

# Family Handbook

2026-27 Academic Year



Home of *The Fighting Anglers*

Clay Becton, *Chairman (Seat 1)*

Carlos Frade, Jr., *Vice-Chair (Seat 2)*

Jason Revels, *Secretary (Seat 3)*

Marcia Cully, *Board Member (Seat 4)*

TBD, *Open Seat (Seat 5)*

## Our Mission

Independence Classical Academy exists to provide a disciplined and highly engaging learning environment rich in scholarship, character building, citizenship, moral virtue, civics, and liberal arts.

This time-tested, classical liberal arts education will ensure students are highly prepared, through rigorous and relevant core content with an emphasis on literacy, to be highly productive and successful citizens with a strong sense of character and civic responsibility.

## Our Values

1. *Every* child deserves a rigorous and exceptional education delivered by highly effective teachers.
2. A culture of high expectations coupled with accountability develops learners AND leaders.
3. A student body that is rooted in patriotism and civic understanding will become more productive citizens.
4. Excellent schools are deeply rooted and broadly tied to the communities they serve and are the center of economic growth.

## Our Beliefs

1. The self-evident truths as found in the Declaration of Independence “...*that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.*” As believers in those truths, we:
  - a. Value children as people and therefore will regard them as full human beings.
  - b. Value the sacrifices made by those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces.
  - c. Value cultivating virtuous character and each citizen’s responsibility to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America.
  - d. Value the idea that personal economic liberty is expressed through an altruistic, and a free enterprise economic system.
  - e. Value the wisdom and life experiences of the senior citizens in our community.
  - f. Value the spirit of entrepreneurship, critical thinking, and the ability to question one another.
2. Parents and guardians being the first and primary teachers, and that as such they have the right to retain control over the education of their children and that *they* are responsible for their children’s basic needs, behavior, and values. At ICA, the school will not usurp parental rights or take over parental responsibility.
3. Schools should provide a safe, positive, highly organized setting with clearly defined expectations of performance, participation, and behavior.
4. Character education and behavior modeling enhances academic and extra-curricular programs.
5. Teacher-led, knowledge-centered education rather than student-centered and assessment-driven education is ultimately the best method for retention of what is taught.
6. Virtues matter, and the eight pillars of character found below are to be modeled, taught, rewarded, and lived:

**Courage • Respect • Integrity • Responsibility • Self-Governance •  
Truth • Goodness • Beauty**



## *Student Declaration*

*We are ICA,  
The Independence Classical Academy,  
where teachers can teach, and students will learn.*

*As an ICA Scholar,  
I will work with diligence and honor,  
I will respect myself and others,  
I will seek truth, goodness, and beauty in all things.*

*We are ICA!*

*Heraclitus was a Greek philosopher who lived before Socrates and was by all accounts, a self-taught individual. He was known as the “weeping philosopher” because a great deal of what he said was of a serious nature. He is also known because he ascribed to the view that life is in constant change. He is credited with saying “Good character is not formed in a week or a month. It is created little by little, day by day. Protracted and patient effort is needed to develop good character.”* At ICA, we expect all students to take their learning seriously and always apply themselves to their studies and their character formation. All policies and procedures at our academy are based on these ideals.

Welcome to ICA! We set out with a shared vision of a school where teachers could teach, and students would learn. This will always be our primary vision, and the policies herein reinforce that. We also know the long-lasting lessons that students learn in school extend far beyond the classroom. Those lessons include the ability to develop behaviors and qualities that enable a person to become a hard-working, honest, kind, and successful individual. Thus, part of the role here as a student is to personify the qualities that we believe reflect our school. Some of those qualities are perseverance, humility, kindness, charity, honesty, and optimism. We want *all* of us to espouse these qualities and more because we want ICA Scholars to be known as dedicated students who are also good individuals as well. In essence, we want our students to be the best version of themselves, on and off campus!

In this handbook, you will find information about the daily occurrences, rules, and procedures at ICA. It also contains the Code of Conduct. If you are misbehaving, then you are taking your mind, heart, spirit, and attention away from learning; in fact, you are then making it difficult for *others* to learn as well. Thus, you will find the parameters and the consequences for behavioral mistakes are designed intentionally to prevent that and are located within these pages. We believe that as your teachers, counselors, media specialists, custodians, and administrators we must be firm, fair and consistent in all that we do; we ask that you behave in the same manner. We expect, as a school of choice, with parents facing lotteries and waitlists to attend our academy, all who accept a seat will support our efforts to maintain a highly disciplined and virtuous environment. In the back of this handbook is our acknowledgement of receipt and agreement to all the policies in this handbook, which have been approved by our board after careful consideration. When enrolling your student in our academy, you are hereby accepting these policies, so it is strongly recommended that this handbook be read in its entirety.

We believe in much of the same philosophies that Walt Whitman and Steve Jobs believed. Smart people question, disagree and sometimes denounce rules; however, we also know that everyone *must* learn at an early age how to disagree without being disagreeable. None-the-less, there are standards for behavior, dress, and academia that ICA Scholars and in fact, everyone at ICA, must abide by, *including visitors and parents*. Remember, integrity is doing the right thing **even** when no one is looking!

Finally, always remember that ICA was established to create a place where teachers can teach, and students will learn. Anything that takes away from teaching and learning will not be tolerated. This is our most basic premise. We are a school of choice and by choosing ICA, students and parents accept this premise as their own.

*Here's to a great 2025-26 academic year, our best year yet! Meet your Administration:*

<b>Sandy Howard</b>	<i>Executive Director (Founder &amp; CEO)</i>
<b>Rebekah McFarland</b>	<i>Director of Academics (K-12 Principal)</i>
<b>Jessica Chancey</b>	<i>Director of Teaching &amp; Learning</i>
<b>Danny Mullins</b>	<i>Director of Student Services</i>
<b>Barbara Cross</b>	<i>Director of Business Services</i>

**Mascot:**

We have chosen Snook as our mascot for its meaning and representation in many cultures.

Specifically, fish represent the ability to use power and leadership wisely *and* without ego, which fits into our values of creating a sense of service amongst our students and faculty.

**Crest:**

Colors: Blue and Gold



Blue represents ***Truth & Loyalty***; Gold represents an ***Elevation of the Mind***

Motto: Scientia Veritas Libertas

Latin (as will be taught in school) for ***Knowledge, Truth, Liberty***

With knowledge, you will gain the truth. With an understanding of the truth, only then will you be truly free and have the liberties this great nation was founded on. How we reach these ‘truths’ is at the heart of our mission, to offer a knowledge-rich curriculum using the Trivium and Socratic methods in our classrooms in which free thinking students can use their own family values and personal experiences to understand the material presented to them. This is the basic tenet of a classical, liberal arts education. Inside the logo, you will find a ***crest*** (*historically used to identify the wearer*). Inside the crest are five symbols, which have the following meaning:

**Torch**: Represents ***Eagerness & Engaging in Service*** which we will promote within our students & faculty.

**Oak Tree**: Represents ***Wisdom & Continuous Growth*** as faculty & Administration encourages our students to build a sense of character and citizenship. It is also The National Tree of the United States.

**Key**: Represents ***Knowledge & Guardianship*** as we take our responsibility for the students in our care seriously and seek continuous knowledge to better their education.

**Arrow**: Represents ***Readiness***, as our students will display readiness to learn and excel.

**Lotus Flower**: Represents the ***Highest Levels of Achievement***, as we set high expectations for our school and students.

**There is ZERO tolerance for unauthorized use of the ICA crest or logo.**

**Independence Classical Academy is the sole owner of the ICA logo and crest, and any unauthorized use of the name, logo, or likeness of it constitutes a violation of our policy as well as copyright infringement. Without using the school or an authorized vendor, you may NOT use the logo or crest on any items, including gifts, without express written permission from a member of administration. Doing so will constitute a violation of our policies.**

**ADMISSION POLICY**

The application of any eligible student who agrees or whose parent agrees to be bound by the expectations and requirements of ICA will be accepted and that student admitted if space is available. If the number of applications received for a grade level during the admissions period exceeds the available number of openings, then all the applications for that grade level will be placed in a lottery and assigned placement numbers as each number is drawn.

In accordance with public law, any child who is qualified under the laws of the state for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to a charter school. Charter schools shall not discriminate against any student based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. Also, ICA shall not limit admission to students based on intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, disability, race, creed, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

- **Lottery Process:** In December & January of each school year, the Independence Classical Academy will accept applications. If there are more applications than seats available, the school will hold a lottery in February. There will be a window of acceptance in SchoolMint; once the window passes, the offer is automatically rescinded, and parents will need to contact the school to be placed back on the waitlist.
- **Waiting List Policy:** A waiting list will be established using the lottery system whenever applications exceed capacity, and the students on the list will be contacted when openings occur during the current school year only until the closing of enrollment. The wait list does not roll over to the following school year. A new application must be completed online during the open enrollment window each school year to be included in the annual lottery. ICA does NOT accept students after Semester 1 without special consideration.
- **Notification of Acceptance Policy:** Parents/guardians will be notified of their child's acceptance or placement on a waiting list by an official email ONLY through Registration software system following the conclusion of the lottery. In fairness, there will be no exceptions to this policy.
- **Acceptance of Seat Policy:** After notification of acceptance, a student registration packet **must** be completed and submitted by the date set by the Enrollment Office otherwise a seat cannot be guaranteed for that student. After 10 days, the application **will** be withdrawn for incompleteness and the next person on the waitlist will be offered a seat. Newly enrolled

students must be present on the first day of school otherwise their seat will be assigned to the next student on the Waiting List. Parents must provide proof of grade placement/promotion from their previous school to confirm placement eligibility, prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> of the year entering ICA.

- Age Requirements: Students five years of age on or before September 1 are eligible for entrance to kindergarten.
- Enrollment: Once students are enrolled in ICA they do not need to reapply if the required annual re-registration is received in the ICA office prior to our December 15th deadline each year.
- Siblings: Once a student is enrolled, a sibling of that student has priority for enrollment provided there is space available at the grade level needed.
- Proof of residency: For each applicant, parents will be required to provide proof of residency.

## ELEMENTARY AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMING. \_\_\_\_\_

ICA will offer daily aftercare on campus for the 26/27 school year with the exception of the last day before Winter Break (December 17<sup>th</sup>) and the last day of school (May 28<sup>th</sup>) in order for staff to close out payments and record-keeping books. ICA attempts to work with all providers who wish to come pick students up from campus upon dismissal with each vendor given specific instructions on how to pick-up their registered students. Students will be dismissed to the vendor of the parent/legal guardian’s choosing by a representative from the aftercare provider under the supervision of ICA staff and faculty only. ICA’s after school fee-based clubs, sports, & activities (athletic, arts, etc..) are provided outside of the auspice of the aftercare program and parents will be required to cover those fees *in addition to* aftercare.

- Students not picked up by 3:05pm will be sent to aftercare and charged the drop-in rate of \$15.00 per student for the first ½ hour, then \$1.00 per minute per child until picked up.
- Habitual (3 or more) late pick-ups will require a parent conference with the Director of Business Services and potential forfeiture of seat(s) in the aftercare program.
- Students registered with ICA after-school programs/clubs must adhere to the rules/policies outlined in the designated Registration Packet.
- Aftercare offered on campus at ICA will be included at the following rates/fees:
  - \$60.00 per week/per child (**payable on the Friday prior to the week attending**)
  - \$25.00 one-time registration fee to secure a spot (including drop-ins) per student.
  - Homework Club (3:00-4:00 only) rate is \$10.00 per day, payable upon pickup. Students not picked up from Homework Club by 4:00 will be transferred to aftercare and charged a \$1.00/minute fee.
  - Late pick-ups for registered extended day students (after 5:30pm) will be subject to a late fee of \$1.00/minute per child, payable prior to the student returning to aftercare.
  - Habitually late pick-ups (3+ per semester) may warrant dismissal from the program.
- The afterschool program at ICA is supervised by ICA employees who have been hired specifically for this program and have been screened, cleared, and trained.

## ELEMENTARY ARRIVAL TIME/DISMISSAL TIME \_\_\_\_\_

Punctuality and timeliness are important concepts for everyone to have. It is an important skill to master that will serve us in all areas of life. The expectation at ICA is for students to be IN their classrooms, seated, and ready to learn by 8:00am

Grade Levels	Building Opens	Breakfast Open	Instruction begins	Daily Dismissal	Early Dismissal
K-5	7:15 a.m.	7:20-7:50	8:00 a.m. <b>promptly</b>	2:30 pm	12:30 pm



- If the carline is closed upon arrival, students must be walked in and signed in by an adult. Dropping off students in the parking lot or walking over from the church is never acceptable and will result in a meeting with the SRD *and* Director of Business Services.
- Parents of students: if you are arriving on campus at 7:40, your child will NOT make it to class on time. You will need to park and sign your child in at the office. You should plan on being at school no later than 7:35 a.m. to allow time to cross campus and be in class and seated, ready to learn by 7:45am.
- Children remaining when the pick-up line ends will be taken to the front office and charged a fee of \$1.00 per minute until they are signed out.
- Breakfast is served 7:05-7:35. Students desiring breakfast should arrive on campus no later than 7:20am to have sufficient time to be served, eat, and get to class on time.
- Families with students attending both upper and lower campus will have sufficient time to drop off older students first, then loop around to drop off younger students. The stagger start times are designed specifically to both alleviate traffic and prevent students from needing to cross campus in the mornings. The same applies to the afternoon, older students are picked up first followed by looping around to pick up younger students.



Independence Classical Academy exists to create productive American Citizens who will be successful in life, regardless of what area they pursue. As civics and virtue are key components to classical education, ICA will not only meet but exceed intended Florida Statutes as it pertains to civic duty. The Florida requirements for school that ICA takes very seriously is the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States. In addition to that minimum standard, ICA students also recite the Preamble to the Constitution (followed by the ICA Student Declaration), which defines the very reason for the existence of the Constitution of the United States, the supreme law of our land. As our core values seek to honor the military and teach western tradition and American exceptionalism, the governing board has determined it is more than

***Per Florida law, school principals are responsible for ensuring the Pledge of Allegiance is recited at the beginning of the day, while teachers lead the recitation in the classroom setting. School districts must also adhere to specific requirements for displaying patriotic symbols, requiring the United States flag to be appropriately displayed during the school year. The school's duty to inform students and parents about the exemption right is a procedural mandate of the district, and this notification must be provided in a written format, such as the student handbook.***

The insertion of this language meets the requirements by offering parents a way to notify the school if there is an adversity to reciting such Pledge, whether it is moral or religious, ***in writing***, so their student(s) may remain quietly seated during the morning routine. Students who do not have the written notice on file will be required to stand and participate in the recitation daily. Western traditions and American Exceptionalism are promoted and are part of our culture at ICA.

Administration reserves the right to refuse students with exemption the right to participate in other patriotic events and activities, including but not limited to Honor Guard, Flag Detail, etc...

## Board-Designated Academic Program Policies

### **Policy AP 1.0 - Honor Code**

Consistent with its mission to develop students with good character and virtue, Independence Classical Academy sets forth the following honor code:

*I am honorable and responsible in conduct, words, and deed; respectful of others; work diligently to carry out the virtues taught within our school and will promote the same. I will take my education seriously, and ensure my actions are not preventing others from doing the same. I will set high expectations for myself and others and rise to meet the challenging work ahead of me, in order to achieve the highest possible outcomes for my own future.*

### **Policy AP 2.0 - Educational Priorities**

The Board of Directors (BOD) desires that all students receive a classical, liberal arts education. To this end, the BOD has determined the following educational priorities.

1. Basic cognitive skills: reading, writing, & mathematics.
2. Core subjects:
  - a. English language and literature
  - b. History, geography, government, and civics
  - c. Physical and biological sciences
  - d. Mathematics
3. Auxiliary subjects: Foreign languages, Physical Education, Agriculture, and the Arts.
4. Extracurricular activities of any type as defined by the Executive Director that meet the mission and vision of the academy

The K-8 curriculum will follow the Core Knowledge Sequence. Occasionally, the School will diverge from the Core Knowledge Sequence to raise the standards in teaching a particular subject or skill, or meet statutory requirements, such as Middle School Civics, or advanced students in middle school taking high school Algebra or Biology. The Board of Directors will determine these instances, with the guidance of policy adherence by the Executive Director. The grade-level team leaders as well as subject-area department chairs will ensure that all content areas in the K-8 Core Knowledge Sequence are taught in grades K-8. Any deviation from the board-approved curriculum will need administrative approval.

### **Policy AP 3.0 - Curriculum Guidance**

Independence Classical Academy has a contract with curricular specialists for any updates to the curriculum. If the staff develops a recommendation to change the curriculum or textbooks, it will be required to present the recommended change to the Board for approval. ICA values the input of teachers as our curricular experts.

### **Policy AP 4.0 - Grading Policy**

Grades are one indication of a student's performance. They indicate how well a student has mastered a particular subject. Teachers will assign grades to reflect accurately the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge. Grade inflation will be discouraged. The following

letter grades have these meanings:

- A – Mastery
- B – Proficiency
- C – Competency
- D – *Insufficiency***
- F – Failure to Obtain Competency

It should be noted that *insufficiently meeting* standards at ICA is not acceptable and may not warrant progression. In addition to these general parameters, we will be using a 4.0 grading scale. The following grading scale will be used for all grades:

A	94-100%	4.0	C	74-76.9	2.0
A-	90-93.9	3.7	C-	70-73.9	1.7
B+	87-89.9	3.3	D+	67-69.9	1.3
B	84-86.9	3.0	D	64-66.9	1.0
B-	80-83.9	2.7	D-	60-63.9	0.7
C+	77-79.9	2.3	F	0-59.9	0.0

Incomplete grades will only be given under special circumstances as determined by the administration. It is the responsibility of parents and students to remain informed of the students' progress via our Student Information System (SIS). Students will receive a grade report every nine weeks. Only semester grades will count toward a student's Grade Point Average in the Middle & High School.

### **Policy AP 5.0 - Reporting Student Progress**

Independence Classical Academy believes parents are an integral part of their children's education. To keep parents informed, students' progress will be reported regularly during the school year. At the end of each quarter, formal report cards will be available online via *Skyward Family Access* documenting student progress.

Additionally, Independence Classical Academy will utilize an online grading system. Using this system, teachers will update student grades onto the current educational platform so that parents can stay up to date about the progress of their children with adequate recordkeeping by instructional staff. For students to be successful, both they and their parents should be informed of their standing in class. In addition to the regular grading of assignments, the school will inform parents of their student's academic progress in the following ways:

- If a student is determined to be significantly below grade level, a meeting will be scheduled with a parent, the teacher, and other faculty as deemed appropriate.
- Due to the nature of enrollment and growth projections/limited space, failing courses

and/or grade levels CAN place a child's seat in jeopardy, students failing even one core course will be subject to mandatory parent/teacher/administration conference to discuss progression requirements.

- Report cards will be available **online** quarterly. ICA does not send home printed report cards.
- Parents can review student progress via online access to Independence Classical Academy's recordkeeping system (Skyward). Faculty at ICA have expectations for grading policies, which are spelled out in the syllabus given to parents by classroom teachers at the beginning of the year. ***It is a parent's responsibility to check Skyward and keep up with their child's grade.***

Grades will be posted within three business days after the due date unless otherwise notified by teacher on the syllabus. *Parents can monitor missing assignments online. Parents are encouraged to notify the teacher first, and the team leader (if no response within 2 business days) if there is no assignment/grade information for a particular academic assignment or course beyond the due date. If a team leader is unresponsive, you may reach out to administration by calling the front office.*

**Progress & Report Cards:** Student report cards are completed at the end of quarter. Progress Reports and Report cards are available via skyward in your student's portfolio. ICA does NOT provide paper copies of grading reports, and it is the parent/guardian responsibility to review and print any needed copies. Report cards will indicate any failures to obtain competency in a given subject or grade level, including possible retention. Final report cards will be available approximately two weeks after the end of the school year.

***PLEASE REMEMBER THAT TO RETAIN A SEAT AT ICA, STUDENTS MUST MAINTAIN A 2.0 GPA OR HIGHER, UNLESS AN EXCEPTION IS ARRANGED UNDER QUALIFYING CIRCUMSTANCES.***

***TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR K-5 GATE PROGRAM or 6-12 EARLY COLLEGE HONORS TRACK, STUDENTS MUST ACHIEVE A LEVEL 4 or HIGHER ON ANNUAL STATE TESTING AND MAINTAIN a 3.5 OR HIGHER GPA. STUDENTS MUST ALSO BE IN GOOD STANDING WITH BEHAVIORAL AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES***

### **Policy AP 6.0 – Schedule Changes**

There will be no schedule changes during the semester unless it is deemed in the best interest of the student by the school. Approval signatures must be obtained from the student's present teacher, the new teacher, administration, & parent/legal guardian. Any requests for schedule changes will require a conference with a member of administration to determine if it is the correct course of action for both the student and campus prior to initiating such a change.

### **Policy AP 7.0 - Promotion Requirements**

#### *K – 5 Students*

Our primary goal at the elementary levels is solid literacy. If a child lacks adequate reading skills, he or she will be unable to progress to more complex studies.

To avoid loss of reading skills over the summer, a summer reading program will be instituted. This will consist of reading specified works and potentially completing oral and/or written assignments.

In addition to literacy, K-5 students must have attained competence in all the core subjects (English, including reading, spelling, grammar, composition; history; math; science) over the course of the year and attained at least a ‘C’ average. Competence is attained by not *only* knowing the material and showing mastery on assessments, but by completing assigned work. Completion of work demonstrates not only the ability of the student in the various subjects but also the mastery of study skills necessary for academic and personal achievement. Students whose grades or skills fall below the requirements of their grade level will be retained. “Borderline” cases will be decided by the teacher and the administration collaboratively.

In addition, students in grades K-2 *must* achieve mastery of reading and phonics at the following **minimum** levels (as indicated in Reading grades and/or State Testing):

- Kindergarten: 80% mastery
- First grade: 90% mastery
- Second grade: 100% mastery

Age is the *second* criterion for placement in a grade level at Independence Classical Academy. A student must fall within state guidelines to enter our academy but may not meet the mastery required for specific coursework and/or grade level placement. Students “*eligible*” for kindergarten are not always “*ready*” for kindergarten, especially with the academic expectations held at ICA. Those showing they are not ready for kindergarten during their screening will be offered a meeting with administration to determine the best course of action for each individual student. Compulsory attendance in the state of Florida is age 6 on or before February 1<sup>st</sup>, therefore it is often best for VERY YOUNG kindergarten students to wait a year before entering when their abilities and maturity is higher.

### Middle School Students (6 – 8)

It is our goal for parents, teachers, and students to work together during the year to ensure that students are developing responsible work habits and attaining a sufficient level of understanding in their courses. Students are solely responsible for adhering to the directions given in class, writing down homework assignments, taking notes, and taking advantage of the use of planners, study guides, and note-taking for retention.

A student must attain a 2.0 GPA in core courses (English, history, math, science) to pass to the next grade level and retain a seat within our educational institution and obtain credit in all core courses to progress to the next grade level. Students in grades 6-8 **MUST** obtain all 12 credits required to matriculate to high school (3 in each core subject: Math, English, History, & Science).

Students receiving a “D” in a single class may be a passing grade and may be awarded credit at the discretion of the teacher and administration. The student may be required to retake that class based on the recommendation of the teacher and Principal. Failing a course will *require* the student to re-take the class. A student who fails an elective course may retake that course with the approval of the administration only. Students not meeting progression requirements at ICA

may forfeit their seat at the academy due to limited space and growth projections.

### **Policy AP 8.0 - Grade Level Retention/Promotion**

The purpose of promotions and retention is to provide maximum consideration for the long-range welfare of the student and to provide an opportunity for each student to progress through school according to their own abilities.

It is expected that most students will be promoted annually from one grade level to another upon completion of satisfactory work, however, a student may be retained when his/her standards of achievement or social, emotional, mental, or physical development would not allow satisfactory progress in the next higher grade. Retention normally occurs before the student leaves primary grades (K-2) to achieve the optimum level of success through remediation.

If retention is necessary, parents/guardians who wish to appeal the decision for retention must first contact the administration. If parents/guardians do not accept the decision of the administration, an appeal may be made in writing to the Board. All appeals must be requested within two (2) weeks after the closure of school. If a parent withdraws a student, appeals will not be heard after the withdrawal date.

At the discretion of the administration, a student may be required to complete remedial courses to matriculate, which may result in loss of elective opportunity. Students not meeting grade promotion requirements may be promoted when it is in the best interest of the student, provided they remain eligible for a seat within the institution. While discretion may be used in other grades, especially grades K-2, administration will NOT be required to promote to 4<sup>th</sup> grade if a student fails to meet satisfactory performance on the state standardized testing measurement regardless of whether he or she meets one of the approved exemptions for good cause promotion. The primary cause for promotion from one grade to the next is readiness to succeed in that grade level.

The principal has the authority to waive any graduation requirement except those required by the state. Often, these exceptions are due to late enrollment at ICA and those on accelerated pathways. Once enrolled full-time, a student will not receive credit from any other institution without the prior written approval of the administration.

ICA reserves the right to retain students based on attendance. Attendance is tied to academic success; therefore, students may fail due to absences (“Failure due to Attendance”). Attendance is paramount to the success of each individual student. Families who enroll their children at ICA are committed to regular daily attendance and punctuality to school to ensure the success of their child(ren).

### **Policy AP 9.0 - Honor Roll Eligibility**

Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade (Grammar School):

All A's and B's:	Honor Roll
All A's	High Academic Honor Roll.

### 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade (Middle School):

3.0 to 3.49 GPA	Honor Roll
3.5 or higher GPA	High Honor Roll.

### 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade:

3.0-3.49 GPA	Honors
3.5-3.74 GPA	High Academic Honors
3.75 or higher GPA	Highest Academic Honors

Honor Roll Awards will be given by semester only in middle and high school. Elementary awards are given quarterly, with the exception of Quarter 4, due to proximity between the closure of gradebooks and the end of year.

### **Policy AP 10.0 - Format for State Assessments**

State assessments will be administered using state-mandated or IEP-directed format and may change from year to year. ICA follows all state requirements as it pertains to testing.

### **Policy AP 11.0 - Homework Policy**

Homework is a fundamental part of our general academic program and helps develop a strong work ethic and personal organizational skills. Homework's immediate educational purpose includes the following:

- Reinforce skills and concepts learned in class.
- Develop study skills and habits.
- Practice skills and knowledge in ways that are not readily accomplished in the classroom.
- Inform parents of what is being taught in the classroom.

In addition to regular classroom assignments, we would like each child to read, or be read to, at least three times a week and preferably every day. As cited in *A Nation at Risk*, "the single most important factor for determining whether children will go to college is being read to as a child." Going to college is not necessarily a goal for everyone but becoming a life-long learner should be if one hopes to remain competitive throughout their lifetime. We believe that becoming a competent reader is critical to being a good student and the first step to being able to explore the world. By reading to your child, you encourage your child's growth and strengthen family ties. By making sure your child is reading at home you are directly contributing to his education. By reading in front of your children, you model good habits and reinforce your expectations.

Homework should be an opportunity for practice or for acquisition of background material. Homework may be considered "self-assigned" as students are required to work with diligence and honor in class. Failure to do so may result in classwork becoming homework for return the following school day. Students who are not **assigned** "homework" should always be studying, specifically in 6th-12th grades, where students will almost always have an upcoming formative or summative assessment in any given subject.

**Parents of ICA Scholars are not expected to “teach” material to students. Students may have homework assigned for practice, but if they do not understand it fully, please refer to the faculty for assistance. Homework at ICA is reserved for studying for assessments, practicing/improving skills, and is NOT used for arbitrary “busy work.”**

### Approximate Time Guidelines

In general, Independence Classical Academy allows our teachers complete autonomy in the classroom and to set their own policies on homework. Homework policies will be indicated on the classroom syllabus at the beginning of the school year.

Students are expected to learn how to use their time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. It should be noted that even teachers who do not regularly assign homework, if a student is not diligently working in class, classwork may fall upon that student to complete the work. Parents are expected to support the school by ensuring their children complete these tasks. Both advanced and remedial classes may require additional homework and/or study time. At ICA, parents can expect, as early as first grade students will have studying to do, from rehearsing spelling words and math memory work, to studying for numerous assessments in middle and high school. Also, parents should expect demanding courseloads and a tremendous amount of studying in honors classes. Faculty is expected to prepare for the delivery of lessons daily, therefore the expectations of students to study are also a daily occurrence and teaches a lifelong skill of preparing for meaningful work.

***For poor or incomplete work, teachers may require students to redo an assignment. Whether such work is given any credit is left to the discretion of the teacher. This is to prepare our students for life in the military, workforce, and college, where deadlines are NOT optional. Refer to the virtues being reinforced at ICA.***

### Late Homework

All assignments are expected to be turned in on time. One of the purposes of homework is to teach students responsibility and accountability. To accomplish this, and to ensure students do not fall behind on their schoolwork, it is essential that students complete their work on time. Students who have an excused absence will have the number of days equal to the number of days absent to make up class and homework without penalty up to 7 days. This may or may not be an option as we are near the end of grading terms, therefore attendance is crucial to academic success at ICA.

In middle and high school, homework submitted one day late will receive 50% credit and two days later will receive NO credit, unless a classroom teacher has a written policy stating otherwise.

### **Policy AP 12.0 - Instructional Time**

The primary focus of the school’s staff and programs to maximize student learning. While **some** learning occurs because of extracurricular activities and non-structured interaction between students and staff, **most** learning occurs because of planned learning activities during class time. Therefore, every effort will be made to minimize disruptions in instructional time. Intercom announcements and pull-out programs will be planned to avoid loss of critical instruction time.

### **Policy AP 13.0 - Special Events - Parties**

Special events or parties held during a significant part of the school day must be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum.

Any special event or party must be approved by the school administration a minimum of 2 weeks **prior to** its planning. Approval for one year does **not** carry over to the next.

### **Policy AP 13.1 - Special Events – Guest Speakers**

Guest speakers utilized during the school day must speak on topics covered in the course or grade. If possible, the students should be in the process of studying the topic to be presented. Guest Speakers must be approved **prior** to the invitation being extended. Approval must still be obtained for guest speakers used in the previous school year. Approval for one year does not carry over to the next. Guest Speakers who cover controversial topics must be screened by the school administration. The screening may include an interview of the guest by the administration or designee. Parents must be notified prior to guest speaker presentations on controversial issues, including religions covered in the Core Knowledge sequence. Parents may have students excused from such presentations and understand that the student will be supervised in a silent study hall. Teachers will provide permission slips to parents as notification of a guest speaker covering controversial issues and indicate an option on the permission slip for students to be excused.

### **Policy AP 13.2 - Special Events – Field Trips**

Field trips should be directly tied to the curriculum and add to the instructional environment by conveying knowledge or an experience that supports the curriculum. Field trips must be approved by the school administration and will be organized by the Field Trip Coordinator, who makes all final decisions on planning. Any waivers of the decisions issued by the coordinator should be sought only through the Director of Business Services, Mrs. Barbara Cross at [b.cross@icacharter.org](mailto:b.cross@icacharter.org) via email. We do not want our teachers or administrators burdened with making discretionary decisions at all times of the year. One source for requests needs to be adhered to.

### **Policy AP 14.0 - Extended Field Trips**

All extended field trips require individual Board approval a minimum of 90 days (180 days outside US) prior to the trip. All students attending the extended field trip must have unanimous approval of the administration of Independence Classical Academy. For upper school students, the trip must include coursework and/or lesson plans, and all students must be awarded credit and a letter grade, which will be based on the accompanying coursework as well as their behavior on the trip. All extended field trips must have liability insurance protecting all the trip attendees, the school, and the St. Lucie County School District. Any liability insurance not covered by the school's policy must be paid for by the fees charged to trip participants. Any increase in the costs of extended field trips (due to inflation, changes in exchange rates, etc...) must be paid for by increases in fees by trip participants. All adults attending the field trip are

required to be currently registered volunteers with a background clearance to chaperone. The field trip planner (faculty, club leader, etc...) will work with the sponsoring faculty/staff member to ensure that all procedures are followed.

### **Policy AP 15.0 - Teaching Controversial Issues**

Controversial issues are defined as contemporary problems, subjects, or questions of a political or social nature where differences of opinion and passions can run high. Controversial issues will only be explored when emanating from some part of the curriculum (grades 6-8). When these subjects come up, teachers will present an impartial view of both sides without proselytizing. Contemporary controversial issues will not be discussed in elementary school even if part of the CK sequence, without principal approval. An educational institution is not the appropriate place to express ideas of individuality as it applies to controversial issues and is reserved for a space to teach and learn curriculum-related content only.

### **Policy AP 15.1 - Teaching Human Sexuality**

We believe *parents* have the fundamental responsibility for their children's education, which includes the areas of morality and sexuality. The school's role, at most, should be viewed as a supportive one. It is apparent that sexuality is more than biology and physiology, it also includes morality, spirituality, and emotions. Because it is a part of the whole human experience, it must be taught with respect and sensitivity. *We preserve that right for the parents, where it belongs.*

We believe children are naturally modest concerning their bodies and are not ready to learn everything at once. They are naturally curious, however, and need to get answers to their questions in a way appropriate to their stage of development. In teaching this topic, we want to minimize the embarrassment associated with it for both children and parents.

As a reference for our philosophy on teaching human sexuality, we approach it from the State standards through Health and Physical Education at the upper levels, and a biological approach via science curriculum. We respect each individual family and their own values and resign any teaching of this content in terms of sexuality, morality, spirituality, and emotions to our respective parents, *not* ICA faculty. In support of this promise to our families, students will also refrain from discussions on campus anything relating to the same. Many families come to ICA for the virtuous nature of our environment, and that comes with an expectation that their children will not be exposed to certain behaviors, conversations, and activities. As a result, students who fail to refrain from inappropriate discussions on campus *will* be subject to *serious* disciplinary actions.

**In a world where the internet exposes children to and exploits them through both solicited and unsolicited means, we urge parents not to give untethered or unmonitored access to the internet and social media, as the exposure is bound to be had, and then brought to school. While the school cannot control what a child is exposed to or allowed to do at home or other areas of socialization, we will control what is allowed to be exposed on our campus. This is a serious matter to our administration, one of virtue. Misconduct (physical or verbal) of this nature will not be tolerated. In addition, ICA will NOT monitor or respond to complaints stemming from online activity between students that happen off campus. Phones are not allowed out/powerd on during school hours, therefor**

**we expect parents to monitor their own children's internet and phone activities, as opposed to bringing it to the school to handle.**

### Teaching Human Sexuality

We will teach the Core Knowledge Sequence in the fifth grade, which includes a discussion on reproductive organs and reproduction. Parents will have the opportunity to preview the materials the class will be reading, on which the discussion is based. Sexual intercourse will only be discussed in the context of a monogamous relationship between two people of opposite sexes at the high school level. Parents will have the choice of having their children opt out of these portions of class, which will be taught during the regular science time.

In the upper school, themes that deal with sexuality may emerge from the reading of a serious text, such as *Anna Karenina* or *Brave New World* or *The Scarlet Letter*. When these topics do emerge from the curriculum itself, teachers will adhere to the school philosophy. Teachers will engage the material in a serious way. The purpose will not be to claim that "Hester Prynne could be just as happy as a single mother," or that "Greek culture proves that homosexuality is an appropriate sexual preference," or any other such highly contestable claims that violate our policies or principles. When in doubt over the teaching of an issue, the teacher should always consult the administration or move past the material.

In upper grades, students may be involved in discussions concerning sexuality and sexual restraint as these issues affect their living a moral and responsible life. Moreover, parents will always be notified of these discussions before they take place in case parents wish their children to opt out. In addition, sex education must be taught in the context of human health. Sexuality will be taught as an aspect of a monogamous marriage, and the moral and physical consequences of promiscuous sex will be made plain. Often, notice cannot be afforded, given these topics arise during a Socratic Discussion. We require parents to be supportive and trust our faculty to adhere to the virtues fostered within the academy and will be reserved in his or her framing within the philosophies of the school.

Character education is part of our program. Sexuality involves serious moral decision-making. It is important to help children build the capacity to make and abide by sound moral choices. We would like our teaching of human reproduction to be a springboard to initiate and facilitate discussions between parents and children on this sensitive subject.

### *Principals to be communicated:*

- Sexuality in practice is best accompanied by marital commitment and fidelity.
- Premarital abstinence is a positive, practical, achievable lifestyle that promotes self-control, self-respect, respect for others, responsibility, maturity, and good health.
- Abstinence prior to marriage is the only 100% safe approach to sex physically, emotionally, morally, and spiritually.
- The sex education program in the high school will include discussion on sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS), condoms (only with respect to their limited effectiveness in prevention of sexually transmitted diseases), and fetal development.

Approaching these topics from both a health and philosophically moral position is a serious matter.

### **Policy AP 15.2 - Teaching Evolution**

Much of modern biology rests on the theory of evolution. The Core Knowledge Sequence introduces the theory of evolution in middle school. ICA will adhere to the Core Knowledge Sequence. The theory of evolution in relation to human origins will not be taught at this time. In the high school biology class, the evolutionary theories of human development will be canvassed. The teaching of evolution is not intended to exclude other theories of human origins and development, such as Creation or Intelligent Design. Nevertheless, we will not promote these theories but refer students back to their parents.

### **Policy AP 16.0 - Student Services**

To meet federal guidelines, Independence Classical Academy admits all students, based on available seats, without knowing the special needs of students before a seat is offered.

Independence Classical Academy provides in-class accommodations fitting of a classical environment, pull-out testing in small groups, and after-school tutoring for students with academic needs. We also contract with providers for therapeutic services (occupational therapy, speech and language therapy) that the school cannot offer on its own.

When a child with special needs enrolls with Independence Classical Academy, the family will be informed of the services provided by the school and the current staffing levels. If a child has special needs that the ICA staff cannot adequately address, the school will work with the school district's (LEA) student assignment office and ESE department to make a recommendation to a nearby school which provides the required services. This will happen prior to enrollment or during the staffing process for new referrals/registrants as early in the school year as possible.

Independence Classical Academy's student services program rests on three pillars of instruction: explicit phonics instruction, arithmetic skills, and Socratic seminar. Since classroom time is crucial for all students to develop these skills, student services will be unable to create and lead resource classrooms for students. The goal is to reinforce what is learned in the classroom (the least restrictive environment) and to help the student develop independence.

## School Environment Policies

### Policy SE 1.0 - Attendance

#### Overview

Our mission at Independence Classical Academy is to provide an exceptional classical liberal arts education and to encourage the virtues of character necessary for human flourishing. This requires a commitment, over the course of many years, to a specific course of study. The chief element of that commitment is regular and punctual attendance.

School starts promptly according to our school hours and calendar. If your child is absent because of illness or an appointment for which we have not been notified previously, you must call the front office to make us aware of the situation. It is critical for students' safety that we know where all students are on school days. **Please notify the school every day your child is to be away from school.**

Absences will be excused for religious observances, court appearances, illness, and other reasons required by law. Physician notes and notes from home to excuse absences **MUST** be received in the office or via email within **THREE** calendar days of the date of absence.

Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this policy, as staff cannot be expected to keep up with "retroactive excuses" nor can faculty be expected to review assignments that have long passed the due date in our SIS system, particularly once the formative assessment window for that material has passed.

#### Absences

The school is responsible for the welfare of a student from the start to the end of the school day while that student is registered as '*present.*' Regular attendance is required. Teachers will maintain a register of student attendance and lateness in their classes.

Planned absence during the school term is discouraged, but any such absence must be requested by parents in advance and in writing. The administration may require that the student obtain comments from teachers about the impact of the absence before the request for an excuse can be granted and may require evidence or a commitment that the time will be made up. An approved school calendar is provided six months in advance of the next school year starting; therefore, we are discouraging vacations and trips taken during the school year. We also discourage doctors' and other appointments when avoidable. When those appointments **are** unavoidable, **students** are responsible for any make-up work during their absence. Assignments that are not made up, according to the time restrictions set by the teacher and school, will be reflected in their grades. It is helpful to both students and teachers to make prior arrangements to meet that requirement. This is all in the best interest of the child.

The attendance goal of ICA is 98%. To receive credit, a student cannot miss more than 10 days per calendar year, including **both** excused **and** unexcused absences. Upper-level students (6-8), missing two classes equals a half-day absence. Missing four classes equals a full-day absence.

### Unexcused Absence

If a student has four or more unexcused absences in one month or ten days in any semester, the student may be classified as habitually truant according to ICA policy and needs to be referred to outside agencies to help families understand Florida's compulsory attendance laws. When the parent does not explain sufficiently the reason for unexcused absences, a parent conference will be required, and credit will be withheld. An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence will be entered on the student's record. The parent or guardian of the student receiving an unexcused absence will be required to keep up with attendance matters in Skyward.

### Excused Absences

The following will be considered excused absences:

- Absences for medical reasons
- Absences for mental or emotional disabilities
- Pre-arranged absences of an educational nature must be approved by the principal (e.g., visits to colleges for high school students; scheduled, performance-related activities)
- Attendance at any school-sponsored activity
- Bereavement (notify school if absence will extend beyond three days)
- State Mandated (i.e., health quarantines, closures, etc...)

The school may require suitable proof of excused absences, including written statements from medical sources. *Make-up work will **not** be provided to students missing class/school during a period of disciplinary suspension.*

### Make-up Work

Missed work due to an absence must be completed within the same number of school days as the absence. For example, if a student is absent from school for 3 days because of the flu, that student will have 3 school days to complete the work he misses while sick.

An absence on the date of a major assignment, such as a test or major paper, will not extend the deadline of that assignment. The student must complete/turn in the assignment upon his or her return.

### Extended Excused Absences

Due to the individual nature of extended excused absences including, but not limited to, acute or chronic illnesses/injuries, quarantine, a terminally ill family member, or family death, the parent/guardian of the general expectation of the faculty related to the completion of assignments and status for moving to the next grade, if applicable.

### **Policy SE 2.0 - Tardy/Early Sign-outs**

Each tardy or early release prevents students from engaging their classes appropriately. To get the most from class, students must begin and end on time. *Three (3) tardies or early sign-outs make one absence. These may be excused, but the total number does count against the ten (10) absences a student may accrue before losing credit and/or forfeiting a seat due to failure to meet attendance requirements.* There will be no early sign-outs permitted without prior notice or

exceptional circumstance after 2:00pm due to the traffic backing up to block the parking lot and the movement of students on campus.

### **Policy SE 3.0 – Releasing a Student from School**

Independence Classical Academy is concerned about the safety of our students. Students will only be released to people who are their parents or legal guardians, unless we have received written permission to release the student to another adult. Students may NOT be taken from the school, playground, cafeteria, or other campus location – ALL students must be signed out from the front office.

In the case of divorce or separation of the parents/legal guardians, both parties shall have full rights until legal notification is provided to the school limiting the rights of either parent, which should be updated. ICA faculty, staff, and administration will not and cannot be involved in the civil discourse between parents. The rules of the courts will prevail ICA administration will not side with parents, or take verbal instruction on custody/communication issues-we will simply follow the written documents provided to us. In addition, we will not expect our teachers to double down on efforts to communicate with parents. The primary parent in our SIS, emergency cards, and Parent Square will prevail, and from there, it is up to parents to communicate with one another. Extenuating circumstances that make that impossible, we will consider on a case-by-case basis.

School-sponsored activities require a teacher or sponsor to be responsible for the students. Students may only leave the activity or event with their own parent/legal guardian unless prior written authorization is given to the teacher or sponsor. Transportation of students when leaving school will return by same transportation.

### **Policy SE 4.0 - Enrollment**

Independence Classical Academy sets forth the following non-discriminatory enrollment policy as required by law: *Enrollment will take place without regard to race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, or need for special education services.*

#### **Lottery Overview**

In the event interest in a grade is beyond capacity, enrollment is determined by a random lottery system. All completed applications turned in by the deadline will be eligible for the lottery. All applicants are randomly selected during the lottery. Should there be more lottery applicants than available seats, students are randomly assigned waitlist numbers.

#### **Lottery Application Process**

The Director of Operations or Registrar will determine, based upon the total number of students currently enrolled, how many enrollment openings are available for each grade level. The application process will be conducted online.

#### **Lottery Application Criteria**

Legal Guardians may submit an enrollment for their child anytime during the Enrollment period for the appropriate grade level for their child and only for the upcoming school year. Only full-time students will be accepted.

### **Lottery Application Deadline**

All applications for the lottery must be filled out completely and legibly. Applications must be submitted online or in person at ICA by the advertised annual Open Enrollment deadline to be considered in the lottery. Applications received after the deadline will be added to the wait list in the order they are received.

### **Lottery Mechanics**

Where the number of eligible applicants exceeds the space available in a particular grade to which admission is sought, a process of random selection shall be conducted. Random selection will occur when the priority list of applicants has been exhausted. ICA's lottery is conducted considering several different priority statutes.

#### ***Priority 1: Board Preference***

Those children whose parents, grandparents, or guardians are active board members will receive priority seating. Ad Hoc Committees and Boards that serve as an extension of the Board are also considered at this priority level.

#### ***Priority 2: Staff Preference***

Children of staff members who work 30 or more hours per week will receive priority for admission if their applications are received by the designated deadline. These children will be allowed to remain in the school regardless of whether the parent/guardian remains employed by the school.

#### ***Priority 3: Sibling/Household Preference***

It is the intent of Independence Classical Academy to support whole families and create a cohesive and inclusive school community. Siblings of enrolled students will receive priority for admission if their applications are received by the designated deadline. Families may also apply for household priority. Household priority is given when a child who is not a sibling and lives with a currently enrolled or admitted family. In this situation, custody papers or other legal documentation must be provided to claim priority.

#### ***Priority 4: Military Family Preference***

It is the intent of Independence Classical Academy to support and pay homage to our active duty, prior and retired military personnel. Upon verification of credentials, dependents of our members of the US Armed Forces will be offered priority selection at ICA.

#### ***Priority 5: First Responder Preference***

It is the intent of Independence Classical Academy to support and pay homage to our first responders by offering preference on enrollment to law enforcement, firefighters, and EMT's whether active or retired and their children.

At the conclusion of the lottery for each grade level, applicants will be ordered on a waitlist for each grade.

### **Grounds for Denial of Admission**

Subject to the school's responsibilities under the applicable federal, state, and local laws, the following will constitute ground for denial of admission to the school:

- Failure to meet age requirements.

- Having been expelled from any school district the preceding twelve months.
- Failure to comply with the immunization provisions. Families who choose not to immunize their children must provide a legal immunization waiver.
- Falsification of application or enrollment documents.
- Failure to provide registration documents by the deadline set forth by the registration office (noticed in the seat offering within the application system).
- Failure to maintain a 2.0 minimum GPA (consideration for grades 6-12 initial admission only).
- Failure to meet the expectations of Florida Statutes regarding compulsory attendance as stated in FS 1003.21 and/or ICA's attendance policy in this handbook.
- Failure to complete the required graduation requirements at their prior school, resulting in the inability to take courses with their current cohort of students.
- Failure to provide proof of adequate state testing scores or sufficient GPA *if applying to the competitive entry Honors/Early College programs at the academy only.*

### **Time Frame and Public Notice**

The First-Round application period will take place in February of each year. Once the lottery is complete and a seat offered, the parent(s) will be notified by email and given 72 hours to accept or decline the seat. This offer is only for the grade level the parents applied for.

If the parents(s) cannot be contacted because they failed to make notification of changes in their email or phone number, they shall be removed from the lottery pool.

If the parent declines a seat offered to their child, that child's name is withdrawn from the application pool and the parent(s) may choose to reapply later, or they may contact the school to be placed back on the waitlist.

If a student is offered a seat into ICA after June 1, the parent or guardian must respond within 24 hours or that child's name is withdrawn from the application pool and the parent(s) may choose to reapply later, or they may contact the school to be placed back on the waitlist.

ICA will not discriminate in recruiting for enrollment and will reach out broadly to the entire community, including households that do not speak English as a primary language, students with disabilities, and other underserved groups to inform of early enrollment list availability. ICA may also promote enrollment opportunities through Spanish-language radio and announcements through organizations like the Boys and Girls Club and Children's Services Council.

### **Enrollment Deadline**

Independence Classical Academy will only accept new students after December 1st with approval of the administration.

### **Re-Enrollment for Current Students**

Current Independence Classical Academy families do not need to enter the lottery each year, but they must do two things to secure their seat for the following year.

The second quarter of each school year the legal guardian on file of students currently enrolled in ICA will receive a re-registration form for the following school year. This information helps

determine how many seats are available for the lottery. Failure to return the registration form by the December deadline may result in the loss of a student's seat for the following year.

Independence Classical Academy will notify currently enrolled families of the re-registration process via e-mail and forms sent home in person. Independence Classical staff will offer several reminders via e-mail and written communication. ICA will not make individual reminder calls.

It is the sole responsibility of the parent to keep their e-mail and phone numbers updated as well as follow the registration process and meet the required deadlines. If a parent fails to make the deadline or fails to submit the re-registration form, the seat will be included in the availability for the lottery. The parents may choose to reapply, but will be subject to the same lottery rules as new applicants.

### *Complete Registration Process*

After being offered a seat at Independence Classical Academy, parents will be required to complete additional steps to complete their registration, including notifying their current school of their acceptance of a seat at ICA and to authorize their child's records be transferred to ICA for private school students. SLPS students do not need to do anything except apply, accept, and register, which automatically unenrolls them from their current school. Parent/Legal guardian's failure to respond to the Registration office and/or provide required documentation by the deadline set forth by ICA, will constitute a voluntary withdraw of their application.

This deadline will be established by the school administration, or their designee, and communicated to parents via Registration software.

If parents do not inform their previous school and authorize the release of their child's records by the deadline, they may forfeit their seat, and it will be offered to the next child on the waitlist. A delay caused by a family's existing school, at no fault of the parent, will not cause a family to forfeit a seat.

### **Policy SE 5.0 – Grade Level Placement of Newly Enrolled Students**

The grade level placement policy is designed to promote educational excellence and fairness by placing students at the most appropriate level for instruction. Students new to the school who are found to be reading more than one grade level behind their existing peer group may be required to enroll in the grade level deemed appropriate by the administration, if room exists.

### **Policy SE 6.0 - Classroom Placement**

The classroom placement policy is designed to promote educational excellence and fairness by optimizing the learning environment at each grade level while meeting special needs of individual students.

Parents may provide a written request for a specific classroom environment for their child; however, such requests are not guaranteed because they can lead to imbalances in the classroom. Prior and future teachers at each grade level will provide information to the enrollment

coordinator regarding classroom dynamics, special needs, diversity, availability of volunteers, student achievement, etc., to assist in determining classroom assignments to provide a rigorous education for all students. Classroom assignments must meet final approval by the administration.

## **Policy SE 7.0 – Dress Code**

### Purpose

A school dress code policy is crucial to a successful classical school, accomplishing three key goals. First, it diminishes the burden of thinking about clothing and fashion that can become all-encompassing for many students and removes distractions in the classroom and redoubles focus on the task at hand. Second, it helps students take school more seriously by acknowledging through dress that we respect fellow classmates, teachers, and the common enterprise of education. Third, it develops school identity and pride. All students are therefore expected to adhere to the following dress code policy.

When questions about aspects of the dress code arise, the student is expected to follow the general and leading spirit of the policy, which is to diminish distractions, show respect, and elevate the tenor of the school. As with all policies, the dress code policy can be amended at the recommendation of the appropriate committee and approval by the Governing Board.

The most up to date uniform policy will be posted on the school's website, including any changes made during the year.

### Dress Code Details

Any school dress code issues not specifically addressed in this uniform policy will be resolved considering school spirit, with final discretion lying with the school administration.

Temporary exceptions to the clothing requirements of this policy may be granted by the administration for hardship. Upon request, reasonable accommodation in the dress code policy shall be made for students with disabilities at the discretion of the administration. Specific questions can be directed to the front office, and an administrator will make the ultimate decision on permissibility.

### Backpacks and Lunch Boxes

Backpacks and lunch boxes are expected to be clean, in good condition and appropriate for a school environment.

### Independence Classical Academy Crest Embroidery

If students would like to purchase items with the ICA crest embroidered, it must be purchased through the school's uniform vendor. ALL logos, mascots, school crest, and design aspects as they relate to ICA or the Anglers name, are intellectual property of Independence Classical Academy and no rights are given for the use or reproduction of the same.

### All K-12 Students

- Polo uniform shirts must be in one of the following solid colors ONLY: Red, White, or Navy Blue
- Polos with the school crest are available online in the school store to purchase or students may wear polos in the permitted colors without the school logo, provided any logos

- remain smaller than a quarter.
- Logos (no larger than a quarter) other than the ICA logo are permissible on the chest only.
- Button up, Oxford style shirts (long or short sleeve) are permitted in lieu of polo style (in same colors as polo shirts).
- Shirts must be tucked in while on campus.
- Jean pants must not have rips, frays, tears or designs.
- Jean pants must be traditional blue denim only.
- Uniform style pants/shorts/skorts must be in khaki/tan or navy.
- No cargo pants or cargo shorts are allowed.
- Uniform style dresses must be red, white, khaki, or navy.
- Undergarments must not be visible during school hours at any time, including school events and field trips.
- Belts must be worn with all pants and shorts. Belts must be solid navy, black, or brown (slight embellishments on girls' belts are permitted).
- Socks must be white, black, gray, or navy in solid colors (logos no larger than a quarter).
- Shoes must be closed-toe, close-heeled, rubber sole, and no heels higher than 1 inch. No crocs, clogs, or slippers.
- No hats. NO sunglasses
- Outerwear (jackets, sweaters, etc..) must not have a hood and be solid navy in color, logo no bigger than a quarter. ICA jackets are available online via the school store.
- Hoods will not be permitted on campus
- No visible tattoos/body art or piercings, other than standard, stud earrings.
- No gauge earrings are allowed.
- Shorts/Skorts/Dresses must be no higher than 3" above the knee

## **Policy SE 7.1 – ELEMENTARY Campus Specifics**

### PE Dress Code

All students who participate in PE will need to dress in PE uniform only on PE days. PE uniforms **MUST** be purchased through the school's uniform vendor. They are worn to school for the day, in lieu of the regular uniform.

- Navy, Red, or Gray ICA PE shirt (short or long sleeve).
- Navy ICA PE shorts or long pants.
- Athletic Shoes (sneakers).
- PE shorts must adhere to the same length requirements as the school dress code policy.
- All PE uniforms **MUST** be purchased from the online school store.
- Cold weather layered items **MUST** be in school colors above.

### Boys

- Hair must be neatly styled
- Hair color must be natural and not distracting.
- No nail polish.

### Girls

- No jeggings or leggings.
- No make-up
- Hair must be neatly styled.

- Hair color must be natural & not distracting.

### Elementary Spirit Wear

Students may wear a spirit shirt every Friday with school appropriate bottoms. Spirit Shirts must be purchased from the school store/club or team **ONLY**.

## **Policy SE 7.1 – Middle/High Campus Specifics**

### PE Dress Code

All students who participate in PE or athletic courses **MUST** purchase uniforms through the school's uniform vendor from the school website.

- Navy, Red, or Gray ICA PE shirt (short or long sleeve).
- Navy ICA PE shorts or long pants.
- Athletic Shoes (sneakers).
- PE shorts must adhere to the same length requirements as the school dress code policy.
- Cold weather layered items **MUST** be in school colors above.

### Boys

- Hair must be neatly styled; hair color must be natural and not distracting.
- No nail polish.

### Girls

- No jeggings or leggings.
- Make-up must be natural and not distracting.
- Hair must be neatly styled.
- Hair color must be natural & not distracting.

### Upper Campus Spirit Wear

- Middle School students may wear a spirit shirt every Friday with appropriate school bottoms
- High School **ONLY**- May wear an ICA spirit shirt any day of the week with school appropriate bottoms
- Spirit Shirts must be purchased from the school store/club or team **ONLY**.

### Dual Enrollment Students ONLY:

Dual Enrollment students are permitted to wear Indian River State College Spirit wear with school appropriate bottoms any day of the week, the only exception being **NO HOODIES WHILE ON ICA'S CAMPUS**.

### Visitors and Volunteers

Volunteers **MUST** abide by the spirit of the uniform policy. Attire is expected to be safe, modest, and not distracting to students and staff. Guidelines for students' garment lengths are to be followed by volunteers. **NO volunteers or visitors will be admitted to campus when undergarments, midriffs, or other exposed areas are visible, or when shorts/skirts are shorter than fingertip length.** As a classical school, the virtues matter, and as adults, we lead by example. Visitors and volunteers must consider the spirit and modesty required by students at ICA and dress accordingly, as you are in the presence of other people's children. There will be no exceptions to this policy, including field day and field trips.

PLEASE NOTE:

ICA has invested significant resources into making our campus feel comfortable and look nice for our families, thus creating a warm environment in which to learn. If your child is missing an item, please check social media, reach out to the office, or stop by to check the lost & found (*located in the cafeteria*). Items not claimed at the end of each week will be posted and checked for names and given one additional week to be claimed. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in Lost & Found, items will be discarded to make space and keep the campus tidy and free of pests. Jackets, lunchboxes, and water bottles are not cheap—please label all items for easy identification. Items labeled will be delivered to the classrooms directly.

**Policy SE 8.0 - Student Leadership**

Any student leader must demonstrate high moral character and be in good academic standing with a minimum 3.0 GPA for leadership positions. These positions include, but are not limited to: Honor Guard, Student Government, Shooting Club, & Fishing Club.

**Policy SE 9.0 – Healthy Students**

To retain the academic integrity of the campus, having a full and healthy student body is mission critical. To maintain a healthy campus, ICA spends significant resources on custodial and maintenance line items. In exchange the following expectations are expected to be adhered to by all families enrolled:

Regarding Toilet-Training: All students of Independence Classical Academy must be independent in toileting. On occasion students may have “accidents”. When an “accident” occurs, it is the responsibility of the parent to assist the child and to provide clean clothing. Young children should always keep a complete change of clothing in their backpacks, and sometimes it will be necessary to send a child home if an accident occurs. For the safety and security of our staff, children will NOT be cleaned up at ICA. Parents will come to clean up a child if he or she is to remain at school.

If there are repeated “accidents”, a meeting with the parents and school administration will be held to evaluate the situation. Appropriate action will be taken based on what is in the best interest of all students and the school to ensure the child meets our standard in toilet training.

Regarding Lice: While the CDC has guidelines for students not being required to send students home from school early and being permitted to stay in school until the end of the day, *ICA adheres to a stricter guideline, for the safety of all families*. As a school of choice, we want all our families to feel safe and secure in having their children attend school in a perceived safe, healthy environment. Therefore, ICA requires ALL students with visible signs of lice to be sent home *immediately* for treatment, and to remain at home until there are **NO** signs of active bugs, nits, **or** eggs before being on campus. After being sent home for lice, any student returning to school **MUST** report to the clinic for a physical check by the appropriate staff member prior to being able to return to class.

Regarding Personal Hygiene: Students in grades 4-12 should be wearing deodorant, dressing properly for the weather, and ensuring hygiene is kept up within the spirit of a large classroom

setting that is enclosed where students will be in constant proximity to one another. In the spirit of a healthy, high-quality learning environment, all students should take care of themselves when they reach the age of adolescence, particularly. In addition, all students in grades K-12 are required to be well-groomed, in clean attire, and dressed appropriately for school, according to the ICA dress code.

Regarding Fevers: Students who are not feeling well and have a temperature above normal will be called to be picked up, at the discretion of the parent. Students with a fever of 100.4 or higher will be required to be picked up within the hour, so contagion does not spread. Students may return to school once they have been *fever & symptom-free for 24 hours (without medication)* and are not showing contagious symptoms (including but not limited to green runny nose, cough, etc..) to prevent the spread of illness on campus.

### **Policy SE 10.0 - Discipline**

Independence Classical Academy has the following disciplinary goals:

- 1) Provide a secure and calm learning environment in which ***all*** students can focus on their work with as little distraction as possible.
- 2) Treat all students equitably, fairly, and with respect.
- 3) Teach students the importance of their own character.
- 4) As our motto states, ICA is an institution where “*teachers can teach, and students will learn.*” Therefore, any departure from proper decorum, resulting in the interruption of teaching and learning is subject to disciplinary action.

For the purposes of discipline, the following terms are defined as:

- “Habitual” meaning three or more times within a semester.
- “Continuous” meaning repetitive, after being instructed to do otherwise or after being redirected at least once.
- “Minor” meaning it constitutes a disrespect for or disruption of self but not authority or others.
- “Major” meaning it constitutes a flagrant disrespect for or disruption of others, the learning environment, or authority.
- “Dismissal” meaning the removal from the ICA program (students will be referred to student assignment for their zoned school, or may choose to enroll in private, another charter, virtual, or home school programs without limitation).
- “Expulsion” meaning a referral to the sponsor for expulsion from all SLC public schools.

#### Disciplinary Action

Students will be verbally corrected for minor instances of poor behavior. If the behavior is repetitive or serious, they will contact home in hopes of finding a way to work together to effect change to elicit the expected behavior on campus. For habitual or more serious disruptions the student and parent will be required to come pick their student up for the remainder of the day. ICA believes parents are responsible for their child’s behavior and virtues, therefore those students not meeting our behavioral or academic virtues will be sent home to be disciplined by parents. Any assignments missed as a result of a suspension will receive a grade of zero. ICA is in the business of teaching, not disciplining, therefore this policy will be effective on day one of school. We will work proactively with families to set high standards and then encourage

the attainment of those standards, but we will not discipline your students repetitively and daily outside of reinforcing good behavior and encouraging success in self-governance. Gross insubordination or misconduct and failed response to teacher redirection/correction will warrant potential discipline (detention, suspension, etc..) by the Dean and require a mandatory conference with parents. Serious misconduct, according to our discipline matrix, may warrant a dismissal, with the student being in jeopardy of forfeiting their seat at ICA and being ineligible for re-enrollment within the institution.

**Policy SE 10.1 - Discipline Matrix**

The following matrix has been established to set a standard of decorum both on campus, at school events and activities, and in the classroom that allows every student to meet our academic expectations. Our code of conduct is agreed to by accepting a seat at our institution, therefore the following actions will not be tolerated:

<b>LEVEL 1 OFFENSE</b>	<b>LEVEL 2 OFFENSE</b>	<b>LEVEL 3 OFFENSE</b>	<b>LEVEL 4 OFFENSE</b>
Chewing gum	Habitual Level 1 offenses	Habitual Level 2 offenses	Habitual Level 3 offenses
Dress code violation	Cheating or Plagiarism in addition to discipline, will warrant a zero on assignment/project/test.	Major offenses of blatant disrespect	Major infractions that risk the immediate health, safety, and welfare of the academy's student body, otherwise not listed on the matrix
Spraying perfumes/body sprays in classroom	Body modification during school, event, or activity		
Minor verbal disruptions (talking out of turn)	Incidents of Inappropriate Behavior, Profanity, Vulgarity, or Obscenity		
Noncompliance with directions	Open defiance	Gross Insubordination	
Minor physical disruptions (horseplay, toys, etc..)	Physical inappropriateness & altercations	Battery & Fighting	
Failure to work diligently	Out of area	Open defiance of school policy	Tampering with school safety or security equipment
Disrespect for others and property	Inciting	Bullying & Harassment (Sexual)	Threat / Intimidation
	Theft	Grand theft	Robbery
	Minor Vandalism	Vandalism of property greater than \$100 less than \$1,000	Vandalism exceeding \$1,000 of damage

Other minor infractions not otherwise indicated on matrix that interrupt teaching & learning	Giving false or misleading information	Any major misconduct that requires Law Enforcement action	Possession of weapons, drugs (controlled or prescription), alcohol, vapes, nicotine, or other drug or weapon-related contraband
		Trespassing	Unauthorized access to school structures without permission (burglary)
Level 1 offenses are classroom management offences and warrant parent contact.	Level 2 offenses will warrant a disciplinary action by the administration.	Level 3 offenses warrant dismissal from ICA.	Level 4 offenses warrant dismissal from ICA and potential expulsion by SLCSB.

### Policy SE 11.0 - Suspension

The School Administration has the authority to suspend students as appropriate. Suspensions last from one to ten days depending on the severity of the infraction, academic standing, and discipline history of the student. All suspensions will require a parent conference upon return to school. A conference will occur before the student is readmitted to class and expectations of the student moving forward will be clarified by all parties in the best interest of success, as part of our discipline matrix.

The ICA Board hereby determines that a student may be declared habitually disruptive after being suspended for 10 cumulative days in one year for causing a material and substantial disruption in the class, on school grounds, on school vehicles, or at school activities or events because of behavior that was initiated, willful and overt on the part of the student, and the suspensions were made for:

- Continual, willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority
- Willful destruction or defacing of school property (to include trashing restrooms, littering, and graffiti).
- Behavior on or off school property, which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel.
- Serious violations in a school building or on school property.
- Repeated interference with a school’s ability to provide educational opportunities to other students, including but not limited to habitual violations of technology, dress code, and school environment (SE) policies.
- Infractions involving the touching or harming of another person with intent. It is never appropriate to touch another student or adult in any manner for any reason. As part of our “zero tolerance” policy and expectations for a virtuous environment of self-governance and personal responsibility, hands on altercation will result in an automatic 5 to 10-day suspension per the discipline matrix.

ICA has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and has adopted the St. Lucie County anti-bullying policy as part of our code of conduct, effective October 2020. Bullying, whether physical, verbal, emotional, or cyber, will NOT be tolerated at ICA. A request to St. Lucie County Public School for expulsion\* ***will*** be mandatory for the following violations with ***no*** exceptions:

- Carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon, as determined by Independence Classical Academy.
- Possession, Sale or distribution of a drug or controlled substance.
- The commission of an act which, if committed by an adult, would be considered a felony act.

*When a student is considered a habitually disruptive student by Independence Classical Academy, or commits an egregious act, ICA may request the St. Lucie County School District Board of Education to expel\* the student from school.*

**\*St. Lucie County School District is the sole arbiter of expulsions. Independence Classical Academy may only recommend expulsion of a student to St. Lucie County School District. The expulsion process and proceedings will follow all St. Lucie County School policies that apply. When students are expelled, they are expelled from the St. Lucie School district, which includes ICA.**

### **Policy SE 12.0 - Plagiarism**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any subject. Students' progress academically *only* by receiving comments and corrections on work they turn in, and by taking these comments and corrections to heart to improve their performance. The entire system of assessment rests on the assumption that the work a student turns in is his own. Plagiarism compromises this system; it is unfair to other students in the class who do their own work and constitutes a form of theft of others' ideas and labor. Plagiarism is defined as the appropriation of another's ideas or words and presenting them as one's own. An instance of plagiarism can be as long as a term paper or as short as a sentence. Simply rephrasing an author's words can also constitute plagiarism. The words of authors can only be used when properly quoted and cited. Teachers will provide guidelines of acceptable citation. When in doubt, the student has the responsibility to ask how an author should be used in an assignment. Whenever a student has been caught plagiarizing, the following process will be followed.

1. The teacher will keep a copy of the student's assignment and, whenever possible, a copy of the plagiarized work. The teacher will also write a brief description of the instance of plagiarism. These materials will be placed in the student's permanent record.
2. The teacher will inform the administration of plagiarism.
3. Either the teacher or the administrator will inform the student's parent of the plagiarism.
4. The student will receive a zero on the assignment if it is the first offense.
5. For a second offense, the student will fail the entire course, and further disciplinary action, to include suspension or expulsion, may be instituted.

A disciplinary referral *will* be issued if plagiarism occurred. Students caught plagiarizing will

be ineligible for any awards or honors, regardless of overall academic outcomes.

### **Policy SE 13.0 - Cheating**

Like plagiarism, cheating will not be tolerated by any teacher in any subject. Cheating occurs when a student uses someone else's work or a prohibited source of information to gain an unfair advantage on a test or an assignment and to avoid doing his own work. Cheating comes in many forms. One student copying off another, a student using a "cheat sheet" to answer questions on a test, and a student trying to pass off another student's work as his own are examples of cheating. Whenever a teacher suspects two students of cheating, he should confront the students individually before speaking to them together. Otherwise, the same process outlined for plagiarism should be followed for instances of cheating. A student who allows others to copy his/her work without instruction will also be held accountable in the same fashion.

A disciplinary referral will be issued if cheating has occurred. Students who are caught cheating will be ineligible for any academic awards or honors, regardless of performance in other areas.

### **Policy SE 14.0 - Behavioral**

Students are expected to always be polite and attentive. Any other behavior is disruptive and will be cause for disciplinary action. Students should enter the building prepared to learn and enter every classroom quietly, respectfully, and prepared to engage in the lessons of the day. Students should respect adults, be reserved in their manners and kind in both words and deeds, and exceed the expectations of society in general, while attending ICA.

#### Classroom

Teachers have the authority to set their specific classroom rules and procedures within the parameters of the Independence Classical Academy handbook, including but not limited to hall pass policies, restroom policies, seating policies, and other classroom management policies-which are at the discretion of the faculty. The final decision with behavioral policy rests with the School Administration. Decisions by school administration may be appealed to the Governing Board, whose decision is final, according to the grievance policy set forth in this handbook.

Students should listen when others are talking and not interrupt, speak courteously and respectfully, follow directions, keep their body and objects to oneself, and not disturb others. ICA scholars are expected to respond to adults on campus using sir or ma'am out of respect for their position of authority.

When called upon in class, a student shall stand, push in his or her chair, respond, and return to their seats upon completion of the conversation. Students should always be attentive to the teacher and/or student speaker. Students shall not speak over one another, while the teacher or a peer has the floor, or with haste.

Students should spend the final minutes of each class period/day inspecting their personal learning areas and cleaning up after themselves to leave the classroom how they found it.

### Campus

Behavioral expectations apply whenever the student is on our campus, including before school, during recess, and after school.

In the hallways, students are expected to walk quietly and orderly. During lunchtime students are expected to act calmly and quietly while they enjoy their meals and relax. All students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves. At ICA, students who make extraordinary messes in the cafeteria, restroom, hallways, or other campus locations WILL be required to stay afterwards and clean up their OWN mess. This time is considered disciplinary in nature and any work missed will be ineligible for make-up work.

Parents/Guardians of students caught destroying property of ICA will receive an invoice for the repair and/or replacement of such damage. Any students with invoices not paid by the end of the year will not receive their final report card and/or schedule/class assignment for the following year.

### **Policy SE 15.0 - Student Network Use**

Independence Classical Academy recognizes the value of a network and internet access as a resource. We also recognize the need for supervision to protect our students. It is our goal to provide these services in as safe an environment as possible. Network access is a privilege, and all students are expected to practice proper and ethical use of these systems.

The use of these systems is monitored, without expectation of privacy, and subject to administrative and/or law enforcement review at any time. It is intended that these resources will be used to pursue intellectual activities in support of research and education where appropriate. Student emails are created by ICA and are also subject to review by the above entities at any time.

Independence Classical Academy does not assume responsibility for system failures that could result in the loss of data. Middle/High School students should use personal flash drives to save work in class.

### Electronic mail and social media

Students are not allowed unsupervised access to, or the use of personal electronic mail or social media accounts from school networks. Due to misuse, students at ICA are not issued school emails.

### Etiquette and Personal Security

During supervised classroom activities on the network, students are expected to observe the same standards of behavior as they do in the classroom.

- Be polite and courteous.
- Never reveal any personal information. This includes addresses, phone numbers, passwords, and credit card numbers.
- Do not reveal addresses, phone numbers, passwords, of any *other* student or member of the staff.

## **Policy SE 16.0 - Electronic Device Policy**

Electronic devices must be powered off and may not be used during the academic school day, including drop-off and pick-up times. This includes but is not limited to laptops, portable audio devices, head/earphones, hand-held video games, smart watches, and cell phones. Exceptions will be made for necessary medical devices and at the principal's discretion. Students have full access to the use of phones for the purpose of communicating with parents in the office and this privilege, while not permitted to be abused, will never be withheld. Classical education places an emphasis on knowledge-centered learning and the importance of digital devices is not necessary in carrying out that mission. ICA will very clearly indicate the significance and seriousness of this policy at all orientations, open houses, and town hall meetings.

Any student who is using a phone or other electronic device during the day will have that device confiscated until the end of the day. Parents will be required to collect the device and sign a form to acknowledge the consequences of such confiscation. If there is reason to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation, the device may be powered on and searched by school administration or school security.

Students who break this rule will be subject to disciplinary action. Once a device has been taken up, the following procedure will be used to return the device:

1st Confiscation: The device will be held until the end of the school day and can be picked up by the student or parent when school is dismissed.

2nd Confiscation: Will warrant discipline. The device will be held until the end of the day and can be picked up only by a parent who will be required to sign for the device.

3rd Confiscation: The device can be picked up after school has been dismissed and will warrant a 3-day suspension, depending on student standing, according to the discipline policy.

4th Confiscation: The device can be picked up after school has been dismissed and will warrant additional disciplinary action according to the discipline policy, including potential dismissal.

Independence Classical Academy is not responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of these items. It is important for families to remember ICA is a school of choice, and in choosing this learning environment for your student, you acknowledge our belief that passive learning has no place in school.

### **Policy on Dismissal of Students**

As provided for under Florida Law, INDEPENDENCE CLASSICAL ACADEMY, INC. (the "Academy") reserves the right to withdraw a student involuntarily for non-minor infractions of the Academy's Code of Conduct at any of its schools.

#### *Withdraw/Dismissal of Students for Violations of Code of Conduct*

An Administrator at the Academy school shall have the authority to recommend dismissal for a student from the program for any violation(s) of the Code of Student Conduct that is determined by the Administrator or Director to be non-minor in nature. Written notification shall be provided to the parent/guardian informing them that the student will be dismissed from the program, stating the reason(s) for the dismissal, stating actions taken by staff to assist the student prior to dismissal, and

providing information about their due process rights and right to appeal the determination as set forth herein. The notification must also establish whether the student will be eligible to reapply for enrollment at the Academy at a future date. The Academy shall notify the School District where the individual school is located (the "School District") of any recommendation for dismissal under this policy.

Any recommendation for dismissal, as well as any documentation supporting said recommendation, shall be submitted to a due process coordinator for review of compliance with this policy. Said coordinator shall be the Registrar of the Academy.

#### Process for Dismissal

Should an administrator at the Academy school recommend a student for dismissal, a hearing will be scheduled with the school's Disciplinary Review Committee (the "Committee"). This Committee will be made up of the Academy's Board Chair or Board Designee, members of the Academy's Administrative Staff, including an ESE staff member when necessary. A School counselor (for informational purposes only), and possibly the Academy's attorney, whose role will be to advise the Committee on the dismissal process, may also attend the hearing. The hearing will begin with the administrative staff stating the behavioral offenses committed by the student. The student, with their parent/guardian and/or representative, will be given an opportunity to address the allegations against the student. The Committee can ask follow-up questions to clarify items about the case. Once the discussions have concluded, the Committee will deliberate and decide whether to issue a dismissal from the Academy Program. The student along with their parents or representatives, will be notified of the decision at the conclusion of the deliberation.

Following the hearing, a dismissal will not become final until (i) the expiration of the window to appeal as set forth below, if the parent/guardian does not appeal, or (ii) the conclusion of the appeal. Upon a dismissal becoming final, the administration of the Academy school will refer the student to the School District for appropriate placement.

#### Offense Qualifying for Dismissal

A student may be dismissed for offenses that are deemed to be non-minor offenses of the Academy's Student Code of Conduct in effect for the current school year, by the Administration. Said offenses may include but are not limited to: Level 3 or 4 behaviors as well as repeated Level 2 incidents listed on the Academy's Discipline Code of Conduct.

#### Effect of Dismissal

"Dismissal" for purposes of this policy means that a student is involuntarily unenrolled from all schools operated by the Academy and will remain ineligible for re-enrollment.

#### Appeal Process

The parent/guardian of a student who has been notified that their student will be dismissed from the program must be given a period of five (5) days to submit a written appeal to the Governing Board of the Academy if they so desire. The appeal shall be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Governing Board of the Organization. Designated time for a hearing on the appeal shall be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Governing Board, or the Chairperson may call a special meeting to consider the appeal. The Governing Board should attempt to hold a hearing within ten (10) days following the submission of the parent/guardian's written appeal.

All members of the Governing Board must be provided with a copy of the parent/guardian's written

appeal in advance of the meeting. At the meeting, a hearing will be conducted on the dismissal. The parent/guardian has the right to have an advocate or attorney represent them at the hearing. The administrator recommending the dismissal, or his or her designee, shall be given 25 minutes to present pertinent facts and information about the decision. The parent/guardian, or his or her designee, shall then be given thirty (30) minutes to present additional facts and information for the Governing Board to consider. The administrator, or his or her designee, will then be given five (5) minutes for rebuttal.

Following the presentation by both parties, the members of the Governing Board may ask the parties questions, seek additional information, and discuss the issues amongst themselves. The Chairperson shall then call for a motion to either approve or deny the appeal. The appeal may be approved or denied by a majority vote of the Governing Board members present at the meeting. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson reserves the right to break the tie. The Governing Board also reserves the right to uphold but modify the terms of any dismissal by a majority vote, including whether the student will be eligible to reapply for enrollment at a future date. The decision of the Governing Board is final and may not be further appealed.

Within three (3) business days following the decision of the Governing Board, the Administrator shall issue a written notification to the parent/guardian communicating the decision of the Governing Board. A copy of the notification will be provided to the School District. If the Governing Board voted to grant the appeal and overturn the dismissal, the student should immediately resume participation in the program.

#### *Suspensions and Placement Following Recommendation for Dismissal*

The administration may suspend a student who has been recommended for dismissal for up to ten (10) days. The suspension may be extended beyond ten (10) days if such suspension period expires before the regular or special meetings of the Governing Board can be held if the parent/guardian appeals. Whenever possible, the Governing Board shall attempt to meet in a special meeting to avoid an extension of the suspension period.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a student with disabilities may *not* be suspended for ten (10) consecutive days or ten (10) total days during the school year if such removal would constitute a change of placement without having a Manifestation Determination Hearing, as set forth below. Thereafter, the student may be required to remain at home pending the outcome of the appeal, though the Academy must provide educational services to the student, including providing assignments so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals in the student's IEP and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

#### *Manifestation Determinations for Students with Disabilities*

The dismissal of a student with disabilities shall be handled only in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03312, Florida Administrative Code, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and other applicable laws. If the school's Disciplinary Review Committee and Governing Board through the appeals process approves a recommendation for dismissal for a student with disabilities, such approval shall be conditional upon the Academy conducting a manifestation determination meeting within ten (10) school days. The parent/guardian shall be notified of the decision in writing and shall be provided with the notice of procedural safeguards.

The manifestation determination team shall be composed of a representative from the Academy

District, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team (as determined by the parent and the Academy). The manifestation determination team will follow all procedures and requirements set forth in Rule 6A-6.03312. A student may not be dismissed from the program if the manifestation determination team finds that the conduct in question was a manifestation of the student's disability. In such a case, the Academy will implement all required measures in Rule 6A-6.03312.

If it is determined that the conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the administrator shall notify the parent/guardian of the Disciplinary Review Hearing that will take place within the 10 suspension days. If the Disciplinary Review Committee determines a dismissal is warranted, the parent/guardian shall have five (5) days thereafter to make a written appeal to the Governing Board.

#### Confidentiality of Student Information During an Appeal

At present under Florida's Sunshine Law, all appeal hearings relating to a dismissal must be open to the public if the parent chooses to have the meeting be public. The Governing Board may not go into executive session to consider an appeal under Florida law. However, the Governing Board and those people presenting during the hearing should be sensitive to the confidential nature of the information. In the initial notification regarding the dismissal, the parent/guardian should be fully informed that any hearing before the Governing Board to consider an appeal will be open to the public. The parent/guardian should be notified that their request for a hearing before the Governing Board constitutes consent to the disclosure of confidential information about the student at the hearing relevant to the Governing Board's consideration. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Organization shall protect the confidentiality of all education records that are considered as part of the appeal and shall not release such records to any person who does not have a legitimate educational interest or legal right to review such education records in accordance with Florida law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

#### Expulsions

A "dismissal" under this policy is not an "expulsion" as that term is utilized in the applicable Code of Student Conduct.

### **Policy SE 17.0 - Extracurricular Activities**

#### Attendance Required for Extracurricular Participation

Students participating in any school sponsored event must have attended school the day of the event, otherwise they will be disallowed from participating in the event. Additionally, students who are considered truant based on this policy manual may be disallowed from participating in any extracurricular activities sponsored by the school for the remainder of the year.

#### Extracurricular Activities

We encourage students to participate in as many extracurricular activities as they can reasonably manage, knowing that academics come first. Every member of a club or team has a responsibility to his or her teammates to show up on time ready to participate, and to remain in good academic standing, and to display Independence Classical Academy's core virtues as ambassadors for the school.

Extracurricular activities may charge a participation fee, and athletic events may charge a gate fee for matches. These funds will be used to pay for uniforms, equipment, instruments, fees for

invitationals, and other miscellaneous items. Tuition or other fees paid for these activities will not be refunded if participation is revoked due to truancy, disciplinary action, or other eligibility requirements.

Each coach or club leader will set rules by which each student must abide to participate, as well as establish fees for participation with approval from the school.

### **Policy SE 17.1 - Extracurricular Activity Eligibility (clubs & committees, not athletics)**

Our goal is to encourage students to prioritize academics, but not in a manner that deprives them of meaningful opportunities to compete and contribute positively to the school. Participation in extra-curricular activities is a privilege that is contingent on academic performance and good behavior, and students must maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA to be found or remain eligible for extracurricular activities at ICA. A special exception to the minimum requirement may be made for students eligible for IEP or 504 plans at ICA. Homeschool students are eligible to participate in athletics and clubs at ICA, and are held to the same standards of dress, attendance, GPA, and discipline expectations as ICA students.

Students who are out of school for the day of a scheduled school event are ineligible to attend. This policy reaffirms a commitment in ICA's belief that attendance in school is a priority.

### **Policy SE 17.2 - Off-site Extra-Curricular Activities**

All ICA off-site extra-curricular activities must be "registered" with the School Administration.

A list of all sanctioned Independence Classical Academy off-site extra-curricular activities will be maintained and updated by the School Administration and copies will be made available for ICA parents.

School sanctioned events held at the adjacent "*Life Center*" are not considered "off-site" due to the nature of our development agreement and lease terms. Some events, if outside attendance is permitted, may still require a permission slip due to limited liability issues, but private events hosted by the school and for the school are extended to include the Life Center.

### **Policy SE 18.0 - Student Social Activities**

All Independence Classical Academy social functions will have a faculty or staff sponsor and/or adult chaperones, minimum of one faculty member. There will be no ICA event outside the preceding guidelines.

### **Policy SE 19.0 - Dances**

Independence Classical Academy may periodically sponsor dances for students. Attendance is limited to those students who are enrolled with ICA, are achieving academically (as determined by the administration) and following the rules of conduct set forth by the school. Dances may be held separately for different age levels. Students are required to follow the rules and regulations of Independence Classical Academy while attending any dance. All Dress Code intent for modest

and acceptable fashion wear would apply.

### **Policy SE 20.0 - Student Publications**

Student publications must uphold Independence Classical Academy mission, philosophy, core virtues, and board policies. The purpose of such publications is to inform ICA's community of school-related events, achievements, and business. In addition, student publications are a way for students to learn and to practice responsible writing and journalism. Student editorials are permitted in the student newspaper subject to prior review of the School Administration. Employees of the school or parents may not use student media to proselytize their own views on controversial issues. The Administration acts as the final editor in all cases.

### **Policy SE 21.0 - Supervision of Students**

Students are to be always supervised while under the control of ICA. This includes the time students attend school, while away from the school on school-sponsored events, or while participating in extracurricular activities, such as clubs. Supervision will be provided 30-minutes prior and 30 minutes after the end of school during drop-off and pick-up times. Students may not be left alone without supervision at any time. Students left on campus without a plan after 3:00pm will be checked into the afterschool program and charged the drop-in rate.

### **Policy SE 22.0 - Photographs of Students**

#### Portraits

Independence Classical Academy will sponsor one formal portrait day for students. A company which best meets the needs of the families for a reasonable cost will be selected by school administration. These photos will be utilized for the creation of the yearbook in addition to being sold to the families. All students, unless explicitly instructed otherwise (via the opt-out form), are subject to being shown on social media, advertising for the school, and in our yearbook. Parents who wish to OPT OUT of photographing and publishing of their children should complete the "DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH OR PUBLISH" form at the beginning of the year, or request such a form during the year and return it directly to the front office (not to your child's teacher or in a backpack or communications folder) to ensure receipt.

#### Snapshots

Frequently throughout the school year school staff may take pictures of events that happen during the school day. Should a parent not want their child photographed in such a way, they must submit written notification of their request to the administration. This request will then be passed along to school staff. Snapshots may periodically be used for promotional materials for the school. Additionally, the school reserves the right to utilize such snapshots through electronic media which do not individually identify any specific student. If a parent or guardian requests the removal of such a photograph, the school staff will comply with the request within 24 hours.

### **Policy SE 23.0 - Philosophy of Sports**

Independence Classical Academy encourages and allows for participation in athletics by all

students at many levels of competition. It endeavors to teach positive character values to our students while they are engaged in the rigors of sport participation in a healthy team environment. The program seeks to promote mental, emotional, and social health in addition to the physical development necessary for an active life. Emphasis is given to the teaching of skills in diverse physical activities and educating students in the concept of fair play, cooperative effort, and the ability to handle stress. Athletics are competitive in nature and therefore have minimum standards.

Independence Classical Academy will strive to offer its students opportunities to participate in a variety of individual and team activities. The school shall provide the best quality coaching available and safe facilities to obtain this objective.

The student-athletes shall be expected to display exemplary citizenship and to maintain adequate progress in their academic achievements. A minimum GPA at the end of each semester, as required by FHSAA rules and bylaws (per individual sport information session and ICA athletic policy), is required for play in the next term. Each athletic coach will provide minimum expectations at the beginning of each sporting season.

All students are given the opportunity to be on the appropriate teams if they are eligible. The School Administration, or designee, will oversee finding and appointing coaches. Coaches are volunteers. The coach should have experience and background in the sport and support the school. It may be in the best interest of the athletes to not offer a sport if a qualified coach is not available.

Students are eligible to participate in an interscholastic extracurricular activity at another charter or their zoned public school if Independence Classical Academy does not offer that activity. Please check with the School Administration if you have questions regarding participating in district sports teams.

## **Policy SE 24.0 - Medical Policies**

### *Student Immunizations*

All students accepted by ICA are required to follow state programs mandating immunization against specific diseases unless an acceptable exemption is on file. Failure to comply with the state requirements will result in the students being unable to attend classes, and receiving unexcused absences, until proof of compliance is provided.

### *Administering Medications*

For those students who require medications, the parents must complete a medication form. All medication must be administered according to school procedures.

Students needing medication exchange from one household to another are required to sign the medication log with name/number or dose included in the prescription medication (MUST BE IN ORIGINAL BOTTLE) and signed out by the other parent on the same form. Medication being transferred will be housed in the locked medication area in the clinic until signed out.

OTC (Over the Counter) medications MUST be turned into the office with a note. Students may NOT have medications on them without express, written consent and a physician's note stating that they require the medication to be on them (i.e. EpiPen).

### Illness and Communicable Diseases

Students with contagious illnesses or communicable diseases shall not attend school. At the discretion of the Administration, a physician's note may be required for a student to return to class.

## **Policy SE 25.0 - Interviews, Interrogations, and Searches**

### Interviews and Interrogations

School administration will make every reasonable attempt to notify parents prior to permitting any person from outside the school, including law enforcement officials, to question or detain a student. ICA considers our onsite SRD (School Resource Deputy) part of Administration and is authorized to search backpacks of ICA students or visitors. He or she has the same authority as the School Administrator on all matters of campus safety. Under no circumstance will a student be questioned or detained without the presence of either a parent or school official unless deemed necessary by state-mandated reporting guidelines and/or School Administrator/SRD; the school having legal custody of the student during the school day and during approved extra-curricular activities must ensure that each student's rights are protected.

### Searches

All school property is under the control of the board and its officials. A search of school property (including, but not limited to lockers,) may be made at the discretion of school administration if a reasonable suspicion arises that those items considered illegal, disruptive, or a general nuisance to the educational process are being kept at the school.

### Detaining Students

School officials will detain a student if there is a reasonable suspicion that a student has drugs, narcotics, weapons, explosives, or other dangerous contraband in his possession, and if such possession constitutes a clear and imminent danger to the safety and welfare of the student, other persons, or school property. Further, school officials will notify parents and the appropriate law enforcement agency of illegal possession of such materials.

## **Policy SE 26.0 - Discrimination**

The Independence Classical Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, orderly, caring, educational and professional environment for its students and employees that is free of unlawful discrimination. ICA prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation), religion, disability, or age. ICA will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination in any of its educational or employment activities or programs. Any violation of this policy will be considered serious, and ICA shall promptly take appropriate action to address the violation.

Students, school employees, volunteers, and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. ICA expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination by students, employees, board members, volunteers, or visitors. "Visitors" includes parents and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors, and other persons doing business with or performing services for the school.

## **Policy 26.1 - Bullying and Harassment**

Bullying is prohibited against any student or any teacher for any reason.

Bullying includes any pattern of written or verbal expression, physical or electronic act or gesture, that is intended to coerce, intimidate, or cause any physical, mental, or emotional harm. Bullying is prohibited on school property, at school-sanctioned events, when students are being transported to or from school or a school-sanctioned event, and off-campus when it is reasonably foreseeable that the bullying conduct may cause a substantial disruption in the educational mission of the school or interfere with the ability of other school students to learn or be secure.

*ICA adopted the Bullying Policy of St. Lucie County School Board, effective January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021.*

Parents and students are expected to be their own advocates. Bullying cannot be prevented if the administration is unaware. Suspected bullying should be reported **at the time it occurs, or you are aware it has occurred**, so a proper investigation can be completed. This applies to students, teachers, and parents. At no time will ICA entertain complaints or accusations that are based on statements such as “this has been going on for months” or other similar statements. To effectively discipline, timeliness is just as important as being fair and just. It is critical for administration to get involved as soon as possible and to document evidence and collect statements from witnesses and/or victims. In addition, ICA will not entertain “anonymous” complaints, because they are impossible to investigate. At no time are social media outlets and anonymous complaints the appropriate way to handle these things. They **MUST** be brought to the attention of the school. We want ALL students to feel loved, accepted, and strong. We cannot address things that we are unaware of.

## **Policy SE 27.0 - Prohibition Against Firearms and Weapons**

In matters related to the possession of firearms or weapons, including pocketknives or other items as determined by the School Administration - students must abide by Florida law. If individuals are found to be in violation of the law, law enforcement will be notified.

Student participation in school sanctioned gun safety courses, student JROTC courses, Young Marines, Shooting Clubs, or other school sponsored firearm related events does not constitute a violation of this policy, provided the student does not carry a firearm or other weapon into any school, school bus, or onto the premises of any other activity sponsored or sanctioned by school officials.

## **Policy SE 28.0 - Textbook Policy**

Independence Classical Academy desires the best in learning materials for its students. Materials that are loaned or given to students are to be treated appropriately. Students are responsible for these materials. If materials given to a student are lost the student must pay for any needed replacement. If loaned materials are lost or damaged the student must also pay for its replacement. If textbooks that are not to be consumed are written in, students will be responsible for payment to replace the materials. Students with unpaid invoices for these types of damage at the end of the school year will have their final report card and future schedules

withheld.

In the case that reimbursement has not been made to Independence Classical Academy for lost or damaged materials. No further materials will be purchased or issued to that student until the past due fees are paid.

### **Policy SE 29.0 - Parent Communications to Administration, Faculty, and Staff**

Parents may use any of the following ways to contact/communicate with Administration, Faculty, and Staff of Independence Classical Academy:

- email
- note provided to Independence Classical Academy front office (a secretary will deliver to the appropriate box)
- voice mail
- face-to-face meeting (this must be scheduled in advance using one of the means above)

#### Useful Guidelines

\*For guidelines regarding the best person to contact please follow the chain of command.

School Administration: Due to the number of day-to-day responsibilities, they will respond in no more than 3 business days.

Administrative Staff & Faculty: Will make every effort to respond within 1 business day, and no more than 2 business days.

The Independence Classical Academy spam filter sometimes “junks” new addresses, so if you are not getting a response via email, please try one of the other means of communication.

Issues regarding student academic or behavioral concerns should be addressed with the appropriate teacher. If the teacher is unable to assist, please stop by the front office (or call) to schedule a meeting with the appropriate administrator.

### **Policy SE 29.1 - Parent Grievance Policy**

This school passionately believes that adults must be models of good character even in the most difficult situations. Should a parent have a grievance concerning a particular class or the administration of the school, that grievance should be resolved using the following chain of command. Issues that arise in a particular classroom should always be addressed to the teacher first since the teacher is most likely to have the most direct knowledge of the student.

1. Teacher. Parents should schedule a meeting with the teacher through the office. Under no circumstance is it ever acceptable for a parent to confront a teacher about an issue with students present, including his or her own.
2. Dean of Scholars. If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, and the matter regards student discipline, the parent should schedule a meeting with the

Dean of Students.

3. Principal or Director of Teaching & Learning. If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, and the matter regards academics or teacher concerns, the parent should schedule a meeting with the principal.
4. Executive Director. If grievance cannot be resolved after this, the parent should schedule a meeting with the Executive Director through Mrs. Predix @ [k.predix@icacharter.org](mailto:k.predix@icacharter.org)
5. Zero Tolerance. At **no** time should grievances or disparaging statements regarding ICA be aired on social media or other public platforms (including front office or parking lot conversations). The formal grievance policy is the **ONLY** acceptable method of communicating concerns at ICA. Violation of the grievance policy **will** result in the immediate forfeiture of your child's seat at ICA.

*Appeals to the Independence Classical Academy Board of Directors*

If resolution is not achieved by the foregoing process, two other options are available:

The grievance can be submitted to the Independence Classical Academy Board of Directors in writing. The Board will review the summary and will make one of the following decisions:

1. The Board may decide to support the previous decision.
2. The Board may appoint up to two Board members to address the issue.
3. The Board may address the issue in an open Board format.
4. The Board may address the issue in an executive session, in accordance with the Florida Open Meetings Law.

Parental concerns and grievances may also be raised during the public comment portion of the Board of Directors meeting. The concern or grievance must be submitted in writing to the Director of Operations operating as secretary to the board and no more than three minutes will be granted. Grievances or discussions involving specific personnel will not be entertained. It is recommended that concern or grievance be addressed in one of the steps above before using this option.

Grievances regarding specific school policy should be directed to the Executive Director or the Governing Board. Grievances regarding an administrator should be directed to the individual first, then in writing to the Board prior to a meeting.

**BOARD GREIVANCES SHOULD GO THROUGH THE PARENT LIAISON FOR THE GOVERNING BOARD (Barbara Cross [b.cross@icacharter.org](mailto:b.cross@icacharter.org)) WITHOUT EXCEPTION TO ENSURE THE BOARD IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED.**

In accordance with the Independence Classical Academy charter contract, all grievances must be resolved at the school level. Though ICA is *chartered* through St. Lucie County Public Schools, the district does have general oversight of school operations. Only violations of the amended

charter contract should be reported to St. Lucie County Public Schools. Final decision rests with the Board of Directors, but ICA remains a school of choice, and parents are not obligated to keep their child(ren) enrolled, should the resolution of a grievance not meet their standards or expectation, they are welcome to withdraw their child without notice and enroll them in another public, private, charter, or homeschool of their choosing.

### General Concerns/Questions/Suggestions

We recognize that ICA has set forth stringent academic, attendance, discipline, and accountability policies. The intention behind the rigorous standard is the need to rise to our mission of setting a new standard of excellence in education. We believe that students will rise to the occasion and accept the challenge and have fun doing it! However, in the unfortunate event that resolution is not achieved through the process outlined above, it is unlikely that Independence Classical Academy is the best educational option for you and your child. The Board of Directors will not entertain anonymous complaints, nor can they hold information in confidence when it is not in the best interest of the school or violate public records or sunshine laws.

### **Policy SE 30.0 - Volunteer and Visitors Background Checks**

All visitors and volunteers must enter the main office. Should they wish to go beyond the main office, a background check will need to be conducted, and a badge will be issued, identifying the visitor properly checked in through the office. It is the responsibility of all staff members to help police the halls to ensure that all visitors have properly checked into the office. Any individual who does not have an appropriate name badge must be walked back to the office to ensure they are signed in properly. Volunteers and visitors who wish to be on campus must apply to the front office to be cleared to do so by ICA through our Raptor clearing system, as well as having met the background clearance from the above referenced policy #10 above.

### Student Supervision Background Checks

If an adult plans to volunteer with students (such as coaching, field trip chaperones, student tutoring, etc.) the individual must complete a volunteer registration form. If the adult is responsible for student supervision (such as running an after-school club), the parent must go through an additional background check, the cost of which the parent is responsible for paying. The school conducts a complete background check to ensure the individual is clear of anything in their past which would prevent them from working with children. ICA is not required to inform volunteers of the reason for non-approval, as it is discretionary. Some volunteer circumstances require specific clearance, and more or less than other circumstances. Employees of ICA are not at liberty to discuss with anyone other than the volunteer/visitor applicant themselves the outcome of any decision regarding these clearances.

### **Policy SE 30.1 - Volunteer & Visitor Confidentiality Policy**

Volunteers often inadvertently have access to sensitive information. Any information about students, grades, faculty, etc. is to remain confidential. Volunteers may observe situations of a sensitive nature. These are also to remain confidential.

If a volunteer has a concern involving something that is witnessed, observed, or overheard it

may only be discussed with the faculty member, Administrator, or a member of the BOD. If a volunteer disregards this policy, the privilege of volunteering will be revoked.

### **Policy SE 31.0 - Chaperone Policy**

The number of chaperones for an event will be established prior to the occurrence of the event. No siblings or individuals other than assigned, cleared chaperones may attend the event. Fees for the event, if any, must also be paid by the chaperone and are due at the same time as the student's fee for the event. If fees are not submitted by the date due another chaperone will be chosen to fill the vacancy.

Chaperones must attend to assigned duties and model the Independence Classical virtues.

Violators of this policy will not be allowed to chaperone any future events. Chaperones are also bound to the volunteer confidentiality policy as well as the dress code policy.

### **Policy SE 32.0 - Dissemination of Information**

Any person responsible for coordinating any special classroom event must give appropriate information to the front office and go through the school for ALL such communication (example: a parent wants to coordinate a gift for a classroom teacher and get other parents to make it a group effort, invitations to a birthday party, etc...). It is *NEVER* appropriate to contact another parent via their social media or direct communication while on campus or other uninvited contact.

*At no time will ICA permit dissemination of information outside of our normal procedures. ICA offers a single Facebook page (Independence Classical Academy) for parents of currently enrolled students only. To keep tasks at a minimum and prevent duplication of information, we recommend parents who want up-to-date and accurate information call the school, email the appropriate staff member, reach out via the website, or follow our social media page. We will not monitor, respond to, or authorize other people to do so via social media. This is to maintain accuracy of information and keep staff tasks at a minimum. Thank you for your cooperation.*

### **Policy SE 33.0 - Mass Communication Policy**

School Administration or designee must approve all letters and bulletins, including e-mail (excluding class assignments by teachers) from teachers or parents or other interested parties. Each communication must be submitted to the office in an electronic format, print-ready, three days prior to the date it needs to be communicated. ICA is a family atmosphere that supports our community. If there is a community event that ICA can support, it must be approved through the school administration.

### **Policy SE 34.0 - Updated Records Requirement**

It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to keep the school office informed and up to date regarding any changes of names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc. so that important student information may be received from or provided to the parent/legal guardian in a timely manner for the benefit and well-being of the student.

Any parent without up-to-date information may risk losing their seat at ICA due to failure to respond to timely notices regarding enrollment and registration, as well as risk missing important safety and security messages/alerts that are disseminated via email, phone, or text.

### **Policy SE 35.0 - Carline**

The school will make every reasonable effort to ensure the safety of students and efficient movement during drop-off and pick-up. Students who self-release without a parent to pick them up will be released before the peak traffic of carline has started to move, to ensure their safety.

Use of cell phones is strictly prohibited in the carline to ensure safety of other vehicles, students, and staff.

### **Policy SE 36.0 - Intellectual Property**

Independence Classical Academy recognizes its right to secure intellectual property through copyright, trademark, and patent protections afforded under state and federal law. For this policy, intellectual property shall refer to creations of the mind, including but not limited to patents, trademarks, and copyrightable material which will be inclusive of the name ICA, Independence Classical, the Anglers name and logo, and the official crest of ICA.

Any parents or community members shall inform the Executive Director of Operations promptly if they wish to use the name, logo, or any references to the intellectual property of Independence Classical Academy. All uses must have prior written authorization. No person shall use the school's name or property to mislead the public to believe that events, social media, or website uses are school sanctioned. Any misuse of ICA's intellectual property may result in the revocation of any prior authorization to use it. Parents of community members using the intellectual property of ICA (name, logo, or likeness) will be asked to stop using it, and if not, legal action may ensue. It is the goal of the ICA Board of Directors to ensure ICA can operate smoothly and without interference. The misuse of intellectual property causes confusion and drives an unnecessary workload, as well as potential backlash the board will be required to address, therefore this policy was written to prevent such happenings.

Any web page or other communication published by a parent or community member shall not represent or purport to represent ICA. Any such web page or communication should clearly indicate that it is published by the individual. The following statement, in type font no size smaller than that used as the main body text or body of the message, is sufficient notice of non-representation:

**“This communication was created by [insert name of individual], who is solely responsible for its content. Independence Classical Academy and representatives for Independence Classical Academy (i) have not reviewed or approved the content of this message/site, and (ii) do not sponsor or endorse the content contained within these pages.”**

### **Policy SE 37.0 – Re-Enrollment of withdrawn students**

Effective for the 22/23 school year and beyond, the following policy additions have been made and approved by the governing board as of April 2022:

Students who are withdrawn from the Independence Classical Academy for failing to meet any of the following standards will NOT be eligible for re-entry:

- Academic standards (retention, promotion, & progress) according to policies AP 5.0, 7.0, & 8.0
- Attendance standards according to policies SE 1.0 and 2.0
- All campus environmental standards (behavioral, grievance, communications, etc..) according to policies SE 1.0-43.0

It would be understood that moving forward, if your child is withdrawn in lieu of a recommendation for expulsion or when forfeiture of seat appeal is heard and determined to be upheld by the governing board for failure to meet the standards of ICA, they would be ineligible for admission to ICA. All seat forfeitures will be immediately filled upon vacating the seat by the next student on the waitlist.

There are circumstances in life that are unavoidable, and often parents feel there may be a better fit than ICA for their student(s). In those cases, if parents withdraw their student while in good standing with the school, they would be eligible for readmission but would have to reapply and follow the same process as other new students seeking admission. This is a good stance as a school of choice allowing parental autonomy and choice.

Independence Classical Academy is a privately run, not-for-profit business operating for the welfare of our students, faculty, and staff. ICA is a school of choice. No students are assigned to ICA, and therefore enrollment is voluntary and at-will. As such, all policies in this handbook are to be adhered to in the strictest of manners, to allow for the successful operations of the school to achieve our mission and vision for the families we serve!

Any deviation from policy will not be tolerated, and as the policies within this handbook are approved by the Governing body of ICA, exceptions will not be made without dire extenuating circumstances.

ICA is a school of choice, anyone enrolled into this academy accepts that these policies meet the needs of your family and are choosing to abide by them willingly upon the start of each school year and further acknowledge that any violation of policies set forth in this handbook **will** result in the forfeiture of your child's seat within this institution, especially the grievance policy.

***Enrolling your student into this academy, you hereby agree that you have read and understand and will abide by all policies set forth in the Family Handbook while your child(ren) attend Independence Classical Academy.***

ICA does not issue printed handbooks. As part of our dedication to promoting personal accountability, all enrolling families are expected to research the school, take a tour to determine if the culture and classical model is the right fit for your child(ren) prior to enrolling and/or accepting a seat within the institution. Therefore, by completing registration, you agree that you have read the handbook and agree to abide by the rules within it and agree to use the formal grievance policy within these pages should any issues arise at ICA regarding your child or your family and the staff or instruction at ICA.

You understand that the Governing Board holds final decision-making authority in all matters related to ICA, and that the final decision made by the Board will be adhered to and accepted. NO paper copies of the family handbook will be provided, and an updated digital copy will be maintained on our website at [www.icacharter.org](http://www.icacharter.org) throughout the school year. No signature is required to be deemed acceptable by each family enrolled.

We encourage ALL families to attend the governing board meetings, held on the last Wednesday of each month, with a few exceptions due to holidays and school closures. The Board meetings are always posted on social media, kept on the website, and advertised via signage at the school for several days prior to the meeting. You may speak at any board meeting about any topic, as the meetings are public.

We thank you for trusting us with your child's education, and we will work together to produce the best experience possible! If you have something you can add to our campus or culture, please let us know.