS actions”**
- 3. ...follows directions**
- 4. ...is a TEAM player**
- 5. ...respects self**

<p><b><u>1. ...uses “ICS words”</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be respectful to others in your speech.</li> <li>2. Use kind words towards others.</li> <li>3. Use voice and language appropriate for the situation.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>2. ...uses “ICS actions”</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect school property and the property of others.</li> <li>2. Respect the personal space of others by keeping hands, feet, and objects to yourself.</li> <li>3. Walk quietly, staying next to your partner.</li> <li>4. Go directly to your destination. Use the shortest path.</li> <li>5. Eat only where and when permitted.</li> <li>6. Chewing gum and candy are not permitted in school, except as permitted by the teacher for a special in-class activity.</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>3. ...follows directions</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listen carefully for instructions.</li> <li>2. Do not talk when another person is speaking.</li> <li>3. Follow directions promptly, the first time they are given.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>4. ...is a TEAM player</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect the differences in others.</li> <li>2. Be kind to everyone.</li> <li>3. Raise your hand/wait your turn.</li> <li>4. Stay in line or with your class when walking in the halls or outside the school building.</li> <li>5. Clean up after yourself when finished. If you see a mess, clean it up.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>5. ...respects self</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Come to school ready for learning.</li> <li>2. Complete assignments with care. Take responsibility for your learning.</li> <li>3. Always be honest. Tell the whole truth.</li> </ol>
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As a community we outline and define the *ICS Community Guidelines* during daily Morning Meeting/CPR and classroom discussions. Students learn what the *ICS Community Guidelines* look like, sound like and feel like. These concepts will be taught and discussed consistently throughout the year.

Students start each year by brainstorming and creating their **hopes and dreams (Grades K-4)** or **goals and declarations (Grades 5-8)** for the year. Students then share their **hopes and dreams / goals and declarations** with classmates and teachers. They discuss the connection between these **hopes and dreams /goals and declarations** and **classroom rules**. As a group, each class then creates classroom rules that help them achieve the **hopes and dreams/ goals and declarations** they have shared. Classes discuss how their classroom rules align with and inform the **ICS Community Guidelines**. After six weeks of discussion and focus, the entire school holds a **celebration** of their hard work and commitment to the *ICS Community Guidelines*.

All students are responsible for upholding these rules and guidelines. If a student breaks a rule he or she will be expected to discuss and solve the situation (make it better), with the help of a supervising adult. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the student may also serve a consequence (please see the tables below).

### **Parent Involvement**

The Independence Charter School community consists of teachers, non-teaching staff, administrators, students and **parents/guardians**. Parents and guardians are an integral part of a child's education. All ICS staff and community members are considered *teachers* of our children. We welcome your participation in the classroom and the school community. Students take pride in a school when they see parents, guardians and teachers working side by side to create an optimal learning environment. We look forward to working with you at community service events, parent-teacher conferences, field trips and PTA meetings. Our Family and Community Partnerships Coordinator, Jenny Hoedeman-Eiteljorg, works closely with classroom teachers to organize meaningful parent participation at ICS.

Because ICS is a school of choice, we know that families have made the important decision to send their children to a school with the highest standards for student behavior and achievement. **It is thus expected that parents/guardians will attend all scheduled parent/teacher conferences and school-requested meetings (academic or behavioral)**. Independence Charter School may keep a student after school for a parents' meeting if a parent/guardian has not attended a meeting requested by teachers and/or administration.

### **Positive Recognition, Redirection, and Reinforcement**

Independence Charter School believes that students learn best in a positive and supportive environment. ***Independence Charter School staff will use language that is clear, simple and direct in recognition, redirection and reinforcement; language that is genuine and respectful to all members of the ICS community, showing faith in an individual's abilities and potential.*** At ICS, students celebrate their academic and social achievements throughout the year. Celebrations occur frequently and in various settings. These celebrations may be as a school, a grade, a class, with a bus cohort or as individuals. All students will have the privilege of participating in these celebrations by upholding their responsibilities as outlined in the *ICS Community Guidelines*.

### **Community Responsibility and Service**

"Independence Charter School (ICS) is a community-oriented...school (that) draws heavily on the resources available in Philadelphia – the museums, historic landmarks, businesses, schools, parks, communities, and families." We are dedicated to teaching students how to give back to these institutions and to our community.

Throughout the year there are opportunities to learn about community service. These opportunities may present themselves in the following ways:

- All students, teachers and administrators are responsible for the ICS physical community. ICS feels strongly that we must teach responsibility for our immediate surroundings by picking up after ourselves and one another, beautifying our surroundings and fixing those things that need repair (within our means), therefore fostering a greater respect for that which we already have. An *ICS Responsibility Chart* will help to guide the community in these efforts.
- Grades and classrooms, as part of their curriculum, will run school wide community service and/or outreach programs.
- Grades, classrooms and individuals will have the opportunity to participate in *Clean up Saturdays* at ICS. This will provide students (as young as Kindergarten) an opportunity to give back to the ICS community.

**Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection**

Romantic physical contact such as, but not limited to: hand holding, hugging, and kissing. Students who engage in inappropriate public displays of affection may be subject to disciplinary measures.

Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection distract from the learning environment; the K-8 environment at ICS is designed to promote academic growth and excellence. This policy will apply to students in grades 3-8. Age and circumstances will be taken into consideration when applying discipline measures for Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection.

**Acceptable Use of Technology for Students, Faculty, Staff and Subcontractors**

The use of technology while a student or employee or subcontractor of Independence Charter School is a privilege, not a right. Technology users are expected and required to avoid actions that are dishonest, unkind (such as personal attacks and invasion of privacy), invasive, illegal (such as libel, slander, vandalism, sexual harassment, theft, unauthorized access) or in other ways inappropriate. The guidelines and prohibited actions described in this policy apply to any use of the Independence Charter network to interact with any social networking website including, but not limited to Myspace.com and Facebook.com. In addition, use of technology in negative or derogatory ways may be in violation of other school policies and rules of conduct including but not limited to harassment, off-campus behavior, and/or alcohol and other drug policies.

- The use of the school's technology resources is for academic and school-related purposes only. Portable electronic devices such as CD players, digital players and recorders, personal video cameras, DVD players, and electronic games may not be used while on school grounds unless permitted by supervising adults for the purposes of a project. Students maintain the responsibility for properly securing their property.
- Student cell phones may not be seen or heard in the building during the academic day. This includes texting in any form at any time.
- Staff that chooses to bring personally-owned laptops, as well as other electronic devices, is responsible for the safety and security of those items. Operating system updates and viable virus protection software must be installed on personally-owned laptops and may be spot-checked at the discretion of the Technology Director.
- No user may reveal over the Internet, in any form, the personal information of a current or former student, administrator, faculty or staff member, or parent. Network and email passwords may not be shared.
- Students should not access files other than their own unless given permission by either the teacher or administrator.
- Great care must be taken when using the network to communicate since every message sent represents you and the School.
- Personal issues or inter-personal conflicts should not be handled via e-mail. Assume that e-mail is not confidential, since e-mail you send can be sent to others.
- Students MUST receive permission from a staff member or administrator before sending unsolicited email to a group of more than 20 people.

**Disciplinary Consequences**

*While the following procedures outline Independence Charter School’s process of progressive discipline, Independence Charter School considers the facts of each incident in determining whether suspension or expulsion may be an option.*

Independence Charter School has developed the following rules to guide the conduct of students, school employees/volunteers, and parents/guardians. These rules expand upon the **ICS Community Guidelines** and will apply at all times that school is in session, during any school program or function, either in the building or at any other location, as well as during arrival and dismissal, and traveling to and from school.

The rules are informed by two basic themes. First is the understanding that all individuals in the ICS community will treat others with dignity, respect, kindness, and understanding. This is consistent with ICS’s mission to learn from and about peoples and cultures throughout the world. It is also consistent with a child’s right to receive an education in a safe environment. The second is the idea that behavior, whether appropriate or inappropriate, is a choice, and all members of the ICS community will be responsible for their choice of behavior.

Independence Charter School practices **progressive discipline**. This is defined as a system of discipline where the consequences increase upon repeat occurrences. We consider previous behaviors, and when those behaviors are repeated, consequences build from minor to moderate to severe.

**Lateness**

Punctuality is directly linked to a child’s success in school. *Please remember that Pennsylvania law states that it is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to ensure their children arrive at school on time every day.*

Lateness is defined as arriving **to the classroom or advisory** after 8:30 am. Please take this into consideration when bringing your child to school. Make sure that they have enough time to get breakfast, use the bathroom and walk to their classroom. Students can be marked late even if they arrive to the school grounds before 8:30; remember, your child must be **IN THE CLASSROOM** no later than 8:30. If you feel the lateness is a result of your child’s behavior or choices, please contact your Dean of Students.

<b>Student is late three or more times</b>	Parent/guardian contacted by phone or e-mail. If the lateness is due to student behavior, the guardian will be notified that any more student-caused lateness will result in Saturday School.
<b>Student is late six or more times</b>	Warning letter is sent home by Dean of Students. If the lateness is due to student behavior, Saturday School is assigned.
<b>Student is late nine or more times</b>	Letter is sent home, followed by a phone call, to schedule a meeting with the primary guardian and the Dean of Students. At the meeting, a plan is put into place to correct the problem leading to the lateness. The plan will be signed by all parties.
<b>Student is late twelve or more times</b>	Letter is sent home, followed by a phone call, to schedule a meeting with the primary guardian, the CEO, and the Principal. Additional participants may include ICS administrators or Board of Trustees members. At the meeting, an agreement is signed that states that if the student has any further lateness, the primary guardian will be asked to investigate enrollment into a school closer to home that will facilitate timely arrival.
<b>Student continues to be late</b>	Principal will contact the primary guardian to notify them that the agreement has been broken. This will jeopardize the student’s status for enrollment.

**Absence/Truancy**

Attendance is directly linked to a child’s success in school. *Please remember that Pennsylvania law states that it is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to ensure their children arrive at school on time every day.*

Following each absence, a student is required to bring a note to his or her classroom/advisory teacher explaining the absence. The Dean of Students may deem an absence is excused or unexcused. Please note that a phone call to the front office is not sufficient.

Independence Charter School requests that families plan vacations coordinating absences with holidays or vacations on the school calendar. If your child must be absent for a period exceeding three consecutive school days you must inform your child’s Dean of Students in writing no less than two weeks before the expected absence. The Dean of Students will respond in writing as to whether or not your child’s absences will be listed as excused.

<b>Excused absences may be for:</b>	<b>Unexcused absences may be for:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illness or other related medical excuse</li> <li>• Prearranged medical appointments</li> <li>• Death in the family</li> <li>• Impassable roads or other weather conditions prohibiting travel</li> <li>• Required court attendance</li> <li>• Educational tours and trips (with pre-approval from the Dean of Students). Missed work must be made up in accordance with individual teacher's instructions.</li> <li>• Religious holiday observation</li> <li>• Religious instruction pursuant to §1546 of the Pennsylvania School Code (up to 36 hours per school year)</li> <li>• Other exceptionally urgent reasons. If there is a question refer to the Dean of Students for a determination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truancy</li> <li>• Absence due to parental neglect</li> <li>• Illegal employment</li> <li>• Missing the bus</li> <li>• Oversleeping</li> <li>• <b>Family vacations/trips during instruction days that are not pre-approved by the Dean of Students (see above)</b></li> <li>• Any other reason not covered in excused absences above</li> </ul>

<b>Student is absent three or more consecutive days without a note from a doctor or prior approval from the Dean</b>	If the student is absent for <b><i>three days in a row</i></b> , the student will not be allowed into class until the parent/guardian provides the Dean of Students with a doctor’s note.
<b>Student is absent three or more non-consecutive days without a written, valid excuse</b>	Parent/guardian will receive a phone call or e-mail.
<b>Student is absent six or more non-consecutive days without a written, valid excuse</b>	Warning letter is sent home by Dean of Students.
<b>Student is absent nine or more non-consecutive days without a written, valid excuse</b>	Letter is sent home, followed by a phone call, to schedule a meeting with the primary guardian and the Dean of Students. At the meeting, a plan is put into place to correct the problem leading to the truancy. Plan will be signed by all parties.
<b>Student is absent twelve or more times</b>	Letter is sent home, followed by a phone call, to schedule a meeting with the primary guardian, , the CEO, and the Principal. Additional participants may include ICS administrators or Board of Trustees members. At the meeting, the previous agreement is reviewed, modified and signed stating that if the student has any further absences, they will be asked to investigate enrollment into a school closer to home that will facilitate consistent attendance
<b>Student continues to be absent</b>	Principal will contact the primary guardian to notify them that the agreement has been broken. This will jeopardize the student’s status for enrollment.

**Minor Incidents and Consequences**

The table below outlines the possible consequences for various student behaviors. Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to, those listed in the left-hand column. The right hand column lists the possible consequences, all of which may apply to any of the listed behaviors.

Behavior	Possible Consequences (more than one consequence may be assigned)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Cheating</i></li> <li>• <i>Destruction of property (minor)</i></li> <li>• <i>Disrespectful tone and/or body language toward school employee</i></li> <li>• <i>Disruptive</i></li> <li>• <i>Dress Code violation</i></li> <li>• <i>Having/eating gum, candy, seeds or soda</i></li> <li>• <i>Hurtful word/action</i></li> <li>• <i>Lying</i></li> <li>• <i>Misuse of computer</i></li> <li>• <i>Not following directions</i></li> <li>• <i>Play fighting</i></li> <li>• <i>Student arguments</i></li> <li>• <i>Unexcused lateness to class</i></li> <li>• <i>Taking other people's belongings (K-2)</i></li> <li>• <i>Talking back</i></li> <li>• <i>Tantrums (K-1)</i></li> <li>• <i>Unkind toward other students</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>The following may apply to all behaviors listed in the column to the left:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student may <i>Take a Break</i>.</li> <li>• Student may go to <i>Buddy Room</i> and complete a <i>Fix-it Plan</i>.</li> <li>• Student will discuss and practice expected behavior with teacher and/or peers.</li> <li>• Mediation will occur between all participants. This will include a chance to “fix” relationships or objects.</li> <li>• Teacher may contact parent by note in take home folder.</li> <li>• Student may lose a privilege.</li> <li>• Teacher may contact parent by phone. Parent may be asked to speak to the student on the phone about the behavior and expectations.</li> <li>• Student may be given an assignment to be done at home.</li> <li>• Parent meeting may be requested.</li> <li>• Student may be given in-school community service to “fix” relationships or objects.</li> <li>• Student may be assigned an After-School Detention (3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade beginning January).</li> <li>• Student may be assigned Saturday School (3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade beginning January).</li> <li>• Student may be sent home.</li> </ul>



*\*6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will not be permitted to class late. If a student is late to class, he or she will be sent to the Middle School non-teaching assistant (NTA). The lateness will be logged and a pass will be given to return to class. Students late 3 times will receive a parent phone call and a Saturday School.*

**Hierarchy of consequences:**

- If a student displays the same behavior for a third time, the student consequence will move to the next level of severity and a parent meeting will be required.
- If a student has been assigned two After School Detentions, he/she will be assigned a Saturday School.
- If a student has been assigned two Saturday Schools, he/she may be suspended.

**If the behavior continues, it will be considered a Major Incident and one or more of the following may happen:**

- A parent conference may be requested by the classroom teacher and the Dean of students may be present.
- A behavior chart/plan may be put into place. This is a temporary plan and will include frequent guardian meetings and daily teacher/guardian contact.
- Parent conference may be requested, and other ICS team members (teachers, counselors, administration) may be present.

**Major Incidents and Consequences**

The table below outlines the possible consequences for various student behaviors. Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to, those listed in the left-hand column. The right hand column lists the possible consequences, all of which may apply to any of the listed behaviors.

Behavior	Possible Consequences (more than one consequence may be assigned)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Aggressive language (including cursing)</i></li> <li>• <i>Bullying*</i></li> <li>• <i>Defiance</i></li> <li>• <i>Deliberately throwing chairs, furniture, school property*</i></li> <li>• <i>Deliberately walking away from school group when on a field trip or at the park*</i></li> <li>• <i>Destruction of property (major)</i></li> <li>• <i>Endangering self or others</i></li> <li>• <i>Extortion</i></li> <li>• <i>Fighting*</i></li> <li>• <i>Harassing or instigating the harassment of another student*</i></li> <li>• <i>Inappropriate use of the Internet</i></li> <li>• <i>Inappropriate touching*</i></li> <li>• <i>Instigating a Fight or Assault*</i></li> <li>• <i>Making threats</i></li> <li>• <i>Making threats that refer to the use of a weapon to cause harm*</i></li> <li>• <i>Not following directions during safety drills</i></li> <li>• <i>Out of Bounds</i></li> <li>• <i>Plagiarism/Cheating</i></li> <li>• <i>Physical Violence*</i></li> <li>• <i>Spitting on another person intentionally</i></li> <li>• <i>Stealing (K-8)</i></li> <li>• <i>Tantrums that disrupt learning and/or make the class feel unsafe*</i></li> <li>• <i>Vandalism</i></li> <li>• <i>Walking out of class</i></li> <li>• <i>Walking out of the school building*</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>The following may apply to all behaviors listed in the column to the left:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student will be immediately removed from the classroom and sent to the Dean’s Office.</li> <li>• Student will <i>Take a Break</i> and reflect on the incident.</li> <li>• Student will discuss and practice expected behavior with Dean of Students.</li> <li>• Mediation between all participants. This will include a chance to “fix” relationships or objects.</li> <li>• Parent may be called by the Dean of Students. Parent may be asked to speak with the student at the time of the call to discuss the behavior and expectations.</li> <li>• A letter, documenting the incident, will be given to the parent. <b><u>Parent is expected to sign and return the letter on the next school day.</u></b></li> <li>• Student may lose a privilege.</li> <li>• Student may be given an assignment to be done at home.</li> <li>• Student may be given after-school community service.</li> <li>• Student may be assigned after-school detention.</li> <li>• Student may be assigned Saturday School.</li> <li>• Student may be sent home. Parent will be asked to come to school and take the student home within one and-a-half hours.</li> <li>• Student may be suspended out of school between 1 and 3 days, not including the day of the incident.</li> <li>• Parent meeting will be required.</li> <li>• Student may be placed on 30-day probation.</li> </ul>



**\*Incidents leading to suspension:**

**(additional consequences, to repair the damage, may be assigned upon the student’s return to school)**

- Instigating a Fight, Bullying or Harassment
- Fighting
- Leaving the building or school grounds without an adult (this includes from the bus line, school yard, arrival)
- Bullying/Harassment (4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>)
- Deliberately throwing chairs, furniture or school property
- Making a threat that refers to the use of a weapon
- Inappropriate Touching (2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>)
- Refusing to follow directions, requiring Dean involvement
- Tantrums that disrupt learning and/or make the class feel unsafe
- Stealing

**Hierarchy of consequences:**

- If a student displays the same behavior for a third time, the student consequence will move to the next level of severity and a parent meeting will be required.
- If a student has been suspended two times, the will be placed on 30-day probation (see Definitions)
- If a student is suspended three times he or she will be brought before the Board of Trustees for a disciplinary hearing.

If the behavior continues, it will be considered an **Incident Qualifying for Expulsion** and the student may be brought to the Board of Trustees for an expulsion hearing.

*Independence Charter School will consider the facts of each case in determining whether expulsion should be an option.*

**Incidents Qualifying for Expulsion**

When a student displays inappropriate behavior, including but not limited to:

Behavior	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Any criminal conduct as defined by Pennsylvania Law.</i></li> <li>• <i>Assaulting any person, as an individual or as a group</i></li> <li>• <i>Attempting to engage or engaging in any conduct that threatens the health, welfare or safety of any member of the school community</i></li> <li>• <i>Student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol</i></li> <li>• <i>Possession of tobacco or alcohol product</i></li> <li>• <i>Possession of over the counter medication, look alike drugs and/or drug paraphernalia</i></li> <li>• <i>Possession of any weapon, but not limited to, any knife, pocket knife, Swiss army knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nanchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury (as specified by Act 26 on following pages)</i></li> <li>• <i>Any item brought or used with the intent to cause harm (as specified by Act 26 on following pages)</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">➔</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student will be escorted to the Dean’s Office.</li> <li>• Parent/Guardian will be notified immediately.</li> <li>• Parent/Guardian will be asked to pick their child up IMMEDIATELY.</li> <li>• Student will be suspended from Independence Charter School until a full evidentiary hearing on the expulsion of the student can be held before the Board of Trustees.</li> <li>• Independence Charter School may call the Department of Human Services.</li> </ul>

## **Act 26 (Pennsylvania Law)**

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### **24 P.S. § 13-1317.2. Possession of weapons prohibited (a.k.a. “Act 26”)**

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, a school district or area vocational-technical school shall expel, for a period of not less than one year, any student who is determined to have brought onto or is in possession of a weapon on any school property, any school-sponsored activity or any public conveyance providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity.

(b) Every school district and area vocational-technical school shall develop a written policy regarding expulsions for possession of a weapon as required under this section. Expulsions shall be conducted pursuant to all applicable regulations.

(c) The superintendent of a school district or an administrative director of an area vocational-technical school may recommend modifications of such expulsion requirements for a student on a case-by-case basis. The superintendent or other chief administrative officer of a school entity shall, in the case of an exceptional student, take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 91-230, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.).

(d) The provisions of this section shall not apply to the following:

(1) a weapon being used as part of a program approved by a school by an individual who is participating in the program; or

(2) a weapon that is unloaded and is possessed by an individual while traversing school property for the purpose of obtaining access to public or private lands used for lawful hunting, if the entry on school premises is authorized by school authorities.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting the authority or duty of a school or area vocational-technical school to make an alternative assignment or provide alternative educational services during the period of expulsion.

(e.1) A school district receiving a student who transfers from a public or private school during a period of expulsion for an act or offense involving a weapon may assign that student to an alternative assignment or provide alternative education services, provided that the assignment may not exceed the period of expulsion.

(f) All school districts and area vocational-technical schools shall report all incidents involving possession of a weapon prohibited by this section as follows:

(1) The school superintendent or chief administrator shall report the discovery of any weapon prohibited by this section to local law enforcement officials.

(2) The school superintendent or chief administrator shall report to the Department of Education all incidents relating to expulsions for possession of a weapon on school grounds, school-sponsored activities or public conveyances providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity. Reports shall include all information as required under section 1303-A. [FN1]

(g) As used in this section, the term “weapon” shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

CREDIT(S) 1949, March 10, P.L. 30, No. 14, art. XIII, § 1317.2, added 1995, June 30, P.L. 220, No. 26, § 4, effective in 90 days. Amended 1997, June 25, P.L. 297, No. 30, § 6, effective July 1, 1997.

[FN1] 24 P.S. § 13-1303-A.

**Definitions for terms found within the ICS Code of Conduct**

Term	Definition
<p><b>30 Day Probation</b></p>	<p>30 calendar days that will be dedicated to modifying targeted behavior. It is expected that Student behavior will improve significantly and with consistency. If there are any more behavioral incidents during this period, the student may be brought to the Board of Trustees for expulsion.</p> <p><u>During this time, students will not be able to attend class field trips without their parents or guardian.</u></p> <p>Student behavior will be tracked daily with a chart that will be sent home daily. Parent will sign and return to school. There will be at least two scheduled meetings during this time: Two week “check-in” meeting and the “30 day” meeting. During this last meeting, the school administration will decide whether or not the student will continue to attend ICS, attend ICS on an extended probation or be expelled.</p> <p><b>Please note: Any student who is placed on 30 Day Probation more than one time will be brought before the Board of Trustees for a review of their behavior record. This may result in expulsion.</b></p>
<p><b>Act 26</b></p>	<p>Pennsylvania State Code referring to a weapons violation. Please see a copy of Act 26 on the previous page and Act 30 (Safe Schools Act) in our <i>ICS Policies and Procedures Supplement</i>.</p>
<p><b>Assault</b></p>	<p>(Simple) An unlawful attempt or threat to do physical harm to another. Assault is one sided. The victim does not or is not able to defend themselves with enough force to prevent harm.</p> <p>(Aggravated) Assault with a weapon.</p> <p><b>Independence Charter School has a zero tolerance for assault, simple or aggravated.</b></p>
<p><b>Buddy Room</b></p>	<p>If a student continues to be disruptive or is agitated in a classroom <i>Take a Break</i> they will go to the <i>Buddy Room</i>. This is a classroom where the student will <i>Take a Break</i> without the distraction of their classroom peers. This will be a silent <i>Take a Break</i>. The student will be expected to quietly sit in the <i>Take a Break</i> spot without disrupting the class. If the student continues to be disruptive, they will immediately come to the Dean’s office and may be sent home.</p>
<p><b>Bullying</b></p>	<p>To hurt or intimidate other people in a repeating and patterned manner. Bullying includes: physical or verbal aggression toward a person and/or their belongings causing social alienation and intimidation. This includes taking or playing “keep away” with another person’s belongings.</p> <p><b>Independence Charter School has a zero tolerance for bullying.</b></p>
<p><b>Cheating</b></p>	<p>To violate rules dishonestly. The consequence may include one or more of the following: loss of grade for the academic activity, loss of grade for the semester (grades 5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>), mandatory summer school, or suspension.</p>
<p><b>Community Service (as a consequence)</b></p>	<p>Will relate directly to the behavior in question. For example: a student begins a food fight, that student will help clean the cafeteria.</p>

## Student Code of Conduct

<b><i>Dress Code Violation</i></b>	<p>Any student who does not <b>ARRIVE</b> to school in the approved ICS Dress Code will not be permitted into their class room. Students will also have one or more of the following consequences: a written warning, loss of dress down privilege, Saturday School. If the student continues to dress out of Code, a parent meeting will be required and the student will be sent home.</p> <p>Certain clothing items worn in school in violation of the dress code will be confiscated and will only be returned to a parent. These items include, but are not limited to: hoop earrings, hats or hoodies, and jeans (worn under skirts). Sandals will also be confiscated (assuming alternate dress code compliant shoes are available).</p>
<b><i>Expulsion</i></b>	<p>Student is dismissed from the school permanently, unless otherwise stated, due to severe or repeated behaviors. <i>The student and parent have the right to be informed of the reasons for the movement toward expulsion and to respond to these reasons prior to the suspension taking effect.</i></p> <p>Parents and guardians of children who have been recommended for expulsion shall have the right to a full evidentiary hearing before the Board of Trustees of the Independence Charter School, at which time they may present their argument and evidence for not expelling the student. The expulsion hearing shall take place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (BOT). If the next meeting of the BOT is more than three weeks from the date of the incident, the CEO or Principal shall call a special meeting of the BOT. The BOT shall take a roll call vote immediately at the close of the hearing. The decision of the BOT shall be final. The parent/guardian shall be notified of the hearing date in writing no less than ten (10) days before the date of the hearing.</p> <p><b>Please Note: The LEA shall decide suspension for Special Education students as stated in IDEA laws and regulations, on a case by case basis.</b></p>
<b><i>Extortion</i></b>	<p>To obtain something by using threat or intimidation.</p>
<b><i>Fight</i></b>	<p>Taking part in a physical struggle. Both parties involved will receive consequences. Independence Charter does not approve of “hitting back”. All students are taught that walking away and “telling a teacher” is the appropriate response to being hit.</p> <p><b>Independence Charter has a zero tolerance for fighting.</b></p>
<b><i>Harassing</i></b>	<p>To exhaust, annoy or disturb persistently with the result of making any ICS school community member feel unwelcome or threatened.</p>
<b><i>In-School Suspension</i></b>	<p>Student will remain in the Dean of Student’s office for the duration of their suspension. During this time the student will complete all classroom work, work on additional behavioral assignments given by the Dean of Students and receive all homework.</p> <p><b>Please Note: The LEA shall decide suspension for Special Education students as stated in IDEA laws and regulations, on a case by case basis.</b></p>
<b><i>Logical Consequence</i></b>	<p>Defined (by Ruth Charney, <i>Teaching Children to Care</i>) as: reasonable and respectful, neither punishment nor permission. The consequence will help students assume responsibility through structured learning opportunities and the opportunity to try again.</p>

<p><b><i>Out of Bounds</i></b></p>	<p>To be away from the school, teacher or classroom without <b>direct</b> permission. All students must have a pass at all times to travel through the hallways. Consequences will be assigned on an individual basis and will depend on the reason for a student being <b><i>Out of Bounds</i></b>, however, the following basic formula will apply:</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> offense: After School Detention                  2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Saturday School                  3<sup>rd</sup> offense: Suspension</p> <p>In all cases, there will be a mandatory parent meeting.</p>
<p><b><i>Out-of-School Suspension</i></b></p>	<p>Student will remain in the Dean of Student’s office on the day of the incident until the parent or guardian is able to pick them up. ICS expects that the parent or guardian will arrive to the school within one and a half hours of the original phone call. The day of pick up does NOT count as a day of suspension. The student is responsible for completing all in class and all homework for the day(s) missed due to suspension. The student may also be responsible for completing any assignments given by the Dean of Students.</p> <p><i>ALL PARENTS OR GUARDIANS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND A REINSTATEMENT MEETING AS SCHEDULED, WITHOUT WHICH THE STUDENT WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO REENTER THE CLASSROOM.</i> The student must arrive to school with the parent or guardian and will NOT be allowed into the classroom until the reinstatement meeting is finished.</p> <p>The student and parent have the right to be informed of the reasons for the suspension and to respond to them prior to the suspension taking effect. The parent has the right to immediate written notice of the suspension and when it exceeds three (3) school days, the school must offer to hold an informal hearing within the first five school days.</p> <p><b>Please note: The LEA shall decide suspension for Special Education students as stated in IDEA laws and regulations, on a case by case basis.</b></p>
<p><b><i>Play Fighting</i></b></p>	<p>Taking part in aggressive physical play that simulates a fight. Play fighting is considered to be dangerous as students often become injured or the play fighting turns to a real fight. It is important to understand that for the safety of all students play fighting is not allowed under any circumstances.</p> <p>This would also include “Birthday Punches” and “Two-for-Flinching” type games.</p>
<p><b><i>Reinstatement</i></b></p>	<p>A meeting held to restore the student to active standing. If the reinstatement meeting is not held, the student may not return to school. Any student who does return to school without their parent or guardian will need to be picked up immediately.</p>
<p><b><i>Saturday School</i></b></p>	<p>Saturday School is held bi-monthly on assigned Saturdays from 9 am – 12 noon and is assigned to students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades (2<sup>nd</sup> grade students may be assigned beginning in January). Students must be on time as this time will be used to complete a learning activity regarding their behavior. For safety reasons, parents must pick up and drop off students, they will not be allowed to dismiss on their own.</p> <p>Students must wear their school uniform to Saturday School. If a student does not arrive in uniform, he/she will serve Saturday School, but will also receive an additional Saturday School.</p> <p><b>A parent meeting will be requested with the Dean of Students if the Saturday School assignment is not honored.</b></p>

<b><i>Self Defense</i></b>	Self Defense applies only to those situations where a student could not walk away and/or get help from a teacher. <i>Self Defense is NOT reacting to being hit or kicked. ICS does NOT condone “hitting back”. Students are taught to walk away and get help from a teacher.</i>
<b><i>Take a Break</i></b>	Every classroom has a designated <i>Take a Break</i> spot. All students are made aware of this spot at the beginning of the school year. Students know that they may ask to go to this spot in order to calm down or think about a situation. In some cases a teacher may ask the student to go to the <i>Take a Break</i> spot. The student is expected to comply. If a student does not comply, he/she will be asked to <i>Take a Break</i> in a <i>Buddy Room</i> .
<b><i>Teasing</i></b>	To upset or annoy by taunting or making fun of another student. Teasing is a “one time” occurrence. Teasing that occurs on more than one occasion and/or becomes a patterned behavior is considered <i>bullying</i> .
<b><i>Under the influence</i></b>	Having any detectible amount of alcohol or a controlled substance in your system and/or showing physical manifestations of being under the influence.
<b><i>Zero tolerance</i></b>	Refers to behaviors that are not acceptable at ICS. Students who exhibit such behaviors will immediately be removed from the setting. The classroom teacher and Dean of Students will contact the student’s parent and a conference will be held to discuss the logical consequences for the behavior. These consequences will be unique to each student and may include suspension and possible expulsion.

**Recording and Reporting of Behaviors**

Independence Charter School records behavioral incidents and the resulting outcomes. These records are then kept in a locked filing cabinet. At any time, a parent or guardian may request their child’s behavioral record. The request must be written and may be addressed to the Dean of Students. The request will take between 24 and 48 hours to process. The parent or guardian must then come to the school to pick-up the records, as records will not be mailed or delivered via student backpacks.

The parent/guardian does have the right to appeal any information in the student behavioral record. To appeal the factual information (this is different from “not agreeing” with the decision), please write a letter addressed to: The Disciplinary Committee of the Board of Trustees. Mail or deliver the letter to your Dean of Students. This letter will then be forwarded to the ICS disciplinary committee. You should have a decision regarding your appeal of the factual content within 48 hours.

All records will be altered to protect the privacy of other students involved.



# Independence

CHARTER SCHOOL

**Jurate Krokys, CEO**  
**Kristen Long, Principal, Middle School**  
**Richard Trzaska, Interim Principal, Lower School**

Independence Charter School  
1600 Lombard St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19146  
[www.independencecharter.org](http://www.independencecharter.org)  
P: 215-238-8000      F: 215-238-1998

**Office hours on school days: 7:45am – 5:30pm**

**Important Numbers:**

Emergency.....911  
    Police  
    Fire  
    Ambulance

Poison Control.....800-222-1222

ICS School Closing Number.....212

**KYW News (for school closing information)**

Radio Station.....1060 AM

Phone Number.....215-925-1060

Website.....<http://kyw.cbslocal.com/schools/>



# Independence Charter School

2011-2012

## Parent and Student Handbook Signature Page

EACH student is required to return this sheet to his or her classroom or advisory teacher.  
Teachers will return the signed sheets to Dean Andrea (K-4) and Dean Kareem (5-8).



*“Opening Worlds of Opportunity”*

**By signing below I acknowledge that I have received the Independence Charter School Parent and Student Handbook and will read it thoroughly and keep it close at hand for future reference. By signing below I am indicating that I agree to uphold the Policies and Codes listed within.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Name PRINTED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*Student's Name PRINTED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\*If you have more than one child at ICS, please list the names of all children and have each child sign.