



## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2021 – 2022**

**IDCS**

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**COVID 19 INFORMATION:** The Integrated Day Charter School Governing Board will follow guidelines from the Connecticut State Department of Education in regards to pandemics and crisis situations, (e.g. COVID 19, etc.). These guidelines may supersede the guidelines in this handbook. The COVID 19 guidelines and requirements will be shared with IDCS families.

## ***SECTION I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION***

The Governing Board and IDCS Staff thank you for choosing our school and community and for your support of IDCS' mission, vision, and philosophy. The IDCS Family Handbook is divided into two sections. Section I includes IDCS history, its mission, vision, and core tenets. As well, information is provided about the IDCS Governing Board. All school contact information is in the first section. Section II provides detailed information about the school. The information includes such topics as attendance and recess, rules to volunteering and visiting the school. It is organized in alphabetical order for easy access. The third section consists of the Appendices, including the school calendar, parent/student signature page, as well information about health.

### **IDCS Information**

*History of IDCS:* The integrated day program initially began in 1989 in Norwich Public Schools (NPS). Several teachers, Joan Heffernan, June Morrone, and Joyce Werden, working together, were providing the integrated day academic program to children in their classes in one of the Norwich schools. The philosophy and practice of the integrated day is based on students connecting all subject areas in an integrated way. One primary way subjects are integrated is through the research projects that students investigate, write, and present to their classmates and parents/caregivers every year.

In 1997, the Connecticut State Legislature passed legislation that allowed charter schools to open. Because of their experiences teaching the integrated day program, Joan Heffernan (IDCS' 1<sup>st</sup> Director), June Morrone (current Assistant Director), and Joyce Werden, with volunteer, Sandy Quarto, were poised and ready to create an alternative public school, providing public school choice to all members of the Norwich community, and eventually to surrounding towns. Parents of the children in the integrated day program and citizens supporting school choice, worked together to establish the Integrated Day Charter School (IDCS). The charter was awarded in February 1997. Subsequently, IDCS opened its doors to 175 students in the former Thermos Factory in August 1997 (more information about the school is in Appendix A).

### **Integrated Day Charter School Founders:**

Tony Alessi	June Morrone	Linda Allen	James Luckey
Sandy Quarto	Malcolm Brown	Paul Rak	Joyce Weldon
Heidi Clarke	George Rezendes	Tom Griffin	John Conway
Paul Sheppard	Joan Heffernan	Claire Warren	

**Mission:** The Integrated Day Charter School, in partnership with its children, families and community, provides a safe, flexible, and academically challenging learning environment that meets the unique social, emotional, academic, and physical needs of each child.

**Vision:** IDCS students will become confident, socially responsible citizens, and lifelong learners who apply their knowledge to improve themselves and the world around them.

### **IDCS Core Tenets**

**Responsive Classroom:** Responsive Classroom is a social curriculum explicitly taught by the teachers at IDCS to enable children to CARE: be cooperative, assertive, responsible, empathetic, and self-controlled. These skills allow children to contribute to a respectful and diverse learning community.

**Research:** Students in Pre-K to Grade 8 engage in research at IDCS. This gives students input into their learning, allows for greater creativity, and instills a sense of empowerment, personal pride, and intellectual curiosity. To understand a topic fully, several subjects need to be integrated and explored.

**Families as Partners:** Families choose our school community because they embrace the philosophy allowing them to have productive partnerships in all aspects of our environment. This allows them to have a greater role in supporting their child/ren's education. Partnerships occur through home support, classroom support, the school community, Integrated Day Educational Alliance (IDEA), which is the parent-teacher organization at IDCS; IDCS Foundation, and Board membership.

**Environment:** At IDCS, we teach and learn about our connections to all things. Actions impact living things whether it is in the classroom, our homes, the community, or the world.

**Integration of a Critical Curriculum:** Teachers embraced critical pedagogy/instruction to support critical thinking in all content areas. Critical pedagogy is a progressive teaching philosophy that challenges students to examine power structures and patterns of inequality within the status quo. By questioning power dynamics, students can take control of their own learning and critically evaluate the opinions they have been taught to have. As a Higher Order Thinking School (HOTS), IDCS promotes teaching and learning in, about, and through the arts in a democratic setting. There is an emphasis on arts, arts integration, and democratic practice.

*Service Learning:* Students learn to impact their community and the world through action projects. They identify a need, research it, and educate an audience. This creates a sense of responsibility and solidarity with the world.

*Student Achievement:* Developmentally appropriate practice means meeting the learners where they are. A focus on process vs. product results in higher order learning and higher achievement. Student progress is assessed, and curricula are differentiated as needed. Research demonstrates that integration of the arts results in higher academic achievement.

*Teacher/Student Empowerment:* Teachers and students contribute ideas and input into the school community. Decisions are then made, always through the lens of our philosophy, to benefit the total community or class as opposed to any one individual need.

### **Governing Board Information**

The IDCS Governing Board consists of three teachers, three parents, and three community members. The Board is concerned with the strategic planning, finances, and governance. They are caretakers of the long range, "big picture" plans for the school. The three subcommittees of the Governing Board are Governance, Planning, and Finance. The Board constructs task forces from time to time to deal with short range issues. The school Director is responsible for the day to day operational decisions. All Governing Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the IDCS Conference Room on the main floor. The Finance, Governance, and Planning and Communication Meetings are also open to the public (go to: [www.idcs.org](http://www.idcs.org) for the schedule).

### **2021-22 Governing Board**

Community Member	Cheryl Blanchard (Chair)	<a href="mailto:cherylb@idcs.org">cherylb@idcs.org</a>
Teacher Member	Julia Cronin	<a href="mailto:juliac@idcs.org">juliac@idcs.org</a>
Community Member	Rhonda Exum	<a href="mailto:rhondae@idcs.org">rhondae@idcs.org</a>
Parent Member	Kate Gada	<a href="mailto:kateg@idcs.org">kateg@idcs.org</a>
Teacher Member	Amanda Hicks	<a href="mailto:amandah@idcs.org">amandah@idcs.org</a>
Community Member	Sandy Quarto	<a href="mailto:sandyq@idcs.org">sandyq@idcs.org</a>
Parent Member	Allie Martin (Vice-Chair)	<a href="mailto:alliem@idcs.org">alliem@idcs.org</a>
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Norwich BOE	Christine Distasio	<a href="mailto:christined@idcs.org">christined@idcs.org</a>
Director	Ellen Retelle, Ph.D.	<a href="mailto:ellenr@idcs.org">ellenr@idcs.org</a>
Assistant Director	Debby Allard	<a href="mailto:deba@idcs.org">deba@idcs.org</a>
Governing Board Clerk	Rachel Stahl	<a href="mailto:rachels@idcs.org">rachels@idcs.org</a>



## **IDCS Staff**

### **Administration/Office**

Director	Ellen Retelle, Ph.D.	<a href="mailto:ellenr@idcs.org">ellenr@idcs.org</a>	Ext. 402
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### **Teachers**

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## Specialists Teachers

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## Academic Support Teachers

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Social Worker	MaryEllen Sullivan	<a href="mailto:maryellens@idcs.org">maryellens@idcs.org</a>	Ext. 449

## Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-Curricular Coordinator	Monique Kercado	<a href="mailto:moniquek@idcs.org">moniquek@idcs.org</a>
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## Teaching Assistants

PreK	Shawna Quinn	<a href="mailto:shawnaq@idcs.org">shawnaq@idcs.org</a>
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Grade 7/8	Sheena Despirt	<a href="mailto:sheenad@idcs.org">sheenad@idcs.org</a>
Grade 7/8	Lexi Garcia	<a href="mailto:lexiq@idcs.org">lexiq@idcs.org</a>
Grade 7/8	Monique Kercado	<a href="mailto:moniquek@idcs.org">moniquek@idcs.org</a>

### **Food Service/Dining Room Staff**

Food Service Manager	Ashley Pagan	<a href="mailto:ashleyp@idcs.org">ashleyp@idcs.org</a>
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Dining Room Staff	Melinda Gray	<a href="mailto:melindag@idcs.org">melindag@idcs.org</a>

### **Custodial Staff**

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Custodian	Mireille Jeanty	<a href="mailto:mireillej@idcs.org">mireillej@idcs.org</a>
Custodian	Nancy Montoya	<a href="mailto:nancym@idcs.org">nancym@idcs.org</a>
Custodian	Everett Scraders	<a href="mailto:everetts@idcs.org">everetts@idcs.org</a>

The IDCS is staffed with experienced and dedicated professionals whose goal is to provide children with a nurturing and caring environment and challenging and differentiated program.

## ***SECTION II: SCHOOL INFORMATION***

### **Admissions Policy**

The Integrated Day Charter School is a free Connecticut public school open to all children in Norwich and surrounding areas. Approximately, eighty-five percent of the students are from Norwich. Up to 15% of the school population may be admitted from towns other than Norwich. IDCS is a school of CHOICE. This means that students are admitted through a lottery system. Children who are not admitted during the lottery are placed on the waiting list according to when their names were drawn from the pool of names. The child remains on the waiting list until there is an opening in the school. Children move up on the lottery list as other children gain admission to the school. Once a child from one family is admitted into the school, siblings have priority for admission into the school. As soon as a placement is available, siblings gain admission to the school.

### **After School Activities-Extra Curricular Activities**

IDCS offers various after school activities, such as after school programs, extended day, homework club, and sports. There are three sessions in one school year: Fall, Winter, and Spring. There is a cost for all after school programs. The information is sent to parents/caregivers and families several weeks before the start of the new school year and new term. Monique Kercado (moniquek@idcs.org) is the coordinator of extra-curricular activities.

After School Programs: IDCS offers a variety of after school programs; these include, but are not limited to gymnastics, bucket band, art, cheerleading, drama, cooking, etc. The after-school program classes are scheduled for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The classes start at 3:15 p.m. and end at 4:15 p.m.

Early Risers and Extended Day: Early Risers is for students whose parents/caregivers need their child/ren supervised before school - children dropped off at 6:45 a.m. Extended day is for students whose parents/caregivers need their child/ren supervised after school until the children can be picked up - no later than 6:00 p.m. Early Risers and Extended Day are scheduled from Monday to Friday. Extended Day students have a snack at 3:15, then go outside to play for 20 minutes. Subsequently, the students go to the media center where they can do homework, read, or complete work on educational websites.

Homework Club: Homework club meets on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; it runs from 3:15 to 4:15. This club is for parents/caregivers who want their child/ren to complete homework after school, at school. Staff checks with the students to see what homework needs to be completed; staff helps if needed, then staff checks the homework prior to the end of Homework Club.

Summer/Vacation Camps: Summer Camps start several days after the end of the school year and include general summer camp with activities throughout the day, a basketball camp, as well as other camps. Vacation Camp may be offered during Spring Break.

**Sports:** IDCS offers Cross Country in the Fall; Basketball in the Fall/Winter, and Track in the Spring. Friendly competition is organized for all three sports. Track and Cross-Country meets are organized with other schools. Basketball games are scheduled with local schools, also. Practice is from 3:15 to 4:15. Specific days are identified prior to the beginning of the sport season.

**Tutoring:** Parents typically hire a tutor when their child is a half year or more behind in a specific subject area or skill. A tutor provides academic assistance and support to one student on certain subject areas or skills. As a teaching-learning method, tutoring is characterized by how it differs from formal teaching methods because of the informal setting as well as the flexibility in instructional methods in terms of duration, pace of teaching, evaluation and tutor-tutee rapport. Contact your child's teacher if you believe your child needs tutoring. Your child/ren will be assessed and a recommendation made. IDCS offers tutoring at IDCS after school.

### **Assemblies – School Events**

**All School:** All IDCS students attend the Friday morning assembly from 8:30-9:00 in the school gym. Throughout the year, students from each class share their work with the school. Grade 7/8 students lead the All School assemblies. Parents are invited to attend All School. The schedule is on the school website (idcs.org).

**Hot Fudge and Fiction:** Guest readers read stories to students in the classrooms; students typically will hear three different guest readers. After the three-story sessions, all students, staff, and parents/caregivers go to the dining room for hot fudge sundaes. This is an Integrated Day Educational Alliance (IDEA-Parent Teacher Organization) event, which typically occurs in September, from 5:30-7:00.

**High School Options Event:** In September, Grade 6, 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents/caregivers are invited to a presentation about high school options for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Subsequently, during the school year, staff from local public and private high schools, such as Norwich Free Academy, Norwich Technical High School, Ledyard, Bacon Academy as well as other high schools; share information about their schools with Grade 7/8 students and their parents.

**Book Fair(s):** IDEA/IDCS office staff organize two Scholastic Book Fairs during the school year; one in November and one in March. Both Book Fairs coincide with the Student Led Conferences (SLC). Students and their parents/caregivers may attend the Book Fair before or after the SLC.

**Bread Feast:** Bread Feast is a unique IDCS event. IDCS celebrates breads from around the world. On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, parents/caregivers provide different kinds of bread and spread as well as fruit and juice for Bread Feast. The food and drinks are set up on two long tables. Then, students, staff, and parents/caregivers eat the food together in the dining room and the gym.

*Caring & Sharing:* Caring and Sharing is a unique IDCS event. Learning buddies work together to wrap books, create placemats, design and draw cards as well as other items for local community organizations. Parents/caregivers and staff supervise the various groups. This takes place on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving or the day before Winter Break.

*Winter Concert:* Students perform for their classmates and parents. Performances include singing and playing. It is held at 10:00 the day before winter break. All IDCS families are welcome to attend the Winter Concert.

*Kindness Week:* Random Acts of Kindness Day is celebrated on February 17. IDCS celebrates Kindness Week during the week of Valentine's Day. Students at all grade levels engage in various kindness activities during the week. Kindness Week is a National Event. We celebrate caring for others. For more information go to the following website: [www.randomactsofkindness.org](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org).

*One World Day:* One World Day is a unique IDCS event. The purpose of One World Day is to celebrate the diversity in our school community and our connection to the local and world communities. Various activities include a Flag Parade, sharing food from around the world, performances, dance, and art. One World Day is held in February at varying times during the day and the evening.

*Empty Bowls:* Empty Bowls is a grassroots movement by artists and crafts people in cities and towns around the world to care for and feed the hungry in their communities. Empty Bowls supports food-related charitable organizations around the world, and has raised millions of dollars to help end hunger. For more information, go to [emptybowls.com](http://emptybowls.com).

*Staff – Student Basketball Game:* The IDCS Staff and students play a friendly basketball game after the basketball season. The girls and boys' teams play against the staff, coaches, and some parents. The cheerleaders from the after-school program perform at halftime. All students, staff, and families are invited to attend. This event usually occurs in the evening in February or March.

*Health and WellBeing:* The IDCS students and staff recognize that health and wellbeing are critical for successful and happy lives. IDCS engages in various activities regarding Health and Well Being. The events are scheduled in the fall or spring.

*HOTS Artist Events:* IDCS is a Higher Order Thinking School (HOTS). This means that artists are hired to work with a specific grade level for one week. After working with an artist, classes produce songs, plays, or other types of performance. All parents are invited to attend the performances, which are held throughout the year in the school gym.

*Arbor Day:* In April, IDCS celebrates Arbor Day, which was established in 1972. The vision of Arbor Day is to help everyone understand and use trees as a solution to many of the global issues we face today, including air quality, water quality, a changing climate, deforestation, poverty, and hunger. For more information, go to [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).

*Spring Recital and Art Show:* In late May, students who have been attending piano, strings, and horn classes, perform for parents, families, and friends. The event is held in the IDCS gym

from 5:30 to 7:00. The Students Art Show is held in the dining room. Parents, families, friends, staff, and students attend the Art show from 5:00-5:30 and then after the recital.

**Basket Raffle:** Basket Raffle is typically held in the spring. Classrooms, parents/caregivers, staff, as well as community organizations donate baskets filled with various items; each basket is based on a theme, such as sports, or birds, or barbecues. Other donated items include tickets to the theatre or tickets to a basketball game. Food trucks set up in the IDCS parking lot to provide dinner, at a cost. The Basket raffle is held in the IDCS dining room and gym. Basket Raffle starts at 5:00 and ends at 7:00. Student, staff, families, and community members attend the Basket Raffle.

**Plant Sale:** Students organize, order, and raise money selling plants to IDCS students, staff, and families. The plant sale is typically held on Thursday and Friday prior to Mother's Day. Students use the money that they raised to purchase items for the school or to donate the money to a community organization.

**Talent Show:** The IDCS Talent Show is held in mid to late May. It is an opportunity for students to showcase their talents to their classmates and to the school community. The Talent Show starts at 1:30 and ends approximately at 2:45. Families are welcomed to attend.

**Career Day:** Parents/caregivers are invited to IDCS to share various aspects of their careers with Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Graders. This event takes place during the school day in late April or the beginning of May.

**Staff Appreciation Day:** Staff Appreciation Week, is a week-long celebration to recognize the contributions of the IDCS staff. It coincides with the national teacher appreciation week. The week provides an opportunity for students, their parents, the governing board, and administration to show their appreciation for the hard work teachers do and the long hours many of them put in. IDCS Staff Appreciation Day will be held on May 4, 2021.

**Annual Picnic:** The Annual School Picnic is the end of year celebration for the school community, which includes students, staff and IDCS families. The picnic is held at a nearby park from 9:00-1:00. IDCS and IDCS families provide drinks, meat and vegetarian hotdogs, salad, sandwiches, dessert, snacks, and ice cream. During the picnic, students engage in a kickball tournament, painting, board games, a scavenger hunt on a pond trail, playing on the playscape, as well as other activities. The Annual Picnic is held at the end of May or beginning of June.

## **Assessments**

IDCS uses several assessments to inform teacher practice and student learning.

*I-Ready Diagnostic Assessments* are used to assess students in Math and Reading from Kindergarten to Grade 8. *I-Ready Diagnostic* is an adaptive assessment designed to provide teachers with actionable insight into student needs. It offers a complete picture of student performance and growth, eliminating the need for multiple, redundant tests. By adapting to student responses and assessing a broad range of skills—including skills above and below a student's chronological grade—the *I-Ready Diagnostic* pinpoints student ability level, identifies the specific skills students need to learn to accelerate their growth, and charts a personalized learning path for each student. I-Ready is administered three times during the school year. For more information go to [www.curriculumassociates.com](http://www.curriculumassociates.com).

*Smarter Balanced Assessment*: SBA is the Connecticut statewide mandatory standardized test. Students from Grade 3 to Grade 8 take the Language Arts and Math tests. Additionally, Grade 5 and Grade 8 students take the Science Test. The test is administered in April and May. Results from the tests are given to the school in August/September. IDCS sends each student's result to the parents/caregivers in September/October. For more information go to <https://ct.portal.airast.org/get-started/smarter-balanced-assessment.shtml>.

*BRIGANCE Early Childhood*: Brigance assessment is used to assess PreK students entering IDCS. The test is administered in May. The BRIGANCE developmental screeners and assessment inventories use observation, interviews, and child performance to pinpoint understanding in the domains tied to early development and school or kindergarten readiness. Test content aligns to the Common Core and many state-specific learning standards to equip educators with familiar information to fit their existing framework. For more information go to [www.curriculumassociates.com](http://www.curriculumassociates.com).

In addition to the above-mentioned assessments, IDCS utilizes other assessments depending on the needs of the students.

## **Attendance**

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to the education process. School hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for Kindergarten to Grade 8 students: 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for morning PreK students and 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. for afternoon PreK students. Students should be in school during these hours to maximize their learning opportunities. Parents/caregivers are responsible that their child/ren attend regularly and for the full school day. Research indicates that consistent student attendance is highly correlated with school success. School and home need to work together to ensure children and youth gain the most benefit from their education. For all our students to be successful learners, regular school attendance is critical. For more information about attendance, go to <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/attendancedata/chapter1a.asp>.



**RUVNA APP:** All parents/guardians are required to respond to the RUVNA app every morning before their child/ren come to school. The RUVNA app is automatically sent to parents twice before 8:00. There is a series of questions that parents must respond to regarding COVID19. If any of the responses are "yes," your child/ren must not come to school. The school nurse will contact parents/guardians

**Definition of Attendance:** A student is "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day.

Our attendance records are closely scrutinized by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or leaving school early is documented and must be reported to CSDE. Additionally, CSDE requires that IDCS notify parents, via letter, when their child/ren have missed too many days of school. For more information go to CSDE's policy at <https://www.attendanceworks.org/policy/state-education-policy/connecticut>.

**Excused Absences:** The first nine absences in any given year can be excused by IDCS for any reason the parent/caregiver deems appropriate, if accompanied by the appropriate documentation and provided parents/caregivers notify IDCS prior to the absence or within 10 days after the absence. Absences will *only* be excused for the following reasons:

- **Illness:** Exempted by the IDCS school nurse due to fever, vomiting, or other illness.
- **Health concerns such as illnesses or doctor's appointments:** A note from a medical professional is required for absence to be considered excused. A physician's note is always required if the student is out more than five days in a row. If your child is out on two or more days preceding a weekend and does not return to school on Monday, the weekend days are counted in the five-day period. If your child's physician will not examine your child or provide a note for return to school, please call our school nurse, Peggy Rankowitz, R.N. at (860) 892-1900 x 431 to arrange clearance for your child's return to school.
- **Religious Holidays:** Please notify your child's teacher **and** Cathy Badorek (cathyb@idcs.org) the IDCS receptionist, in writing (note, email, or text) prior to your child's absence.
- **Court appearance:** Legal documentation required. Please notify your child's teacher and the IDCS receptionist prior to your child's absence.
- **Funeral or death in the immediate family:** Please notify your child's teacher and the IDCS receptionist within 10 days of absence.

**Unexcused Absences:** For absences ten or greater in any school year, parent notification along with appropriate documentation is required. All other absences will be considered unexcused and subject to truancy regulations.

**Tardy or Leaving Early:** Students are tardy if they arrive at the IDCS after 8:00. All students who arrive after 8 a.m. must sign in at the front desk. Parents should schedule medical appointments after school hours when possible. A note from the doctor, dentist, counselor's, or etc. office should be submitted to the teacher or school receptionist when the student returns

to school from an appointment. If your child is going to arrive after 8:30, please do not leave a voicemail for the teacher, as she/he may not have an opportunity to check messages in time. Contact the school receptionist. Excessive tardiness or removing your child before the end of the school day is a form of truancy.

Notifying School: A parent/caregiver should inform the school any time a student is absent, is late, or is leaving early. Parent and/or Caregiver notification may be in the form of: (a) written note signed and dated by the parent, (b) email to [cathyb@idcs.org](mailto:cathyb@idcs.org) *from the parent's email on file*, (c) in person verbal notification *at the front desk only*, (d) verbal notification over the phone. Parent/caregiver notification requires the parent/caregiver's name, relationship to the student, reason for AND date of absence. Siblings cannot excuse an absence. As an extra precaution, when a student is marked absent during morning roll call, the automated attendance system will call the parent/caregiver informing them of the absence.

Truancy According to Connecticut State Statutes: Current law defines a student as "truant" if the student is between age 5 and 18, enrolled in a public or private school, and has four unexcused school absences in one month or 10 unexcused in any school year. A "habitual truant" is a student with 20 unexcused absences in a year. If a student is truant, the parent will be called to arrange a meeting with the director. If a student has 15 or more consecutive unexcused absences, an attendance review meeting will be scheduled. If the parent is uncooperative, the juvenile justice system will be notified.

Extended Absence: The IDCS Governing Board and School Administration strongly recommend consistent school attendance. If there is a family emergency that warrants an extended absence when school is in session, it is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to notify the teacher, the front office receptionist, and the director in writing at least one week ahead so that work can be provided for the student to complete during missed time. Please specify the reason for the absence and the expected length of the absence. Once the child submits the completed work, the absences will be excused if the absence has been pre-approved. This procedure is used so that students do not miss required assignments. Excused absences also mean your child will not have to be reported as truant (4 unexcused absences in a month, or 10 in a year).

Vacations: **Family vacations should not be scheduled when school is in session.** We are committed to providing the best education possible. This commitment is expected from all members of the IDCS community. We are a community of learners at the IDCS. We are best served when we are a full community, pursuing our common goals on a day-to-day schedule.

Emergency Dismissal Procedures: Should an exceptional situation (e.g. extreme weather or school maintenance breakdown) occur between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and it is necessary to close the school before 3:00 p.m., parents/caregivers will be contacted immediately. An automated message will be sent to notify families via phone and email of the dismissal changes. Additionally, the information will be posted on the IDCS website.

Snow Days: If school is canceled or delayed due to hazardous conditions, it will be broadcast on WICH 1310 and on Channel 3 and Channel 4. School cancellations and early dismissals are put on our website ([www.idcs.org](http://www.idcs.org)) as soon as a decision is made. Furthermore, IDCS follows

the Norwich Public School (NPS) announcements/decisions. Consequently, when NPS cancels schools for snow, IDCS automatically cancels school. PreK: if we have a delay, the a.m. PreK class will not meet. The p.m. PreK class will not meet if school is dismissed early due to inclement weather. Families will be notified via automated message in the event of a delay or cancellation due to weather.

**Current contact information:** It is critical to communicate with IDCS parents/caregivers at any time. Consequently, parents/caregivers need to update the following information: current home, cell & work phone numbers, email addresses and the names and current phone numbers (home/cell/work) of **THREE** people to call in an emergency. Additionally, if the family moves or changes phone numbers during the school year, the school should be notified immediately. Please keep in mind we may not be able to reach you in an emergency if contact information is not current.

**If an adult, who is *not* on the emergency list,** comes to the school to pick up a child, the student will not be released to the adult until the parent/caregiver is contacted and grants permission. Moreover, students may not go home with anyone but their parent/caregiver without prior written notice; there are no exceptions. Emails are considered written notice.

### **Birthdays/Holidays**

**Birthdays:** Birthdays are celebrated (or not) in many ways by children and their families. It is important to acknowledge every child's uniqueness and individuality. However, IDCS leaves the actual birthday celebration to the family and the home. Consequently, birthdays are not celebrated at IDCS.

**Birthday/Party Invitations:** Invitations to parties (birthday, graduation, etc.) should be e/mailed to the homes of classmates and not brought to school. When all students in a class are not invited, feelings can be hurt. Upon request, the school will provide a class list with addresses to parents.

**Holidays:** Our school is comprised of many ethnic and religious groups. Out of respect for all the IDCS families, we do not celebrate cultural holidays, such as Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc. in school. However, we do discuss cultures and communities through history, music, art, and academics. Moreover, IDCS has a long history of its own traditions such as All School, Bread Feast, Caring and Sharing, One World Day, Basket Raffle, Hot Fudge and Fiction, and the Annual Picnic, as well as other events, which provide an opportunity for the school community to come together. IDCS staff believe that celebrating these traditions strengthens the fabric of our school community. See additional events in the Assemblies/Events section in this Handbook.

### **Bullying/Anti-Bullying Policy (Summary)**

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STRENGTHENING OF SCHOOL BULLYING LAWS Public Act 11- 232  
Bullying will not be tolerated at IDCS.

Bullying is repeated *written, oral, and electronic* communications

- by one or more students directed at or referring to another student
- and *physical acts and gestures* by one or more students that are repeatedly directed against another student and that:
- cause the student physical or emotional harm or damage his or her property,
- put the student in reasonable fear of harm or property damage,
- create a hostile school environment for the student,
- infringe on the student's rights at school, or
- substantially disrupt the education process or a school's orderly operation.

Hostile Environment is one in which bullying among students is so severe or pervasive that it alters the school's climate. Conduct targeting a student's actual or perceived possession of, or association with others possessing or perceived as possessing, any differentiating characteristic based on race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

"Cyberbullying," is defined as acts of bullying carried out through mobile electronic devices or electronic communications, the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, or cell phones.

Responsibilities of School Staff:

- All staff receive annual training.
- If there is a bullying complaint, a thorough investigation will occur. Parents of all students will be notified of the investigation. The results of the investigation will be shared with parents and students.
- If bullying is found, an intervention plan will be developed and implemented.
- The school reviews its school climate plan annually.

Bullying is prohibited at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school grounds;

- at a school bus stop;
- on a school bus or any other vehicle, the school board owns, leases, or uses; or
- through an electronic device the school board owns, leases, or uses.

A copy of the bullying policy can be found at:

[https://www.idcs.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=1568062&type=d&pREC\\_ID=1696618](https://www.idcs.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1568062&type=d&pREC_ID=1696618).

### **Classroom Assignments**

Many factors go into choosing a classroom teacher for each child. A student's academic ability, previous experience, gender, interaction with his or her peers, and input from the child's current teacher are taken into consideration. Teachers and administrators meet in May/June to prepare class lists for the following year. Parents/caregivers are notified of their child/ren's classroom assignment at the end of June or beginning of July. Although parents/caregivers may submit information about their child's needs to the assistant director or director, classroom teacher assignment is ultimately an administrative decision.

## **Communication**

Ongoing and effective two-way communication between families and schools is necessary for student success and to build school-family partnerships. Research shows that the more parents and teachers and schools share relevant information with each other about a student, the better equipped both will be to help that student achieve academically, social, and emotionally. For more information about school-home partnerships, go to [ct.gov/SDE/Services/Families-and-Community/Family-Engagement](http://ct.gov/SDE/Services/Families-and-Community/Family-Engagement).

*Communication between Administration and Parent/Caregiver:* The IDCS administration strives to keep parents/caregivers informed of all aspects of all students' experience in school. Means of communication include **Friday newsletter (electronic)**, family handbook, phone calls, text messages, emails, power school, IDCS website, school events, Governing Board meeting minutes, IDEA meetings and minutes, Keepers of the Flame meetings and minutes, and face to face meetings. Urgent or timely messages are sent via our robotic call system, email, and posted on the IDCS website. If a parent/caregiver would like to schedule an appointment with any staff member, please send an email to or call the individual staff member to schedule the appointment. Staff contact information can be found in this handbook and on the IDCS website.

*Communication between Teachers and Parents/Caregiver:* IDCS teachers strive to communicate all aspects of child/ren's academic and social experiences at school with parents/caregivers. Prior to the beginning of the school year, teachers conduct home visits with students/families who are new to their classroom. Teachers meet with parents/caregivers and children to encourage open dialogue and an avenue for communication. Additional means of communication include email, text, phone calls, power school, school events, teacher/class webpage, home/school contracts, student led conferences (November and March) and narrative reports (includes all curricular areas as well as personal, social and physical development), volunteers in the classroom, and face to face meetings. It is difficult, if not impossible for teachers to hold unscheduled meetings with parents before, during, or after school. If a parent/caregiver would like to meet with a teacher, please schedule an appointment with the teacher. Teachers will respond to parents within 48 hours.

*Communication between Office and Parents/Caregiver:* The IDCS office staff strive to keep parents informed of all aspects of their child's experience in school, specifically, attendance, tardiness, breakfast/lunch payments, after school programs, extended day, sports, etc. The following are ways that the office staff will communicate with parents: phone calls, text, emails, website, and newsletters.

*Communication between Parents/Caregivers and Students:* If parents/caregivers need to send a message to their child/ren, they need to contact the school receptionist, via the main school number (860-892-1900). Please do not call or text your child on cell phones because it disrupts the learning environment; this action is a violation of our electronic device policy. If a student needs to contact a parent/caregiver, the student must ask his/her teacher for permission. If granted permission, the student must call from the school office phone. If absolutely necessary, teachers will use their judgment in allowing a student to contact

parents/caregivers via a cellphone. Please note that all cell phones must remain in the students' book bag throughout the day, except for 7th and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The teachers collect the cellphone in the mornings and return them to the students in the afternoon.

**Communication Among Parents/Caregivers:** A School Directory, published once a year is available to parents in October to use for family-to-family communication.

**Handouts/Emails to parents:** If parents would like to share information with IDCS families through IDCS, all communications are subjected to approval by the director. If approved, the communication will be sent out with the Friday newsletter.

**Communication Expectations:** The IDCS Governing Board and administration promote and expect civility and respectful communications among school employees, students, parents and the public. IDCS encourages all adults to act as positive role models for students by engaging in positive communication and avoiding harassing, defamatory, obscene, abusive, discriminatory, threatening communication or actions, some of which may be against the law. Go to [https://www.idcs.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=1568062&type=d&pREC\\_ID=1696618](https://www.idcs.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1568062&type=d&pREC_ID=1696618) for more details.

**Home Visits:** IDCS teachers conduct home visits during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weeks of August. The teachers visit students who are new to their class. The teachers get to know the student and parents/caregivers, facilitate communication between the teacher and parents/caregivers, and share school information with parents/caregivers and students.

### **Dress Code**

**Dress Code:** Students revised the dress code during the 2018-19 school year. The IDCS Governing Board approved the dress code at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year. Administration will make the final determination of the appropriateness of student clothing, hats etc.

The primary responsibility for wearing appropriate clothing in school and at school sponsored events rests with the parents and students. A student's appearance reflects his/her opinion of himself/herself and respect for others. However, it is the school's responsibility to dictate that school dress be in good taste and contribute to the health and safety of the student body. For that reason, the following guidelines are set forth:

1. Students should always maintain good grooming and hygiene.
2. The following items are not permissible to wear in school; bathing suits, lingerie-type tops, slippers, A-Tees, cut off shirts with excessive armholes, see through clothing, strapless, backless or open midriff shirts, pajamas.
3. Students may not wear clothing, jewelry or any other markings that may be identified as gang related. Due to the constantly changing nature of these symbols, determination will be made by the administration.
4. Items of clothing/jewelry displaying alcohol, drugs, tobacco, violence, sexuality or inappropriate language is not permitted.
5. Flip flops and high heels are discouraged for safety reasons.



6. Upon entering the school, hats, hoods and sunglasses should be removed. (sunglasses may be worn if required by a doctor).
7. Clothing that exposes the abdomen, chest, buttocks, or underwear is not permitted.
8. Shorts and skirts need to be an appropriate length. Administration will have the final say as to what is appropriate.
9. COVID 19: If students are required to wear face coverings to school, the face coverings must be appropriate to the school setting.

### **Educational Records**

The Director is responsible for ensuring that all record keeping and notification requirements under federal and state statutes is carried out by IDCS. Student educational records are confidential and are secure. Orderly retention and disposition per applicable state statutes of student records is followed.

Parent/Caregiver Access: Parents/caregivers, with legal standing, may inspect and review their child/ren's educational records via two federal laws: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). FERPA protects the privacy of students' records and gives parents the right to inspect their child's records within 45 days. FOIA () gives parents the right to inspect their child's records within 20 days. If printed records are requested, IDCS will print the records within 20 business days. Parents are responsible for the cost of the printing.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. See Appendix C for the complete law. See Appendix C for more information.

Record Correction: Parents/caregivers, with legal standing, may make a written request to seek a correction of the student's educational records. Procedure: Written request to director; investigation of the change in consultation with any of the following staff members: assistant director, classroom teacher, specials teacher, special education teacher, counselor/social worker. Written decision to the parents/caregivers to change or not change the student record. In addition, the parent/caregiver has the right to place a statement in the educational records of the student. The statement must be dated and signed.

Privacy: Personally, identifiable information from a student's educational records may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of the student's parent/caregiver, except as otherwise permitted by administrative regulations to other school officials within the school who have been determined by the school to have legitimate educational interests.

Request for Educational Records from Other Schools: When a student transfers to another school, a parent must sign a Release of Records form before records can be sent to the school. A parental signature on the Release of Records form also indicates the student is withdrawing from the IDCS. The Release of Record form may be obtained from the receptionist at the front

desk. An exception is a child's health record, which can be sent to the school whenever a request is made by the school the child will be attending. Graduating students' academic as well as medical records are automatically sent to the high school.

### **Field Trip Policy**

Incorporating real life learning experiences can enrich and provide opportunities that cannot be duplicated within the school building. Due to transportation constraints field trips cannot extend beyond the school day. Field trips shall:

- be of sound educational value;
- provide opportunities not available to the student within the school building;
- make the best use of instructional time; and
- be approved by the assistant director or director.

Permission to go on field trips must be granted by the parent/caregiver except for trips to Otis Library. School age siblings of students going on field trips will not be able to accompany a brother, sister, or parent on that field trip, as the child needs to attend school.

### **Food Service/Dining Room**

Breakfast Program: Breakfast is served from 7:45 a.m. to 8:10 a.m., Monday to Friday, beginning on September 1, the first day of school. **There is no cost for breakfast for the 2021/2022 school year.** Please note that BREAKFAST WILL NOT BE SERVED IF THERE IS A WEATHER-RELATED DELAY.

Lunch Program: Hot lunch and grab and go lunches will be served beginning on, September 2, the first full day of school. Menus are posted on our website [https://www.idcs.org/apps/food\\_menu/](https://www.idcs.org/apps/food_menu/) Milk (and lactose free milk for students who are lactose intolerant) is available (\$.50) daily. **There is no cost for lunch in the 2021/2022 school year.** Please note that LUNCH WILL NOT BE SERVED ON NOON DISMISSAL DAYS.

Breakfast/Lunch Payment - **NOT APPLICABLE FOR THE 2021/2022 SCHOOL YEAR:**

- Cash: Parents/caregivers may send cash to school for your child/ren's breakfast and lunch. If your child will be eating lunch daily, please pay one week in advance for your child's lunch. When his/her balance is low, please send your next payment. There is a silver locked box in the front entrance for parents to submit lunch money. Use an envelope; write your child's name, teacher's name, and amount on the envelope. Then, deposit it in the silver box. Envelopes are available at the front desk.
- Titan Portal: Parents/caregivers can submit payments for their child/ren's breakfast/lunch account and make payments by logging in to the Titan Parent Portal. Go to <https://family.titank12.com/> Please check your child/ren's account on a regular basis and submit additional funds as needed.



*Free or Reduced Lunch Applications:* All parents are asked to submit an application for free/reduced priced lunches. These applications must be submitted every school year. Free or reduced lunch applications are distributed with the July mailing to parents and should be sent in with other forms on the first day of school. Caregivers will be notified as soon as the applications are processed. Free/Reduced Priced lunch applications can also be mailed to the school before the first day of school. If your child receives free/reduced lunch, they can also receive free/reduced breakfast, provided an order form is submitted to your child's teacher each week. All IDCS families are asked to complete and submit the Free/Reduced Price Application since the data affects IDCS' grant eligibility. **ALL FAMILIES SHOULD COMPLETE ONE APPLICATION EVEN THOUGH STUDENTS WILL NOT HAVE TO PAY FOR MEALS THIS YEAR.** Apply online:

(ENGLISH) <https://family.titank12.com/application/new?lang=English>

(SPANISH) <https://family.titank12.com/application/new?lang=Spanish>

(CHINESE) <https://family.titank12.com/application/new?lang=Chinese>

*Family Style Eating:* IDCS students eat with students from other grade levels during their lunch. Second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students eat together at the same table. Lunches are scheduled from 11:05 a.m. to 11:35 a.m., 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and 12:20 p.m. to 12:50 p.m. from Monday to Friday.

*Lunch with your Child/ren:* Parents/caregivers are invited to eat lunch with their children every day during the week. Sign in at the front desk, then go to the cafeteria. Enjoy!

*Snacks:* Please provide healthy snacks, such as fruit and nuts, rather than candy and processed snack foods, when sending food to school.

### **Health Regulations**

Peggy Rankowitz, the school nurse, is at the school from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Parents/caregivers can contact her via email [peggyr@idcs.org](mailto:peggyr@idcs.org) or by phone 860-892-1900 Ext: 431.

The health of the children is a cooperative effort between the home and the school. The home should provide each child with a good night's rest and nourishing breakfast. **No child should be sent to school with a severe cold, fever of 100 or higher, sore throat, vomiting, rash or any other symptom of a contagious disease.** Please notify the school if your child has a communicable disease.

Administering Medication:

- A parent/guardian must provide a completed authorization form signed by a physician, dentist, Physicians Assistant, or APRN before medication (prescription or over the counter medicine) can be administered. The school nurse or a medication trained classroom teacher or para will give medication during school hours.

- Medication must be brought to the school nurse by the parent/guardian in a physician, dentist, or pharmacy prepared and labeled container. Medication should not exceed a 45-day supply.
- Medication should be picked up by a parent/guardian within one week of the last day of school or whenever a medication is discontinued. Medication not picked up within one week will be discarded according to Connecticut State regulations.
- Non-prescription medication orders by a physician, dentist, APRN or physician's assistant must be supplied by the parent/guardian with a completed authorization form and in the original prepared and labeled container.
- Students can apply sunscreen to their skin. Sunscreen will not be applied for staff without parent/guardian written permission.

*Lactose Intolerance/Food Allergies:* If your child is lactose intolerant, please notify the school nurse and your child's teacher so that modifications can be made. For students with food allergies requiring epi-pens, please ask your pediatrician for the medical form that is required and submit it to the nurse. Schools are required to have documentation on file to substantiate any substitutions or modifications that are made in the required meal patterns.

*Management Plan for Life Threatening Allergies:* Students with life threatening allergies, as indicated by the caregiver on the yearly registration form, will be asked to complete a Systemic Allergy Record and the child's physician will be asked to provide a letter detailing instructions to follow in the event of an allergic reaction at school. A peanut free table is provided for students with nut allergies. IDCS' plan can be viewed on the IDCS website.

*Health Insurance:* Public Act 07-04 requires caregivers to report annually whether the student has health insurance (on annual yellow registration form). Information about the HUSKY program, a state health insurance program, is provided in Addendum B of the Free & Reduced Lunch packet given to all caregivers at the Home Visit.

*Exams at School:* The school nurse conducts the following tests with children in various grade levels: Eyesight Test, Hearing Test, and Scoliosis Test. The nurse will notify parents when the tests occur and the results of the tests if a referral to a doctor is needed.

*Non-Toxic Cleaners:* IDCS uses fragrance free and non-toxic/least toxic products to clean all surfaces in all areas and rooms in the school building (see school policy 3003 on idcs.org or click on the link: [https://www.idcs.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=1568062&type=d&pREC\\_ID=1696618](https://www.idcs.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1568062&type=d&pREC_ID=1696618)

### **Homework Policy**

Homework is necessary for academic growth. It is also an opportunity for family members to become familiar with the work being completed at school. The students at the IDCS have homework every evening. Not all homework assignments include a written product. If no written work is assigned, a student should work on his or her personal research project or read a book of choice. The amount of time spent on homework increases as the student gets older. The general guidelines below do not reflect the needs and pace of every student. Some students may complete assignments quickly while others take more time. Research should be

considered an ongoing homework assignment. All students are working on research projects. It is impossible to complete all facets of a project during school hours. The following guidelines are suggested:

#### Minutes Each Day

Kindergarten	up to 15 minutes	Grade 5	up to 50 minutes*
Grade 1	up to 20 minutes	Grade 6	up to 60 minutes*
Grade 2	up to 20 minutes	Grade 7	up to 60 minutes*
Grade 3	up to 30 minutes	Grade 8	up to 60 minutes*
Grade 4	up to 45 minutes*		

\*For students above third grade, this time should be in addition to approximately one-half hour per day of silent reading or being read to by an adult.

### **Internet, Electronics, and Phone Usage Policy (Summary)**

Internet access has been established for educational purposes only and internet use shall be consistent with the school's curriculum and state standards. All students and parent/caregivers must sign a copy of the *Integrated Day Charter School - Technology and Internet Policy Parent/Student User Agreement Policy* and return it to their teacher prior to being allowed to use computers, chrome books, I-Pads, other electronic devices for school work and activities. Students, from Grade 2 to Grade 8, have individual chrome books that they use for their schoolwork. Students receive a new Chromebook in Grade 2 and Grade 6. Students are responsible for the care of the chrome book. Below is an abbreviated version of the policy. The complete and comprehensive policy can be found on [ids.org](http://ids.org).

Cellphones: Cellphones are a distraction to student learning. Consequently, the use of cellphones is not permitted in the school, unless a teacher or administrator approves the request to use the cellphone. Kindergarten to Grade 6 students must leave the cellphones in their book bags. If there are any issues with cellphones in K-Grade 6, the teacher will collect the cellphone and return it to the student at the end of the day. Grade 7/8 students give their cellphones to the homeroom teacher at the beginning of the school day. The cellphones are returned to the students at the end of the school day. If there is an issue with any student and his/her cellphone, parents will have to collect the cellphone from school.

Vandalism and Abuse: Vandalism or abuse of technology will result in a suspension of a student's computer privileges. Vandalism is any attempt to break a computer or to intentionally damage school property. Students do not have permission to install any software programs or download any programs from the Internet to the computers. Doing so will be considered abuse of the equipment. Electronics damaged by abuse or neglect must be replaced by the student/family responsible for the damage.

Privileges and Consequences: The use of electronic devices and the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use can result in a cancellation of those privileges.

*Network Etiquette:* Respect for the computer equipment and its network is a condition for use of the computers. As such, students are expected to follow the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Do not make any changes to computer programs or setups on computers. You may not load any software on a computer system.
- Appropriate language: Use of or access to media with obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar rude, or threatening language violates this policy.
- Do not give out your or someone else's personal information such as last name, address or phone number.
- No food or beverages around the computers.
- Do not plug or unplug any accessories without permission from a teacher.
- Report any problems you see with the computers immediately to a teacher.
- Students are not allowed to plagiarize works found on the Internet. Copying and pasting work from the Internet into your work is a form of plagiarism.

*Internet: Terms and Conditions Acceptable Use:* The purpose of Internet access is to support research and education providing access to unique resources. The use of the internet must be for educational purposes only.

*Security:* Security on all computers is a high priority. Do not violate the rights to privacy of other students. Students may not use other users' individual accounts or share your password with anyone. If a student sees another student's account is signed in on a school computer, the student must sign them out prior to using the computer.

*Cyberbullying:* Cyberbullying is a form of bullying. IDCS has a zero-tolerance policy.

### **Mandated Reported for Child Abuse/Child Neglect**

Connecticut General Statutes §46b-120

All IDCS staff are mandated reporters; this includes, director, assistant director, teachers, paras, instructors, business manager, bookkeeper, office staff, dining room staff, custodial staff, support service staff, IT specialists, etc.

*Child abuse* occurs where a child has had physical injury inflicted upon him or her other than by accidental means, has injuries at variance with history given of them, or is in a condition resulting in maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment. (Connecticut General Statutes §46b-120)

*Child neglect* occurs where a child has been abandoned, is being denied proper care and attention physically, emotionally, or morally, or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being. (Connecticut General Statutes §46b-120)

Mandated reporters who, outside the ordinary course of their employment or profession, have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 is in imminent risk of being abused or has been abused or neglected, can and should make a report to the Careline.

The Careline is open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. It is staffed by full-time, highly-skilled professionals who are available to answer questions and gather critical information from callers to determine if a report meets Connecticut's statutory criteria for child abuse or neglect. Reports that meet the criteria are forwarded to a DCF case investigator for prompt and appropriate action.

For more information go to:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/1-DCF/Reporting-Child-Abuse-and-Neglect#HowToReport>.

### **Parents/Caregivers – School Partnerships**

**Director's Meetings with Parents/Caregivers:** The School Director holds monthly meetings with parents on the second Thursday of the month, starting at 6:30 on Zoom. The meetings are scheduled on September 9, October 14, November 4 (November 11 is Veteran's Day), December 9, January 13, February 10, March 10, April 8, and May 12. The Zoom link will be in the Friday Newsletter and on the IDCS website and sent to parents via text and robocall.

**Foundation Board:** The IDCS Foundation Board is a non-profit entity 501(C)3 whose goal is to raise awareness, inform/educate about IDCS, and raise money from corporations/businesses, the general public, and IDCS families to support IDCS. Because it is separate from the school, it can apply for grants for which the school might not be eligible. The goal of the Foundation is to raise enough money to establish and sustain a substantial amount of money so that the school can benefit from. The Foundation is composed of parents, staff, and community members who have expertise in business, law, finance, and the pulse of the surrounding community. Parents who are interested in serving on the Foundation, can email the group at [idcsfoundation@idcs.org](mailto:idcsfoundation@idcs.org). Meetings are held four to five times throughout the school year.

**IDEA: Our Family/Teacher Organization:** The Integrated Day Education Alliance (IDEA) is open to all parents and IDCS staff. IDEA sponsors guest speakers, informational meetings, potlucks, Hot Fudge and Fiction, One World Day, Environmental Fair, Arts Night, Health and Fitness Fair, Math and Science Night, Scholastic Book Sales, Research Night, Bread Feast, Sharing and Caring, Game Night, among others. IDEA funds school field trips, service-learning projects, the yearbook, the annual picnic, and other events. IDEA functions are typically on the first Thursday of most months. *The IDEA committee* meets on a monthly basis to plan the events. Parents are encouraged to help with at least one event. Meetings are typically held on Mondays. See 2021-22 calendar (Appendix A) for specific dates.

**Keepers of the Flame:** The Keepers of the Flame is a committee of elected teachers, non certified staff member, and parents who discuss initiatives at the school and work to maintain and ensure that events and programs adhere to the IDCS mission and vision. Parents/caregivers, students, and staff can submit ideas and suggestions to the committee

regarding holding new events or creating nonacademic programs at IDCS. The form is on the IDCS website at [http://www.idcs.org/Board\\_Committees\\_Groups/Keepers\\_Of\\_The\\_Flame](http://www.idcs.org/Board_Committees_Groups/Keepers_Of_The_Flame).

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 4:30 in the IDCS Staff Room on the main floor.

*Volunteering:* Family involvement is one of the basic tenets of the Integrated Day Charter School. Upon enrolling their children, parents/caregivers accept that they will be called upon to become active participants in the educational process. There are opportunities for parent/caregiver involvement in a variety of arenas. Volunteers can sign up online or contact the receptionist to find out about various opportunities. The classroom teacher will contact caregivers throughout the year to schedule volunteer time in the classroom and to secure volunteers for other activities. Volunteers will be expected to follow conduct expectations and sign a confidentiality form.

IDCS Volunteers must sign in at the front desk. All volunteers will be given a badge or a lanyard to wear while in the school. Volunteers park their cars in the Crown Street or Thermos Ave. parking lot. Volunteers can park in the spaces in front of the school building from 9:00 am to 2:00 p.m.

*Volunteer Code of Conduct:*

- Support the philosophy of the school.
- Be respectful of students, their individual levels, and needs.
- Use statements that will be encouraging and positive when redirecting behavior, following the Responsive Classroom model.
- Respect student confidentiality, as described in the confidentiality policy below.
- Adhere to the volunteer schedule and notify the school if unable to come.
- Be willing to take part in training sessions when available.
- Give equal attention to all students, unless otherwise requested by the teacher.
- Honor the professional's role in the school. Please do not undermine or detract from the efforts of professional staff.
- Always conduct themselves in such a way that is not physically, emotionally, sexually or verbally abusive to students or staff.

*Volunteer Confidentiality Policy:* All members of the IDCS community have a right to privacy. Volunteers should not share any academic, behavioral, or health information about students, families, or adults with anyone but school staff. Observations and concerns about students should be brought to the teacher's attention, rather than shared with others. Please maintain the students and staff's privacy and confidentiality.

*Dining Room Visitors and Volunteers:* Parents/caregivers are always invited to have lunch with their child/ren on any day of the week. Sign in at the front desk, then go to the dining room to

meet your child/ren to have lunch. Please call the school if you would like to help in our dining room on a given day. Parents are always encouraged to dine with their children

*Workshops of School Philosophy, Objectives and Programs:* Workshops are provided periodically to facilitate understanding of the philosophy and methods employed at the Integrated Day Charter School. Workshops are provided in curricular areas, parenting skills, Responsive Classroom techniques and other topics of interest.

### **Parking**

*Permitted Parking:* Parents/caregivers, volunteers, and visitors may park in the Crown St. and Thermos Ave. parking lots. The spots directly in front of the school are available from 9:00 am to 2:00 p.m. and after 4:00 p.m. The spots along the fence facing the river and adjacent to the Playscape clearly marked "IDCS Parking Only" are also available.

*Prohibited Parking:*

- Parking is not permitted along Crown St. or Thermos Ave.
- Parking is prohibited in the FIRE LANE.
- Do not park in front of the school before 9:00 a.m. and from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
- Signs that say "visitor parking" are for visitors to the Condos only. Please do not park in these spots.
- Do not park in the Condo Association parking lot, the car will be towed by the Condo Association.
- School/property map is in the Appendix.

### **Personally Identifiable Student Information, Photography, and Video**

*Photography, and Video:*

On occasion, Integrated Day Charter School (IDCS) staff or local/state news media may photograph or record students and/or student-produced work during school and outside of school hours. These are used for state/local and school publications, productions, marketing, websites and social media outlets for IDCS and the IDCS Foundation. IDCS may use these photographs and recordings indefinitely unless authorization is revoked in writing. However, if revoked, IDCS shall not be required to recall the photos and/or records of the affected publications, productions, marketing, websites, social media outlets in use.

*Directory Information:*

Personally identifiable information can only be released according to [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR §99.3](#) FERPA laws. A school may disclose "directory

information" if the school has given public notice of the types of information which it has designated as directory information. Directory information for Integrated Day Charter School will be designated and used as follows:

**Student First Name and Homeroom Teacher:** School Yearbook, IDCS in house Family Directory, State/Local/IDCS publications, productions and marketing. IDCS websites and social media outlets for IDCS and the IDCS Foundation.

**Student Last Name:** IDCS Yearbook, IDCS Newsletter and IDCS Community Communications, Publication of Awards.

**Primary Phone #, Primary Email Address and Primary Mailing Address:** IDCS in house Family Directory. *\*The IDCS In House Family Directory and its contents will **only be released to current IDCS families of record**. Current families of record must request this information from the Front Desk Receptionist.*

**If a parent does not wish Directory Information, Photographs and/or Recordings of his/her child released, or does not want their child's work posted, he/she must notify the Executive Director in writing.**

Surveillance equipment may be used on buses, in certain areas of campus, and in school events for security, safety, and discipline purposes. These video/audio records may be utilized as evidence for certain disciplinary procedures. This evidence may be maintained as part of a student's record and made available to the parent. Parental notice restricting photographs or videos will not apply to the use of surveillance equipment for safety, security, and disciplinary procedures.

### **Pre-Kindergarten Accreditation**

IDCS has applied for accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for our PreK program. Research shows a direct correlation between high-quality early learning and children's positive long-term outcomes in life, including increased educational attainment, healthier lifestyles, and more successful careers and lives.

The ten accreditation components are: a) positive relationships between adults and children; b) curriculum that focuses on social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive; c) effective teaching approaches that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate; d) formal and informal assessment approaches that provide information on children's learning and development; e) supports that nutrition and health of children and protects children and staff from illness; f) a teaching and administrative staff that have the qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests; g) school staff establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child's family to foster children's



development in all settings; h) school staff establishes relationships with and uses the resources of the children's communities to support the achievement of program goals; i) the physical environment has a safe and healthful environment that provides appropriate and well maintained indoor and outdoor physical environments; and j) leadership and management effectively implements policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management so all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

### **PowerSchool**

Power School: Power School is an efficient tool for parents to monitor their child's attendance record as well as other information. To access the power school portal, please following instructions below:

- Go to IDCS.org and click on the header labeled "Parents."
- Click on the PowerSchool Parents Icon.
- If you have already created a PowerSchool account, enter your username and password.
- If this is your first time on PowerSchool, click on "create an account," enter the requested info and select any username and password.
- List each of your children by name with their unique ID and password. Keep your password confidential.
- Select your relationship to your child.

Please contact Rachel Stahl at [rachels@idcs.org](mailto:rachels@idcs.org) or 860-892-1900, ext. 445 if you need assistance.

### **Recess Policy and Playground Rules**

Students will have at least one twenty-minute recess period during the school day. Students go outdoors, weather permitting. For student safety on the playground, we ask students to:

- Be Respectful
  1. Show respect to every student and adult.
  2. Use words that help, support, and compliment each other.
  3. Include classmates and other students in play.
- Be Responsible
  1. Play fairly and take turns on all equipment (e.g., swings and tornado).
  2. Take care of equipment, your belongings and the belongings of others.
  3. Always be where you are supposed to be.
- Be Safe
  1. Follow the rules and directions shared by IDCS adults.
  2. Go DOWN the slide, feet first and one at a time.
  3. Be aware of youngers and other students on the playground.

## **Report Cards & Student Led Conferences**

**Student Achievement:** Developmentally appropriate practice means meeting the learners where they are. A focus on process vs. product results in higher order learning and higher achievement. Student progress is assessed, and lessons are differentiated as needed. Research demonstrates that integration of the arts results in higher academic achievement. IDCS endeavors to ensure that all children receive an engaging and challenging education.

**Report Cards:** Classroom report cards are written in a narrative form. The academic information should provide parents/caregivers an accurate picture of how well their child/ren are performing in school. Specialists report cards have several different characteristics or skills, which are rated on a scale from 1 to 4.

**Student Led Conferences (SLCs):** The following are benefits of SLCs: show parents and students that their opinions and experiences are valued by the teacher; SLCs empower the child to take responsibility for his/her learning; give the parent/caregiver and teacher a chance to hear the student reflect on his/her progress in his/her own words; reassure students that parents/caregivers and teacher are there to support them; and hold students accountable for their academic and behavioral choices.

SLCs are parent-teacher conferences in which the child is not only present, but in charge of explaining his or her progress, reflecting on accomplishments, and setting short and long-term goals. Students share their work with their parents. Students write a self-assessment to share with parents. The teacher is the facilitator during the parent teacher conferences.

## **Research**

Research is a core tenet at IDCS. Integral to the IDCS philosophy is to give students an opportunity to “independently seek knowledge.” Research projects are completed and presented at all grade levels. Research should be considered an ongoing homework assignment and the final presentation should be considered a form of performance assessment.

### **Parent Guidelines for Research**

The following recommendations and guidelines will help clarify the research expectation at each grade level. Please contact your child’s teacher if you have any additional questions.

- Research is student produced work. Assist students, but do not do the work for them.
- Follow grade level guidelines for time management and presentation schedule
- Choosing a topic: Students should have a high interest and some knowledge of the topic, and the topic needs to be relevant.
- Read about the topic. Ask questions. Help them be the expert.
- Check the work to ensure it is presentable, high quality, accurate spelling and grammar, and legible.
- Students should practice at home prior to the presentation.
- Attend the presentation.



**Pre-K Research is**

1. Child produced, and parent guided. And, child produced rather than computer generated or store-bought material or title.
2. To guide students, ask questions students can answer independently, such as who, what, when, where, and how.
3. Help students with organization of materials: keeping sequence and labeling facts 1-5 etc.
4. Picture/word clues for each fact
5. Remember to integrate subject areas (literacy, math, science, arts, etc.)
6. Practicing presentation at home prior to coming to school

**Grade K-1**

1. Student produced with – parent guided
2. Follow time management guidelines and follow schedule.
3. Choosing a topic that is high interest to your child; s/he has a slight knowledge, and the topic is relevant.
4. Students answer what, where, why, and how questions about the topic.
5. Students should practice presenting the information.

**Grade 2-3**

1. Talk with your child about their topic and what he/she is learning and what questions they have.
2. Make sure research is focused on guiding questions. Students answer what, where, why, and how questions about the topic.
3. Help your child find resources, gather needed materials, take mini trips and brainstorm ways to share what they've learned.
4. Follow the classroom timeline.
5. Students practice the presentation at home, prior to the class presentation. Parents provide feedback.

**Grade 4-5 & 6**

1. The most successful research projects have parent support; these include library visits, discussion, and field trips
2. Students generate guiding questions about their topic. A *thesis* is a statement that declares what you believe and what you intend to prove.
3. Research process: Student identifies an area of interest; gathers resources, generates questions, and develop a thesis.
4. Students find evidence that support thesis or answers their questions/take notes and develop an appropriate way to present what they have learned.
5. Students practice at home prior to presenting the information to the class.
6. The process typically takes 8 weeks.

**Grade 7-8**

4. Talk with your child about research and ask challenging questions like:  
What are you learning?  
How will you share this information?
2. Take your child to an enriching experience like a museum exhibit; an expert interview, or a lecture.
3. Take your child to the library and get them a library card.
4. Get supplies in advance for presentations, such as a tri-fold board or science experiment materials.
5. Offer to be a practice audience for your child's presentation.

## **Responsive Classroom & Expectations for Student Behavior**

*Responsive Classroom* is a student-centered, social, and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. It is comprised of a set of research, and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classroom and school communities for both students and teachers. *Responsive Classroom* focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness. Responsive classroom standards for self-control were developed so that students, over time, continue to better recognize and regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors more independently. The standards for self-control are:

- Adheres to social, behavioral, and moral standards.
- Manages overwhelming thoughts or emotions.
- Controls impulses and delays gratification.
- Shows hope and perseverance.

All IDCS teachers attend a weeklong Responsive Classroom training. Teachers support students and implement Responsive School practices in their classrooms.

In a Responsive Classroom, IDCS students will:

- learn in multi-age classrooms and develop relationships with students of all ages via the learning buddies (older and younger students are paired together) activities;
- have input into classroom and school rules and guidelines, which will be prominently displayed and signed by all members of the school community;
- be honest and forthright in dealing with social and academic issues;
- exhibit proper behavior because they know what is right and good and strive to achieve that goal; and
- recognize their ownership of the school and will therefore have a personal stake in the Integrated Day Charter School. This will be reflected in their behavior and care of their physical surroundings.

For more information on Responsive Classroom go to: [www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org).

*Student Behavior:* Process for working with students who experience difficulty following classroom behavioral expectations and are not adhering to Responsive Classroom guidelines:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Step: Teacher will have a conversation with the student and review expectations and if appropriate, possible restorative actions.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Step: Teacher will share with student that parent/guardian will be contacted; teacher contacts parent/guardian and reviews behavior classroom behavioral expectations and consequences or possible consequences if behavior continues, and possible restorative actions.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Step: Teacher will share with student and parent/guardian that student met with Assistant Director or Director because of continued behavioral issues.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Step: Director or Assistant Director, with teacher participation and/or knowledge, will contact parent/guardian to discuss student, behavioral expectations, consequences, behavioral plan, restorative actions, and possible counseling.

\*Steps may be skipped depending on the behavioral issue.

Please see Student Discipline Policy 5000-5114.1 for additional information.

<https://4.files.edl.io/0e3b/06/20/19/220344-dc674bf7-1565-4305-bae4-eb85245736af.pdf>

### **School Hours**

The PreK hours are:

A.M. Class: 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.

P.M. Class: 12:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Noon dismissal days for PREK: Morning PreK students will go home at 11 a.m. on the bus or be picked up by parents/caregivers at 11 a.m. The afternoon class starts at 12:00 p.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. The p.m. PreK class will not meet on half days. If there is a delay due to inclement weather, the a.m. PreK class will not meet. (see "Snow Days" for additional information). Please make note of half day dismissal times on the school calendar.

*Kindergarten to Grade 8 School Hours:* The day begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Please do not leave your children at school before 7:45 a.m.

### **School Policies and Procedures**

All IDCS policies and procedures are available for review at the school or at our website, at <https://www.idcs.org/policies/>

### **Security at the IDCS**

Visitors must enter through the main office. All visitors must show an ID. IDCS has a double-click system. When a non-school person rings the bell, the person will be 'clicked' past the first door. The person will show identification and state the purpose of the visit. If approved, the receptionist will then allow the person through the second door, with a second 'click'. The person will sign in and out of the visitor book. All non-school persons (parents, caregivers, volunteers, vendors, delivery persons, etc.) receive a badge or a lanyard to wear while in the building. The receptionist will refer the non-school individual to the Director, Assistant Director, or Executive Administrator Assistant if there is a question about allowing the individual into IDCS.

### **Service Learning**

Service-learning combines classroom learning goals and community service in a way that enhances or benefits both the student and the community. Every activity reinforces the curriculum in the classroom, students have the chance to reflect on what they've learned. All students learn to impact their community and the world through action projects. They identify a need, research it, and educate an audience. This creates a sense of responsibility and solidarity with the world. Each classroom, and sometimes individual students, engage in a

service-learning project during the school year. Each class shares its service learning projects during All School.

### **Student Arrival/Dismissal**

**Student Arrival:** All children should be in their classrooms by 8:00 a.m. Students arrive via bus, car, and by walking from cars parked in IDCS parking lots. There is no parking in front of the school building between 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Please do not park on Thermos Ave below the condominiums. It is unsafe for students to walk across the street to the school walkway. Approximately 10 staff members assist students when they arrive at school.

**Buses:** Students are picked up at their houses, then brought to Kelly Middle School where they board the two IDCS buses. When students arrive at IDCS at approximately 7:30 a.m., staff greet the students at the school entrance and escort the students to the dining room. Several staff members supervise students in the dining room until 7:45 a.m. At 7:45 a.m. students are dismissed to their classes by groups. That is, 7/8<sup>th</sup> graders walk up the dining room staircase to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Grade 4/5 and 6<sup>th</sup> students walk to their classes on the same floor. A staff member escorts Grade K/1, 2/3, and 4/5 students to the main floor classrooms.

**Walkers:** Parents/caregivers may park their cars in the Crown St. and Thermos Ave. parking lots and walk their children to the school building as well as to the students' classrooms. When students enter IDCS, several staff members greet the children when they arrive. COVID 19 guidelines prohibit parents from coming into the building; this guideline will be adhered to starting July 1, 2020.

**Car Drop Off:** Parents/caregivers who are driving child/ren to school should enter via Crown Street, proceed in the right-hand lane down to the front of the school and drop off child/ren in front of the school. Children should only exit vehicles on the right-hand side. Parents may start to drop off their children at school, via the car drop option, starting at 7:45 a.m. Students enter the building at 7:45 a.m. and go directly to their classrooms, unless they are having breakfast. If they are having breakfast, the students go to the dining room. Four staff members are outside every day opening the car doors to assist the students in getting out of the cars and directing them to the school entrance. If students are dropped off before 7:45 a.m., the students go to the dining room. When students enter IDCS, several staff members greet the children when they arrive.

**Student Dismissal:** Students are dismissed from school at 3:00 p.m. Please do not park on Thermos Ave. below the condominiums. It is unsafe for students to walk across the street to the school walkway. Approximately 10 staff members assist during student dismissal.

**Buses:** Buses depart from IDCS between 3:00 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. There is no parking in front of the school building from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Buses must be able park in front of the school entrance at 2:30. A staff member calls the bus number over the intercom; then, the students leave their classrooms and line up in the media center near the school entrance.

Three staff members supervise the students in the bus lines near the media center. One staff member walks the students to their assigned bus.

Walkers: PreK, Grade K/1 and 2/3 students are dismissed from the back door of the gym. Parents/caregivers will need to sign out child/ren in Grades K to 3 when they meet their child/ren in the gym. Parents/caregivers will have to sign a permission slip for child/ren in Grades 4 to 8 to leave the building via the front entrance and walk to the parking areas where their parents/caregivers are parked.

After School Program/Sports Teams/Extended Day: Students who attend after school programs, basketball, track or cross-country sports, extended day, or homework club join the appropriate group at 3:15. All after school activities are announced over the intercom. There may be no after school programs or sports in Fall 2020 due to COVID 19. However, there will be a limited number of seats in the Extended Day Program.

Change in Dismissal Procedures: If there is any change in a student's dismissal, please contact the school receptionist (Cathy Badorek [cathyb@idcs.org](mailto:cathyb@idcs.org) or 860-892-1900) by 2:30. The receptionist will inform the teacher and/or the student.

### **Student Empowerment**

Students exercise student empowerment via the Student Council, assisting in the dining room, learning buddies, through organizing and facilitating All School, and organizing events that contribute to the school and local communities. Additionally, students contribute ideas and input into the school community. Decisions are then made, always through the lens of our philosophy, to benefit the total community or class. **Students exercise student empowerment in their classrooms when they have choices about some of their schoolwork.**

### **Support Services for Students**

Contact: Carrie Miner if you have any questions ([carriem@idcs.org](mailto:carriem@idcs.org)) regarding support services for students. IDCS has a multi-tiered support service (MTSS) system for academic and behavioral needs of our students. This includes special education services, 504 plans, Child Study Teams, reading and math intervention, and English Learner instruction. IDCS support staff include a social worker, special education teachers, special education coordinator, Math and Reading Interventionist, an English Learner teacher, Speech and Language Pathologist, Physical Therapist, and an Occupational Therapist. Various members of the support team, the classroom teacher, and an administrator meet regularly to monitor student progress in all the above type situations.

Child Study Team: The Child Study Team is a component of the Multi-Tier Support System at IDCS. The purpose of the Child Study Team is to ensure strategies and interventions are identified and implemented to assist a student before the student is referred for special education assessment. Sometimes, a change in the classroom can turn a student's performance around and make it unnecessary to consider special education services. Using



strategies that draw on a student's strengths and meet the student's educational needs may put the student back on the road to academic progress. Consequently, the students would not be referred for special education services.

504 Plan: A 504 Plan is a plan developed to ensure that a child, with a disability pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, attending an elementary or secondary school, receives accommodations providing him/her access to the learning environment. Examples of accommodations include wheelchair-accessible facilities, adjustable-height tables, large-print reading materials, increased time to complete assignments and tests, etc. A team consisting of the parent/guardian, classroom teacher, special education teacher, special education coordinator, and other staff as needed.

Special Education: Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Special Education is defined as: "Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability." Special education is in place to provide additional services, support, and programs to students who have a specific identified disability. Special education teachers support students both in the classroom (inclusion model) as well as in small groups with a special education teacher (pull out). The special education teachers implement individual student's IEP plans and objectives. By law, the sending school district must finance the special education services for IDCS special needs students.

The Special Education Process:

Prior to implementing the Special Education Process, students will be referred to the Child Study Team; Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III interventions will be identified and implemented in the classroom and possibly with instruction by the Reading or Math Interventionist. Student progress will be monitored for six to eight weeks. If the student requires more than the intervention strategies and the data collected supports additional support, the next step would be a combination of Step One and Step Two below:

Step One: Identifying a Need.

Step Two: Formal Assessment.

Step Three: The Individualized Education Program and Meeting.

Step Four: Placement, Accommodations and Specialized Services.

Step Five: Annual and Triennial Reviews and Progress Monitoring.

Speech and Language Therapist: IDCS contracts with a Speech and Language Pathologist and an assistant Speech and Language Therapist. Both staff members are here two days a week.

Occupational Therapist: IDCS contracts with a local occupational therapist group on an as needed basis.

Counseling: Parents/caregivers would meet with the psychologist or social worker and the classroom teacher prior to a child attending a counseling session. Students may be referred to and receive counseling at IDCS. Typically, the counseling is group counseling; that is, a group of students works with the counselor on specific issues. Occasionally, individual counsel may occur; however, if more individual counseling is warranted, then parents are notified to pursue individual counseling outside of the school.

## **Suspension/Expulsion**

The Integrated Day Charter School adheres to a zero-tolerance policy with regard to bullying, physical violence, possession of a dangerous weapon and/or possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia, and/or possession of alcohol. Such infractions may result in suspension or expulsion. The parent will be notified by phone and/or in writing. The suspension may be in school or out of school. For either type of suspension, the parent/caregiver will be expected to meet with the IDCS director.

If a student is expelled, a hearing will be held by the IDCS Governing Board to review evidence and determine proper consequences. The parent or guardian of the expelled student will be notified of the date and time of the hearing.

**A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent.**

A detailed revised Suspension and Expulsion Policy is available in the office for parental review or at our web site, [www.idcs.org](http://www.idcs.org).

## **Transportation**

The Norwich Board of Education is required by law to transport students residing in Norwich who attend the Integrated Day Charter School. First Student is the company providing transportation services (First Student Bus Service: 860 886-4194). *If a student **does not** reside in Norwich, he/she cannot use the First Student buses.* Schedules, rules, and routes are designed and implemented by First Student. Any comments about service should be directed to the IDCS Assistant Director (860-892-1900 Ext 462), or Norwich Board of Education (860-823-6284) or First Student (860-886-4194).

Buses arrive at school between 7:30 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. each day. Students are picked up by First Student buses in the morning along with parochial school students and brought to Kelly Middle School. At Kelly Middle School, the students immediately board shuttle buses for IDCS. Parents should receive a bus pass from First Student in late August listing the bus number and approximate pickup and drop off times. All afternoon bus runs deliver children directly home.

Students can be bussed to established day care centers in Norwich after school instead of home addresses. However, home day care centers need prior approval from First Student. *Please call the school if:*

- your child's pick up or drop off point has changed over the summer;
- you have a change in address, home, work or emergency phone numbers; and
- you need to change your child's pickup or drop off point during the school year

*Going Home on the Bus with Friends:* Norwich students must have a written note from their classmates' parents and the note must be signed by IDCS main office personnel (typically the IDCS receptionist or assistant director or director). If the student does not have a note, the student will not be permitted to board the bus.

IDCS must have current contact information in the event your child misses the bus.

*Bus Discipline Guidelines:* All IDCS students are expected to stay in their seats and obey all bus rules. If a student receives three discipline referrals, the student may be suspended from riding on the bus. Students may also be given assigned seats or suspended from the bus for longer periods of time. June Morrone, IDCS Assistant Director, handles bus behavior issues. Parents may call First Student and request a meeting to view the video tape made on the day of the referral.

*Non-Norwich Students:* Students are typically brought to school by parents/caregivers unless the sending district provides transportation. Parents/caregivers need to contact the district for additional information.

### **Visitors Policy**

Parents/caregivers and family members, former students, educators, community members, and postsecondary students are encouraged to visit IDCS throughout the school year. All visitors are asked to call ahead to schedule a visit. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are the best days to visit. Student or parent tour guides may be provided to escort visitors through the building or a floor plan for a self-guided tour will be provided.

Upon entering the classrooms, visitors are asked to refrain from engaging instructors in conversation. Instructional time is extremely precious; teachers must focus on the needs of the students. Any visitor is invited to schedule an appointment with a teacher or administrator if he or she wishes to discuss the philosophy or methodology implemented at the school, after school.

*Former Students:* are asked to call in advance if they wish to visit. Visitations begin at 3 p.m. so that instruction is not interrupted. However, former students are invited to volunteer in the PreK-4 classrooms during school hours if they call a day ahead of their visit.

Visitors must enter and exit the building through the main entrance where they must sign in and sign out, show identification to the receptionist, and if approved, receive a visitor's badge/lanyard to be worn while visiting the school and returned to the front desk when leaving the school.

**Please review and sign the Family Handbook Agreement page and return it to your child's classroom teacher.**

## ***Appendix A: History of the Integrated Day Charter School***

The IDCS is a pre-kindergarten through grade eight public charter school located in Norwich, Connecticut, serving a diverse population of students from Norwich and 16 surrounding towns. Located in a renovated Thermos Company factory, the school is unique when compared to traditional public school facilities. The openness, visibility of infrastructure, historic elements saved during construction, high ceilings and view of the Thames River provide a unique and beautiful setting for learning.

The integrated day program initially began within the Norwich Public School system in 1989. When the charter school legislation passed in 1997, veteran teachers, Joan Heffernan, June Morrone, and Joyce Werdon, with volunteer Sandy Quarto, were poised and ready to create an alternative school, providing free public school choice for all members of the Norwich community and eventually, surrounding towns. Parents of students in the program and citizens supporting the idea of school choice joined forces and a charter was granted to establish the Integrated Day Charter School.

The charter was awarded in February 1997, and a search for a location began. After researching many options, the founding board decided to renovate the former Thermos Factory, taking advantage of the large open spaces, bright classrooms and an environment that invited integrated learning. The school opened its doors in August 1997 with 175 students and a sizable waiting list. The IDCS is truly a community school. Parents, community members, and teachers worked together to ensure that the school would open on time, and against all odds, it did just that.

The Integrated Day Charter School is in an historic building that had been neglected for many years. The founders of the school worked diligently to find funding, through the city of Norwich, to demolish and remove two derelict buildings on the property. Staff, parents, students and community members combined efforts to clean up and landscape areas surrounding the school, which now includes a memorial garden and playscape. As a result, the IDCS received the 1998 Connecticut Real Estate Achievement Award in recognition of the community development that had the greatest positive impact on the state of Connecticut.

Renovations of portions of the building have been ongoing since our doors opened throughout the school's existence. The second phase of construction included the dining area, classroom space and a storage area on the lower level was completed in the fall of 2001. An addition that includes the gymnasium, kitchen, elevator, offices, and meeting space was completed in January 2008 through a facility grant from the Connecticut State Department of Education.

The school has grown from 175 students in 1997-98 (Grades Kindergarten to Grade 6) to 264 students during the 2000-01 school year, to its current enrollment of 352. Over time the needs of the IDCS community have grown, necessitating the addition of a pre-kindergarten class for 2001-03. A full daycare program was added in 2006. This program was restructured due to space constraints and changing day care needs, with an afternoon Prekindergarten class and an afternoon PreK Plus program and an extended day program offered to parents in need of day care during the school day. PreK Plus closed in 2018 to accommodate the space needs of the current program.

## Appendix B: 2020-21 School Calendar

### INTEGRATED DAY CHARTER SCHOOL | 2021-2022 CALENDAR

Student Start Date September 1, 2021 ~ 180 Days of School

- 18 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm  
30 No School for Students/  
Teacher PD  
31 No School for Students/  
Teacher PD

AUGUST '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	21	22	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY '22						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	21
22	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

- 16 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm  
17 IDEA Event (Empty Bowls)  
18 Winter Recess, No School  
21 Presidents' Day, No School  
22 Winter Recess, No School

17/112/180

- 1 First Day K-8, ER @ 12pm  
2 First Day Pre-K  
6 Labor Day, No School  
10 Picture Day  
15 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm  
16 IDEA Event (Welcome Back)  
17 ER @ 12pm, Teacher PD

SEPTEMBER '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MARCH '22						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	21
22	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- 11 No School, Report Card Writing  
16 Report Cards sent home  
16 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm  
17 & 18 ER @ 12pm, SLC

22/134/180

21/21/180

- 7 IDEA Event (Math Night)  
8 Teacher PD, No School  
11 Indigenous Peoples' Day,  
No School  
22 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm

OCTOBER '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	21	22	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

APRIL '22						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

- 1 ER @ 12pm, Teacher PD  
Basket Raffle (IDEA Event)  
15-22 Spring Recess, No School  
27 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm  
29 Plant Sale

15/149/180

- 2 Teacher PD, No School  
9 Report Cards sent home  
10 ER @ 12pm, SLC  
11 Veterans Day, No School  
12 ER @ 12pm, SLC  
17 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm  
24 Bread Feast/Caring & Sharing,  
ER @ 12pm  
25-26 Thanksgiving Recess,  
No School  
18/58/180

NOVEMBER '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	21	22
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

MAY '22						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	21	22	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- 5 Research Night  
6 ER @ 12pm, Staff PD  
13 Talent Show 1:30pm  
18 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm  
21 Spring Concert 6:00pm  
30 Memorial Day, No School

21/170/180

- 22 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm  
23 ER @ 12pm, Winter Concert  
24-31 Holiday Recess,  
No School

DECEMBER '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	22	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JUNE '22						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	22	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

- 14 Tentative Last Day of School, 12pm  
dismissal  
15, 16, 17 Potential Make Up Snow  
Days  
15 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm

TBD - Picnic  
TBD - 8th Grade Graduation

10/180

- 14 ER @ 12pm, Teacher PD  
17 MLK Jr. Day, No School  
21 IDCSGB Meeting 5:30pm

JANUARY '22						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	21	22	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

- 4 PD days start at 12:00  
4 full PD days  
4 SLC days-12:00 Dismissal  
4 IDEA Events

Key:  
ER=Early Release  
PD=Professional Development  
IDCSGB=Integrated Day Charter  
School Governing Board  
IDEA=Integrated Day Education  
Alliance

22/95/180

FINAL 2021-22 CALENDAR - Rev. 06/30/2021

## INTEGRATED DAY CHARTER SCHOOL | 2021-2022 CALENDAR

Student Start Date September 1, 2021 ~ 180 Days of School

### Important Links

IDCS Website: [www.idcs.org](http://www.idcs.org)

2021-22 Family Handbook: Link to be added

2021-22 Electronic Acceptable Usage: Link to be added

2021-22 Food Services (menus & payments): Link to be added

2021-22 Staff email and voicemail: Link to be added

### Integrated Day Charter School Governing Board Sub-Committee Meetings

Parents are welcome to attend governing board meetings and sub-committee meetings.

\*Because of holiday or other reason, meeting is 1 week earlier or later.

	Governance 1 <sup>st</sup> Monday @ 3:30 p.m.	Finance 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday @ 4:30 p.m.	Curriculum Committee 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday @ 4:30 p.m.
September	<u>09/13/2022*</u>	09/14/2021	09/15/2021
October	10/04/2021	10/12/2021	10/22/2021
November	11/01/2021	11/09/2021	11/17/2021
December	12/06/2021	12/14/2021	12/22/2021
January	01/03/2022	01/11/2022	01/21/2022
February	02/07/2022	02/08/2022	02/16/2022
March	03/07/2022	03/08/2022	03/16/2022
April	04/04/2022	04/12/2022	<u>04/27/2022*</u>
May	05/02/2022	05/10/2022	05/18/2022
June	06/06/2022	06/14/2022	06/15/2022

### IDCS Organization Meetings

	Keepers 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday @ 3:30	IDCS 101 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday @ 3:30	Foundation Quarterly TBA	IDEA Planning Monthly 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday @ 6:00 p.m.
September	09/16/2021	09/20/2021		09/20/2021
October	10/21/2021	10/17/2021		10/18/2021
November	11/18/2021	11/15/2021		11/15/2021
December	12/16/2021			12/20/2021
January	01/20/2022	<u>01/10/2022*</u>		<u>01/24/2022*</u>
February	02/17/2022	<u>02/28/2022*</u>		<u>02/28/2022*</u>
March	<u>03/24/2022*</u>	03/21/2022		03/21/2022
April	<u>04/28/2022*</u>			04/25/2022
May	05/19/2022			05/16/2022
June	<u>06/13/2022*</u>			06/20/2022

### Integrated Day Charter School Staff Meetings

	Climate Committee 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed. @ 3:30	Curriculum/ PDEC Committee 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday @ 3:30	IT & Systems Committee 1 <sup>st</sup> Wed. @ 3:30	Safety & Security 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed @ 1:30	Monthly Staff Meeting 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday @ 3:30	Think Tank 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday @ 3:30	Non Certified Staff 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday @ 2:00
September	09/22/2021	09/09/2021	09/01/2021	09/29/2021	09/07/2021	09/21/2021	09/13/2021
October	10/20/2021	10/14/2021	10/06/2022	10/27/2021	10/05/2021	10/19/2021	<u>10/18/2021*</u>
November	11/17/2021	<u>11/04/2021*</u>	11/03/2021	<u>11/17/2021*</u>	<u>11/09/2021*</u>	11/16/2021	11/08/2021
December	12/15/2021	12/09/2021	12/01/2021	12/22/2021	12/07/2021	12/21/2021	12/13/2021
January	01/19/2022	01/13/2022	01/05/2022	01/26/2022	01/04/2022	01/18/2022	01/10/2022
February	02/23/2022	02/10/2022	02/02/2022	02/23/2022	02/01/2022	02/15/2022	02/14/2022
March	03/23/2022	03/10/2022	03/02/2022	03/23/2022	03/01/2022	03/15/2022	03/14/2022
April	<u>04/13/2022*</u>	04/14/2022	04/06/2022	04/27/2022	04/05/2022	<u>04/26/2022*</u>	04/11/2022
May	05/25/2022	05/12/2022	05/04/2022	<u>05/25/2022*</u>	05/03/2022	05/17/2022	05/09/2022
June	<u>06/08/2022*</u>	06/09/2022	06/01/2022	<u>06/08/2022*</u>	06/07/2022	<u>06/14/2022*</u>	<u>06/13/2022*</u>

FINAL 2021-22 CALENDAR – Rev. 06/30/2021



## ***Appendix C: Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) Home***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - o School officials with legitimate educational interest;
  - o Other schools to which a student is transferring;
  - o Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
  - o Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
  - o Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
  - o Accrediting organizations;
  - o To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  - o Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  - o State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school. For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may use the Federal Relay Service. Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education

### ***Appendix D: Health Reasons for Exclusion from School***

ACUTE GASTROENTERITIS Vomiting: Two or more times during the previous hours.

DIARRHEA: Two or more times during the previous 24 hours or if stool cannot be contained by toilet use.

CONJUNCTIVITIS (Pink Eye): Exclusion until 24 hours after the start of medical therapy.

ERYTHEMA INFECTIOSUM (Fifth Disease): No exclusion.

FEVER: 100 degrees or greater, student to remain home until he/she has 24 hours of no fever.

HEPATITIS A: Exclusion – one week after onset of illness and or resolution of Jaundice (yellow skin color). Physician's note required for school re-entry.

HERPES SIMPLEX (Oral, Cold Sores, Fever Blisters): No exclusion.

HERPES ZOSTER (Varicella-Zoster, Shingles): No exclusion, if areas can be covered. Exclusion for seven days after onset of rash or until all areas are crusted, if areas are unable to be covered.

IMPETIGO: Exclusion until 24 hours after the start of medication therapy and until purulent drainage can be controlled.

MEASLES (RUBEOLA): Exclusion for seven days after onset of rash. Physician's note required for school re-entry.

MONONUCLEOSIS: Primary care physician to determine if exclusion is necessary for health and convalescence of individual student. Physician's note required for school re-entry and instruction for limitations at school.

MUMPS: Exclusion until 9 days after onset of Parotitis (inflammation and swelling of parotid gland). Physician's note required for school re-entry.

PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH): Exclusion 3 weeks after onset of disease or 5 days after start of medication therapy. Physician's note required for school re-entry.

PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE): Exclusion until after treatment and proof of product. Parent/adult must accompany student to school for re-entry (student must be examined by the school nurse prior to returning to class).

RUBELLA (GERMAN MEASLES): Exclusion for 7 days after onset of rash. Physician's note required for school re-entry.

SCABIES: Exclusion until 24 hours after medication treatment.

SCARLET FEVER (SCARLETINA): Exclusion until 24 hours after the start of medication therapy.

STREPTOCOCCAL PHARYNGITIS (STREP THROAT): Exclusion until 24 hours after start of medication therapy.

TINEA CORPORIS (RINGWORM): Exclusion until 24 hours after the start of medication therapy. Areas must be covered while at school.

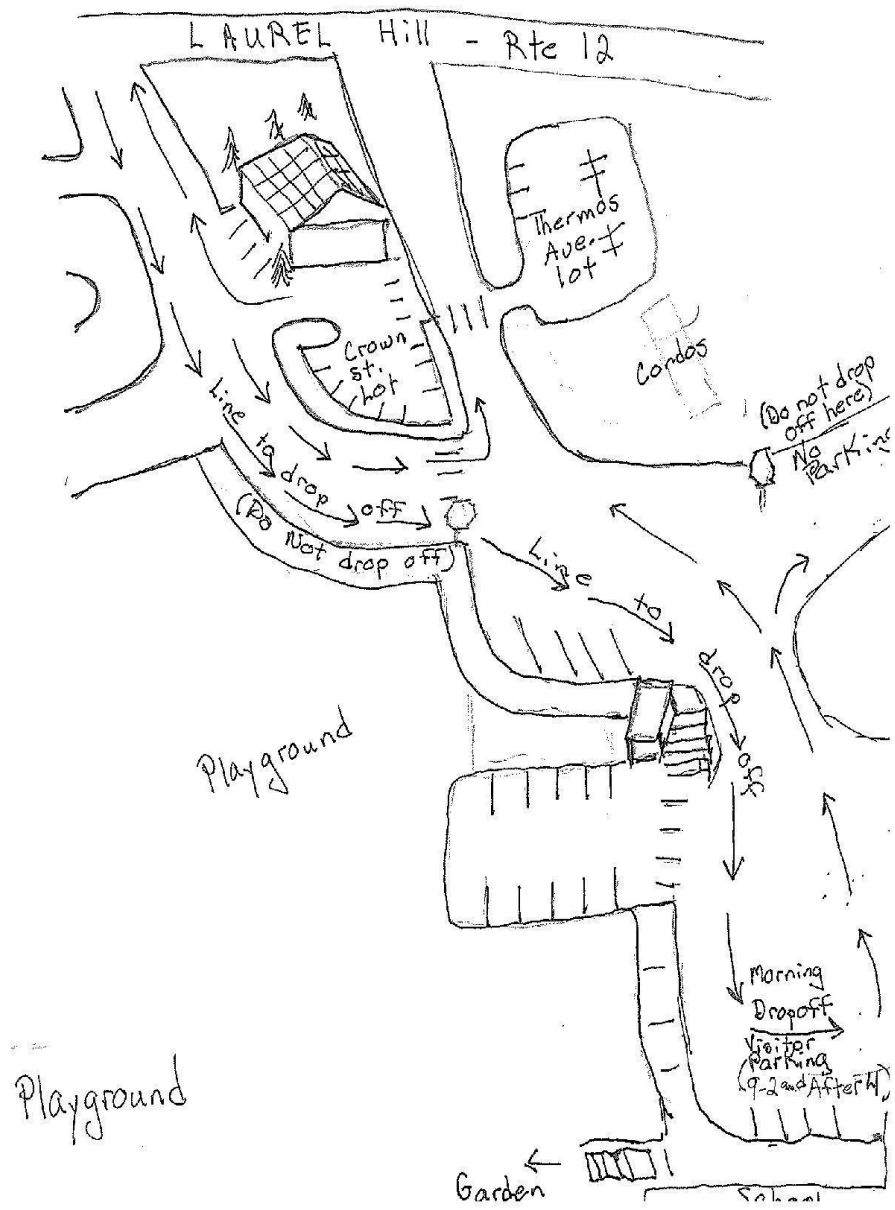
TINEA CAPITIS (RINGWORM OF THE HEAD/SCALP): Exclusion until 24 hours after the start of medication therapy.

TUBERCULOSIS (ACTIVE): Exclusion until primary care physician or health director states that the student is non-contagious.



VARICELLA (CHICKEN POX): Exclusion for 7 days after onset of rash and or until all areas have crusted. Physician's note or examination by the school nurse required for school re-entry.

## Map of School Grounds



## ***Signature Page***

☐ I have read the IDCS Family Handbook and reviewed it with my child;  
We understand and agree with IDCS guidelines and policies.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS TO IDCS PRIOR TO THEIR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL  
(ONE PER CHILD).**