

# Family Handbook

2021-22 Academic Year



## Home of The Anglers

Clay Becton, *Chairman (Seat 1)*

Art Cross, *Vice-Chair (Seat 2)*

Sandra Crouch, *Secretary-Treasurer (Seat 3)*

Debbie Kicliter-Kelley, *Board Member (Seat 4)*

Cathy Townsend, *Board Member (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

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

## Our Beliefs

- 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:
  - Value children as persons and therefore will regard them as full human beings;
  - Value the sacrifices made by those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces;
  - Value cultivating virtuous character and each citizen’s responsibility to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America;
  - Value personal economic liberty expressed through an altruistic, free enterprise economic systems;
  - Value the wisdom and life experiences of the senior citizens in our community;
  - Value the spirit of entrepreneurship, critical thinking, and the ability to question one another.
- 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.
- Schools should provide a safe, positive, highly organized setting with clearly defined expectations of performance, participation, and behavior.
- Effective character education and behavior models for the enhancement of academic programs.
- Teacher-led, knowledge-centered education rather than student-centered and assessment-driven education.

**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!***

## Independence Classical Academy Expectations of Conduct for all ICA Scholars

*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. -Heraclitus*

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.

Welcome to ICA!

Last year we established a vision of a school where teachers could teach, and students would learn. This will always be our primary vision and our mission encourages 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, and kind individual. Life is a balancing act and those individuals who are the happiest are those who learn to balance their vocation (taken from the Latin word “vox” meaning “voice” and the related word “vocare” meaning “to call”) with their avocation!

Thus, part of your 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 you to be the best version of yourself!

In this book, you will find information about the daily occurrences, rules and procedures here 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 believe in much 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 that ICA Scholars and in fact, everyone at ICA, must abide by, including visitors and parents. Remember, character 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 distracts a teacher from teaching and other students from 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 is to a great 2021-22 academic year!*

**Sandy Krischke**  
**Tamara Gavin**

*Executive Director of Operations*  
*School Principal*



### **Mascot:**

We have chosen the 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 truth, you will be free and have true liberty. This is the basic tenet of a classical, liberal arts education.

Inside of the logo, you will find a ***crest*** (*historically used to identify the wearer*). Our uniforms will have the crest on them with ICA above the crest. 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.

## ADMISSION POLICY

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The application of any eligible student who agrees or whose parent agrees for the student 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 of each school year, the Independence Classical Academy will accept pre-admission applications. If there are more applications than seats available, the school will hold a lottery in February.
- Waiting List Policy: A waiting list will be established using the lottery system whenever capacity is exceeded, 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 each school year to be included in the lottery.
- Notification of Acceptance Policy: Parents/guardians will be notified of their child's acceptance or placement on a waiting list by an official email from the Enrollment Office following the conclusion of the lottery.
- 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. 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.
- Age Requirements: Students five years of age on or before September 1 are eligible for entrance to kindergarten. Students who are six years of age on or before September 1 are eligible for entrance to first grade.
- Enrollment: Once students are enrolled in ICA they do not need to reapply, as long as the required annual letter of intent is received in the ICA office prior to our deadline each year.
- Siblings: Once a student is enrolled, a sibling of that student has priority for enrollment provided there is space available in the grade level needed.
- Proof of residency: For each applicant, parents will be required to provide proof of residency.

## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (ICA AFTER HOURS)

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ICA will not offer aftercare on campus for the 21-22 school year. ICA works with all providers who wish to come pick students up from campus upon dismissal. Students will be dismissed to the daycare of the parent/legal guardian's choosing by a representative from the aftercare provider under the supervision of ICA staff and faculty. ICA will be working with the Boys & Girls Club of SLC, who will work with our families to provide aftercare at their Westside Club for a nominal fee.

- ICA will offer athletic, music, and art programs after school as permitted for a fee.
- Westside Club participants will be eligible for a 2<sup>nd</sup> pick-up and transportation after club times end.
- Students not picked up within 30 minutes of school dismissal will be held in the office and supervised at a rate of \$1.00/minute per child.
- Students registered with ICA after-school programs/clubs must adhere to the rules/policies outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

# ARRIVAL TIME/DISMISSAL TIME

Punctuality and timeliness are important concepts for everyone to have.

Grade Levels	Building Opens for Breakfast	Instruction begins	Dismissal Times
K-8	7:30 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	2:33 pm (grades K-5) / 2:36 pm (grades 6-8)

- Early dismissal days will release TWO hours EARLY (12:33pm and 12:36pm, respectively).
- Students should be in their classroom and in a seat when instruction begins.
- Parents will note signage located at the beginning of the driveways and leading up to the drop-off/pick- up areas directing them where to drive to drop-off or pick-up their child.
- Parents of students: if you are arriving on campus at 7:55, 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 7:50 a.m.
- We also remind parents that we ask you not to go down the hallways to speak to teachers during the morning hours unless you have a pre-scheduled meeting. ICA teachers tutor and prepare for the day or have duty in the morning. When a parent “drops in” the teacher cannot give his/her full attention to the issue before them. Please be respectful of this time of day for all faculty.
- All students should be off campus by 3:00 p.m. unless registered in after-school programs or the child(ren) will be held in the office and supervised by staff at the rate of \$1.00/per minute per student.
- Breakfast is served for 30 minutes prior to school start time. Students desiring breakfast should arrive on campus by 7:30am to have sufficient time to eat and get to class on time.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACADEMIC PROGRAM POLICIES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
POLICY AP 1.0 - HONOR CODE .....	9
POLICY AP 2.0 - EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES .....	9
POLICY AP 3.0 - CURRICULUM GUIDANCE .....	9
POLICY AP 4.0 - GRADING POLICY .....	9
POLICY AP 5.0 - REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS .....	10
POLICY AP 6.0 - SCHEDULE CHANGES .....	11
POLICY AP 7.0 - PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS .....	11
POLICY AP 8.0 - GRADE LEVEL RETENTION .....	12
POLICY AP 9.0 - HONOR ROLL .....	12
POLICY AP 10.0 - FORMAT FOR STATE ASSESSMENTS .....	12
POLICY AP 11.0 - HOMEWORK POLICY .....	12
POLICY AP 12.0 - INSTRUCTIONAL TIME .....	14
POLICY AP 13.0 - SPECIAL EVENTS – PARTIES .....	14
POLICY AP 13.1 - SPECIAL EVENTS – GUEST SPEAKERS .....	14
POLICY AP 13.2 - SPECIAL EVENTS – FIELD TRIPS .....	14
POLICY AP 14.0 - EXTENDED FIELD TRIPS .....	14
POLICY AP 15.0 - TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES .....	15
POLICY AP 15.1 - HUMAN SEXUALITY .....	15
POLICY AP 15.2 - TEACHING EVOLUTION .....	16
POLICY AP 16.0 - STUDENT SERVICES .....	16

<b>SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES .....</b>	<b>17</b>
POLICY SE 1.0 - ATTENDANCE .....	17
POLICY SE 2.0 - TARDY/EARLY RELEASE .....	18
POLICY SE 3.0 - RELEASING A STUDENT FROM SCHOOL .....	18
POLICY SE 4.0 - ENROLLMENT .....	19
POLICY SE 5.0 - GRADE LEVEL PLACEMENT OF NEWLY ENROLLED STUDENTS.....	21
POLICY SE 6.0 - CLASSROOM PLACEMENT .....	21
POLICY SE 7.0 - DRESS CODE.....	22
POLICY SE 8.0 - STUDENT LEADERSHIP.....	24
POLICY SE 9.0 - PERSONAL HYGIENE.....	24
POLICY SE 10.0 - DISCIPLINE.....	25
POLICY SE 11.0 - SUSPENSION .....	26
POLICY SE 12.0 - PLAGIARISM.....	26
POLICY SE 13.0 - CHEATING .....	27
POLICY SE 14.0 - BEHAVIORAL.....	27
POLICY SE 15.0 - STUDENT NETWORK USE.....	28
POLICY SE 16.0 - ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY.....	28
POLICY SE 17.0 - EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.....	29
POLICY SE 17.1 - EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY .....	30
POLICY SE 17.2 - OFF-SITE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES .....	30
POLICY SE 18.0 - STUDENT SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.....	30
POLICY SE 19.0 - DANCES.....	30
POLICY SE 20.0 - STUDENT PUBLICATIONS.....	30
POLICY SE 21.0 - SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS .....	31
POLICY SE 22.0 - PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDENTS.....	31
POLICY SE 23.0 - PHILOSOPHY OF SPORTS .....	31
POLICY SE 24.0 - MEDICAL POLICIES.....	32
POLICY SE 25.0 - INTERVIEWS, INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES.....	32
POLICY SE 26.0 - BULLYING AND HARASSMENT .....	33
POLICY SE 27.0 - PROHIBITION AGAINST FIREARMS AND WEAPONS .....	33
POLICY SE 28.0 - TEXTBOOK POLICY .....	33
POLICY SE 29.0 - PARENT COMMUNICATIONS TO ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY, AND STAFF .....	34
POLICY SE 29.1 - PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS .....	34
POLICY SE 30.0 - PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING POLICY .....	36
POLICY SE 31.0 - VOLUNTEER AND VISITORS BACKGROUND CHECKS .....	37
POLICY SE 31.1 - VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY .....	37
POLICY SE 32.0 - CHAPERONE POLICY .....	37
POLICY SE 33.0 - DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION .....	37
POLICY SE 34.0 - MASS COMMUNICATION POLICY.....	38
POLICY SE 35.0 - UPDATED RECORDS REQUIREMENT .....	38
POLICY SE 36.0 - CARLINE.....	38
POLICY SE 37.0 - INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY.....	38

## **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, honest in word and deed, respectful of others, and will promote the same.*

### **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. Other classical subjects: Latin, art, and music
4. Auxiliary subjects: Foreign languages, Physical Education, technology and performing arts.
5. Extracurricular activities of any type as defined by the BOD, Director of Operations, and Principal.

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. The BOD and Principal will determine these instances, with the guidance of policy adherence by the Director of Operations. The principal will ensure that all content areas in the K-8 Core Knowledge Sequence are taught in grades K-8.

### **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 – Sufficiency (Competence)
- D – Insufficiency
- F – Failure to Obtain Competency

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

The grading scale as defined above is utilized for all students with the exception of kindergarten and first grade, which will use *A, B, C, and Needs Improvement (90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 69 and below=NI)*. Incompletes will only be given under special circumstances as determined by the principal. It is the responsibility of parents and students to remain informed of the student's 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 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.
- Progress reports or report cards will be available online quarterly.
- Once a semester, parent-teacher conferences will occur to discuss the student's academic progress.
- Parents can review student progress via online access to Independence Classical Academy's recordkeeping system (Skyward).

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 and the principal if there is no assignment/grade information for a particular academic assignment or course.

**Report Cards:** Student report cards are completed at the end of quarter. Final report cards will be available approximately two weeks after the end of the school year.

**Mid-term Reports:** Mid-term Reports are provided half-way through each quarter via our online family access system.

***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 CURCUMSTANCES.***

## **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, the principal, & parent/legal guardian.

## **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 written assignments. These assignments are due as posted in Skyward and will be evaluated.

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 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 principal.

In addition, students in grades K-2 ***must*** achieve mastery of the Riggs phonograms at the following **minimum** levels:

- Kindergarten: 60% of phonograms taught at the kindergarten level.
- First grade: 80% of phonograms taught at the first-grade level.
- Second grade: 100% of phonograms taught at the second-grade level.

Age is the second criterion for placement in a grade level at Independence Classical Academy. A student must fall within state guidelines to enter a grade.

### *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.

A student must attain a 2.0 GPA in core courses (English, history, math, science) to pass to the next grade level.

Students who make a C in a single class may re-take that class with the approval of the principal. A D in a single class may be a passing grade and may be awarded credit at the discretion of the teacher and principal. The student may be required to retake that class based on the recommendation of the teacher and Principal. Failing a core 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 principal.

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

The purpose of promotions and retentions 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 principal, and a parent/legal guardian.

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 the primary grades.

If retention is necessary parents/guardians who wish to appeal the decision for retention must first contact the principal. If parents/guardians do not accept the decision of the principal, an appeal may be made in writing to the Board. All appeals must be requested within two (2) weeks after the close of school.

At the discretion of the principal, a student may be required to complete remedial courses to matriculate, which may result in loss of elective opportunity.

The principal has the authority to waive any graduation requirement except those meeting the state requirements.

Once enrolled full-time, a student will not receive credit from any other institution without the prior approval of the principal.

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

K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students who receives all A's and B's in core subject areas will receive Academic Honor Roll, and K-8<sup>th</sup> students who receives all A's will receive Principal's Honor Roll.

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

State assessments will be administered using a paper and pencil format, and/or computerized based testing, depending on requirements of the state.

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board, in consultation with parents, and updated as determined appropriate by the Board.

#### **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 young 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 one's 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.

**Parents are not expected to “teach” material to students.**

#### Approximate Time Guidelines

In general, Independence Classical Academy attempts to assign approximately ten minutes of homework per grade level to students. While we strive to use these guidelines, we like to make clear that it is impossible to gauge perfectly how long an assignment will take a given child, as some students take longer to complete tasks than others.

The expected homework time allotment for each grade is as follows:

- Kindergarten- 10 minutes plus family reading time
- Grade 1 - 10 minutes plus family reading time
- Grade 2 - 20 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 3 - 30 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 4 - 40 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 5 - 50 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 6 - 60 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 7 - 70 minutes plus reading time
- Grade 8 - 80 minutes plus reading time

The designated times serve as guidelines and may vary depending on the work assigned on a given day, the schedule, the student’s organizational skills and study habits, and the nature of the assignments.

Students are expected to learn how to use their time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. Parents are expected to support their children in this endeavor. Advanced or honors classes may require additional homework time.

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.

#### 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.

Homework will not be sent home, nor will credit be awarded for any work done during periods of unexcused absence, or excused absences of 2 days or less. Adequate time will be provided to allow for make-up work.

In middle school, homework submitted one day late will receive 75% credit and two days late will receive 50% credit. Homework submitted more than two days late will not receive credit.

#### Make-up Homework

Please see Attendance Policy.

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

The primary focus of the school's staff and programs is maximization of student learning. While learning occurs because of extracurricular activities and as a result of non-structured interaction between students and staff, most learning occurs as a result of planned learning activities during class time. Therefore, every effort will be made to minimize disruptions in instructional time. Public address 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 principal or school administrator 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 by the principal or school administrator **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 principal or school administrator. The screening may include an interview of the guest by the principal 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 student 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 principal or designee two weeks prior to planning. The field trip planner will work with the field trip coordinator to ensure that all procedures are followed.

### **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 administrators 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 increases 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.

The field trip planner will work with the field trip coordinator 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 (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 the elementary school even if part of the CK sequence, without principal approval.

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

We believe parents own 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 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 at the younger level. We respect each individual family and their own values and resign any teaching of this content in terms of morality, spirituality, and emotions to our respective parents, not ICA faculty.

#### Teaching Human Sexuality

We will teach the Core Knowledge Sequence in the fifth grade, which includes a discussion on the reproductive organs and reproduction. Parents will have the opportunity to preview the materials the class will be reading, on which the discussion is based. Parents will also have the opportunity to attend a meeting with the teacher(s) prior to the section on sexuality. Sexual intercourse will only be discussed in the context of a monogamous relationship between two people of opposite sexes. Parents will have the choice of having their children opt out of this portion of the 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. When in doubt over the teaching of an issue, the teacher should always consult the principal.

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.

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 teach 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 offered.

Independence Classical Academy provides in-class accommodations, pull-out tutoring, and resource time for students with special needs. We also contract with providers for therapeutic services (occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, counseling) that the school cannot offer on its own.

When a child with special needs is considering enrolling 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 staffing specialist 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.

Independence Classical Academy's student services program rests on three pillars of instruction: explicit phonics instruction, arithmetic skills, and organization. Since classroom time is crucial for all students to develop these skills, student services will create and lead resource class time for students who need extra help. 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. A 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, please call the front office to make us aware of the situation. It is critical to student 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.

Teachers will allow students to make up work for **excused absences only**, though these days will still count against the total of days in class. Absences will be excused for religious observances, court appearances, illness, and other reasons required by law.

#### 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 principal 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. The school may impose a maximum leave of absence granted in any one year, which may vary across the school divisions.

Regular attendance is important to ensure achievement in school. We discourage 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 student and teacher to make prior arrangements to meet that requirement.

The attendance goal of ICA is 95%. To receive credit, a student cannot miss more than 10 days each semester, 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 more than four unexcused absences in one month or ten days in any semester, the student may be classified as habitually truant according to ICA policy and need 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 parents 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 will require suitable proof of excused absences, including written statements from medical sources. *Make-up work will **not** be provided to students missing class/school due to disciplinary action.*

### 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 missed 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 the assignment the day of 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.

Upon returning from extended absences the attendance clerk will notify the faculty when the 1st day assignments are due for the student. A copy of the information given to the faculty will be given to the student.

### **Policy SE 2.0 - Tardy/Early Release**

Each tardy or early release prevents students from engaging their classes appropriately. In order to get the most from class, students must begin and end on time.

Three (3) tardies or early release make one absence. These may be excused, but the total number does count against the twenty (20) absences a student may accrue before losing credit. Refrain from early sign out 30 min prior to dismissal as an early release is equivalent to a tardy.

### **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 unless parents have signed them out in the 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.

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 Principal 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 a number of 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 in 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.

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 requirement.
- Having been expelled from any school district the preceding twelve months.
- Having engaged in behavior in another school during the preceding twelve months that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel.
- 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 in the registration office.
- 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.

**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 parent applied for their child.

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 an opening offered to their child, that child's name is withdrawn from the application pool and the parent(s) may choose to reapply later.

If a student is offered a seat into ICA after August 1, the parent or guardian must respond within 48 hours or that child's name is withdrawn from the application pool. The parent or guardian may choose to reapply to be put back into the application pool.

ICA will not discriminate in recruiting 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 principal.

### 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 student currently enrolled in ICA will receive a letter of intent asking if they are planning on returning the following year and if so, how many siblings they would like to enroll. This information helps determine how many seats are available for the lottery. Failure to return the letter of intent by the deadline may result in the loss of a student's seat for the following year. This step is NOT the registration for the following school year. Additional steps must be taken to secure a seat for the following year.

All currently enrolled students must be re-registered between April 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> for the next school year. A student is not fully registered until this step is complete.

Independence Classical Academy will notify currently enrolled families of the registration process via e-mail and in writing via the ICA newsletter at the end of each school year. 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 and fails to notify the admissions director, the seat will be offered to the next person on the wait list. The parent may choose to have the student's name added to the bottom of the wait list.

### 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. Parent/Legal guardian's failure to respond to the Registration office and/or provide required documentation by the deadline set forth by ICA, will mean voluntary forfeiture of the seat.

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

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 are found to be reading more than one grade level behind their existing peer group, they may be required to enroll in the grade level deemed appropriate by the principal.

### **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 to the enrollment coordinator for a specific classroom

environment for their child by using the classroom placement form, which can be obtained from the office. 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, balance of boys and girls, friendships, availability of volunteers, diversity of student achievement, etc., to assist in determining classroom assignments in order to provide a fair and common education for all students. Classroom assignments must be approved by the principal.

## **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.

### PE Dress Code

All students who participate in PE will need to dress in PE uniform only on PE days.

- A short- or long- sleeved ICA physical education t-shirt (with logo) in light gray.
- Navy athletic shorts (with ICA logo).
- Shorts must adhere to the same length requirements as the school dress code policy states.
- Shirts should not be tight-fitting.
- Shoes should be athletic style shoes (sneakers).

In cooler weather students may opt for:

- Solid-colored navy or gray sweatpants or sweatshirts with logo
- Solid-colored navy or grey sweatshirt with brand no larger than a quarter logo
- Shorts must adhere to the same length requirements as the school uniform policy.
- Shirts may not be tight-fitting.
- Shoes should be athletic tennis shoe style.

### 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 School Administration for hardship. Upon request, reasonable accommodations in the Dress Code Policy shall be made for students with disabilities, religious convictions which conflict with the code, or otherwise at the discretion of the Administration. Specific questions can be directed to the front office, and the School Administrator will make ultimate decision on permissibility. Complete Dress

Code is found below, but the minimum adherence expected is:

#### All Students

- No logos, prints, or words other than the official ICA logo are allowed;
- No cargo pants or cargo shorts are allowed;
- Shirts should be tucked in;
- Belts should be worn with all pants and shorts in 3rd grade and up. Belts should be solid black or brown. Students in grades K-2 who choose to wear athletic uniform OR are wearing standard uniform style shorts/pants with no belt loops are exempt from the belt code. However, if pants/shorts have belt loops, then students *must* have a belt to meet dress code at *all* grade levels;
- Students must be neat and tidy in appearance at all times;
- Socks should be white, black, or navy in solid colors (no prints);
- Pants/Shorts/Skorts must be either navy blue **or** khaki/tan ONLY. No other colors/patterns.
- Shoes must be closed-toe, close-heel, rubber sole, and no heels higher than 1 inch. Shoes should not be brightly colored, and must be in basic colors (i.e. navy, white, gray, brown, tan, or black); Shoes may have small stripe or logo if necessary, but should not have patterns (i.e. checkered, leopard print, etc.);
- No hats are allowed inside the school (winter hats for outdoor use only during winter months);
- Jackets/fleece/sweatshirts may be worn to school but must be removed prior to entering the buildings unless it is an ICA approved uniform outerwear item. For safety and security reasons, **no hoodies are permitted to be worn on campus indoors OR outdoors;**
- No visible tattoos/body art or piercings, other than stud earrings for girls.
- No gauge earrings are allowed; no dangling earrings are allowed; all other visible piercings must be removed during school;
- Jeans may not have rips or tears, be acid-washed or colors. Traditional, denim color, 5 pocket jeans only will be permitted. Some “bling” on rear pockets for girls are permitted. Jeans for both boys and girls should be blue denim only, NOT black;
- Button up, Oxford style shirts (long or short sleeve), or polo shirts with ICA logo must be worn with jeans, as to not create too casual of an appearance in dress while at ICA. No polo style or t-shirts may be worn with jeans unless it is a school spirit day;
- Boots should be standard, low heel, traditional work-style cowboy boots. No heels, spurs, or adornment permitted;
- Students in grades K-2 will be permitted (not required) to wear athletic gear daily. Athletic shorts are elastic waist, and do not require a belt. Students should have shirt tucked in and wear traditional tennis style sneakers. Upper grades (3-8) may wear PE uniform ONLY on designated PE days;
- NO “holster style” belt clips permitted (i.e. for pocketknives, multi-tools, phone cases, etc...) at ICA;
- No earbuds, smartwatches, or other Bluetooth enabled devices are permitted at any time;
- Undergarments should not be visible during school hours at any time including school events and fieldtrips.

#### Boys

- Shorts must be no higher than 3” above the knee, and not fall below the knee;
- Hair should be neatly styled; hair color should be natural and not distracting;
- Belts should have standard buckle.

## Girls

- Shorts must be no higher than 3” above the knee;
- No skirts, dresses, or jumpers will be permitted at ICA; Skorts are permitted. Skirts with built-in shorts underneath are considered skorts, and thereby permissible.
- No jeggings or leggings will be permitted at ICA;
- Capri style uniform pants are permitted, but may not be “jeggings” style;
- No make-up in grades K-5th. Make-up, when used for middle school should be natural looking;
- Hair should be neatly styled. Hair color should be natural and not distracting;
- Belts should have a standard buckle.

### Spirit Wear

Spirit Wear is not part of the school uniform but can be worn outside of school to show support for the school. Volunteers will often wear Spirit Wear when serving at the school. Spirit Wear can be purchased by parents and supporters of Independence Classical Academy through **our vendor at specific times of the year**. Sweaters, jackets, and other outerwear will be available to order prior to start of school and throughout the school year at specific times. ICA hats are considered spirit wear.

### Backpacks, Book Bags, and Lunch Boxes

Backpacks, book bags, and lunch boxes are not considered to be a part of the school uniform. However, they are expected to be clean, in good condition and appropriate for a school environment. Backpacks and bags shall not include any items which detract from the school’s orderly and disciplined environment. Nothing is permitted to dangle from or be attached to backpacks or lunchboxes at ICA.

### 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 provider locally. Our vendor does NOT allow uniform pieces to be brought in to be embroidered with our logo. This is cost-prohibitive and time consuming as we are priced for bulk ordering.

### Volunteers

Volunteers should 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.

### **Policy SE 8.0 - Student Leadership**

Any student leader must demonstrate high moral character and be in good academic standing with a minimum 2.5 GPA for leadership positions.

### **Policy SE 9.0 – Personal Hygiene**

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 clean a child up 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.

## 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.

**Any departure from proper decorum is liable to disciplinary action.**

### Disciplinary Action

Students will be verbally corrected for minor instances of poor behavior. If the behavior is repetitive or serious, they will receive Poor Behavior Slips describing the infraction. Students will bring these home to be signed by parents and returned to the front office.

Students may receive detention in conjunction with the Poor Behavior Slip. Detention will occur after school and will not be used for study time. Detention takes precedence over any extracurricular activity. For habitual or more serious disruptions the student will be sent to the Office and will receive a Pink Slip.

### Pink Slips

Referrals are hereby termed as “pink slips” for ease of recognition at ICA. Pink Slips are reserved for serious disciplinary infractions or habitual disruption, where the school administration should be involved, or notification of parents is required. They will be handed out by the discipline officer, and they will accumulate over the course of the year. A student’s total will not reset at the semester. Receiving a Pink Slip indicates that a student’s behavior is a serious problem and earning repeated Pink Slips will result in more serious consequences each time. It is our hope that the consequences for receiving a Pink Slip will encourage students to display good character and act in accordance with the school mission.

**1st Pink Slip:** Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Student will receive detention.

**2nd Pink Slip:** Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Student is sent home for the remainder of the day and will receive a detention to serve upon his or her return.

The student’s parent(s) will meet with the discipline officer to discuss the student’s behavior. The purpose of this meeting is to exchange accurate information about the student and to determine how the school-parent partnership can best work together to reform the student’s behavior. Depending on the infraction, suspension is possible at this level, but not mandatory.

**3rd Pink Slip:** Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Will receive a suspension period. Upon the student’s return, a parent may be required to accompany the student to class for one full day to observe the school day.

**4th Pink Slip:** Student is sent to the Office, calls home, and receives a mandatory multi-day suspension. The administration will consider further suspension and/or expulsion\* as fitting consequences.

A two-day to five-day suspension will be given for every disciplinary referral over four. When a student is issued over four referrals, he or she will be considered a habitually disruptive student by Independence Classical Academy. If a student is issued four or more disciplinary referrals, Independence Classical Academy may request the St. Lucie County School District Board of Education to expel that student from school. Any student expelled from ICA would also be expelled from the St. Lucie County School District.

## **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. All suspensions will require a parent conference. A remedial student discipline plan will be created during this conference. The conference will occur before the student is readmitted to class. The School Administration may require the parent to attend (as a volunteer without credited hours) a full day of class with the student upon return.

The ICA Board hereby determines that a student may be declared habitually disruptive after being suspended three times 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
- 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 continual violations of technology and dress code 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.

A request to St. Lucie County Public School for expulsion from Independence Classical Academy, will be mandatory for the following violations\*:

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

Recommendation for expulsion is also mandatory if a student is declared habitually disruptive, regardless of the level of infractions.

*\*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. Student's 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, 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 present 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 the 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 the plagiarism. These materials will be placed in the student's permanent record.
2. The teacher will inform the principal of the plagiarism.
3. Either the teacher or the principal will inform the student's parent of the plagiarism.
4. The student will receive an F 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 has occurred. Students caught plagiarizing will be ineligible for any awards or honors.

### **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 in order 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 plagiarism has occurred. Students caught cheating will be ineligible for any awards or honors.

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

Students are expected to be always polite and attentive. Any other behavior is disruptive and will be cause for disciplinary action.

#### 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, gum chewing, and other classroom management policies-which are at the discretion of the faculty. 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 sent forth in this handbook.

Students should listen when others are talking and not interrupt, speak courteously and respectfully, follow directions, keep one's body and objects to oneself, and not disturb others.

When called upon in class, a student shall stand, push in his or her chair, respond, and return to their seats upon completion of classroom conversations. Students should always be attentive to the teacher and student speaker.

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. Any parents 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 of 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 an 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 School research 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. Students will have school-generated email accounts that are monitored.

### 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. This includes but is not limited to laptops, portable audio devices, head/earphones, hand-held video games, and cell phones. Exceptions will be made for necessary medical devices and at the principal's discretion. Students in need have full access to the use of phones for the purpose of communicating with parents in the front office and this privilege, while not permitted to be abused, will never be withheld from a student. Classical education places an emphasis on knowledge-centered learning and the importance of digital devices are 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. The policy will be listed on our website as well as in this handbook.

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 for 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 a pink slip and require a 30 minute after school detention. 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 pink slip according to the discipline policy.

4th Confiscation: The device can be picked up after school has been dismissed and will warrant a pink slip according to the discipline policy.

Confiscations beyond four will result in additional disciplinary action and, if necessary, recommended expulsion from school. 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 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 extra-curricular activities as they can reasonably manage, knowing that academics comes 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 invitational, 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 in order to participate, as well as establish fees for participation with approval from School Administration.

### **Policy SE 17.1 - Extracurricular Activity Eligibility**

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 extracurricular activities is a privilege that is contingent on academic performance and good behavior and students must maintain a minimum of a 2.5 GPA to be found or remain eligible for extracurricular activities at ICA.

Students with either two Ds or one F at the beginning of the week cannot participate in that week's activities. They may still practice at the discretion of the coach or club leader. Teachers will make a reasonable effort to grade assignments before Monday, but this will not be possible in all cases.

Students who receive a pink slip will be ineligible to participate in activities the following week. This will roll-over into the next activity if the pink slip is received in the last week of a season. Students who receive two pink slips will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the rest of the season.

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 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 at St. Peter's.

### **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 principal) 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. Parents are encouraged to attend as chaperones and must be *approved volunteers*.

### **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 are attending school, while away from the school on school-sponsored events, or while participating in extracurricular activities, such as clubs. Supervision will be provided for 30-minutes prior and 30-minutes after the end of school. Students may not be left alone without supervision at any time. Students left on campus without a plan after 3:00pm will be sent to the office and supervised by ICA staff/faculty at the rate of \$1.00/per minute, per child until signed out.

### **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 staff. 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 48 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.

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.

All students are given the opportunity to be on the appropriate teams if they are eligible.

The School Administration, or designee, will be in charge of 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 public school if Independence Classical Academy does not offer that activity.

Please check with the School Administration if you have questions regarding participating on district sports teams.

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

### Immunizations of Students

All students accepted by ICA are required to follow state programs mandating immunization against specific diseases unless 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.

### 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 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 - 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 advocate. Bullying cannot be prevented if administration is unaware. Suspected bullying should be reported at the time it occurs or are aware it has occurred, so an 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 it 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.

## **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 military or JROTC courses, 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 damages at the end fo 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 best person to contact please follow 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: Will make every effort to respond within 1 business day, and no more than 2 business days.

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 addresses 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 own.
2. Principal. If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher, and the matter regards discipline, the parent should schedule a meeting with the principal.
3. Director of Operations. If the grievance cannot be resolved with the principal, the parent should schedule a meeting with the Director of Operations.
4. Zero Tolerance. At **no** time should grievances or disparaging statements regarding ICA be aired on social media or other public platforms (including front office conversations). The formal grievance policy is the **ONLY** acceptable method of communication 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 determinations:

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 the concern or grievance be addressed in one of the aforementioned steps before using this option.

Grievances regarding policy should be directed to a Board Member. 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 REPRESENTATIVE & BOARD LIAISON KACEY PREDIX at [k.predix@icacharter.org](mailto:k.predix@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 not 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 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.

Independence Classical Academy offers a unique leadership model to more effectively control our institution and allow for excellence. ICA will utilize two leaders, whereas the Director of Operations will take on business matters, board related agenda items, administrative issues, parent grievance issues (unless grievance is with the Administrator, in which case an appeal to the Board can be made through the Liaison), and all non-instructional issues (including but not limited to finance, facilities, maintenance, campus security, non-instructional personnel, etc.). This is done intentionally to allow the School Principal to focus on student success and teacher development, the two key components in leading our institution to greatness. The school principal being able to remain focused on improving our academic success through disaggregation of data and new methodologies in classical learning is a unique yet successful model. The two leaders will work together to coordinate efforts between SAC, PTO and other Ad Hoc boards and committees for sound policy and budget recommendation to the board for the betterment of ICA.

## Policy SE 30.0 - Parental Involvement and Volunteering Policy

Independence Classical Academy rests on a partnership between the school and families who choose to enroll their students. Volunteering is a crucial element in that partnership. ICA relies on volunteers during carline, at lunch, recess, in the classroom, and in other events sponsored by the school. ICA has numerous needs that can be met by volunteers and corporate donations (such as landscaping and pressure washing) as well. All families are required, as stated in the approved charter application between SLC School District and ICA, to complete 10 hours of volunteer hours per family annually. Any families unable to complete the required hours of service should contact the from office no later than December 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss options that may be available to avoid forfeiture of your seat at ICA.

The classical model of education prioritizes the role of the teacher in the classroom, direct instruction, and Socratic conversation. For these reasons, the school's volunteering needs are primarily in assisting teachers in their administrative and supervisory tasks. Many teachers will request help in preparing materials, grading papers, organizing events, and other class projects that working parents can easily manage.

The school also seeks qualified and interested parents to help sponsor clubs, coach athletics, chaperone activities, and assist the school in developing a culture of respect and responsibility.

Volunteer responsibilities:

- 1) Volunteers are an integral part of ICA. Volunteers are not only welcome, but also crucial if we are to have high quality teaching of the entire curriculum each year. Grammar school volunteer activities are coordinated through individual teachers and with the help of the PTO's volunteer committee.
- 2) Volunteers set the tone of the school in the same way that teachers do. Therefore, volunteers are required to dress in the spirit of the uniform policy, which is to diminish distractions, develop a proud school culture, and elevate the tone of school. Volunteers who do not conform to these guidelines will be asked to change clothes. Similarly, volunteers should not use their cell phones in front of students for communication not related to the activities of the school.
- 3) The teacher has the primary responsibility for student learning in the classroom and the teacher's individual teaching style sets the tone for the classroom. Volunteers who wish to volunteer in the classroom need to learn the teaching style of the teacher they wish to assist. If the teaching style conflicts with a volunteering style, the volunteer will need either to adjust their style or find a more compatible setting within ICA to volunteer.
- 4) Any grievance or concern a volunteer has with a classroom or a teacher will be handled by the procedures defined in this handbook. Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCE** is it ever acceptable for a volunteer to confront a teacher about an issue when students are present or in a venue in which students may overhear or see such confrontation, or initiate "impromptu" conferences by just chatting with teachers, staff, or administration while volunteering, outside of a scheduled meeting.
- 5) Volunteers who will tutor in a specific subject or skill may be required to receive prior training.
- 6) Off-site volunteers must be registered to ensure the safety of all ICA students. NOTE: If your student participates in off-site school related activities for which you would like to volunteer, you are responsible for confirming that the event has been sanctioned by the school and following all volunteer protocols.
- 7) ICA encourages every adult—parents, stepparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and community members—to take a special interest in the lives of ICA's students, to act as mentors and tutors, and to instill in every student a love of learning. Volunteers work in conjunction with the faculty to ensure the most effective education possible for their children. To this end, volunteers are responsible for knowing and understanding the contents of ICA's Charter and are encouraged,

- but not required, to participate on school committees and provide other volunteer services.
- 8) Volunteers are never permitted to photograph students other than their own while on campus.
  - 9) Volunteers may be removed for conflicts of interest or violation of confidentiality. Volunteering is a privilege. The privilege of volunteering may be removed by the School Administration if it is believed to be in the best interest of the school.

### **Policy SE 31.0 - Volunteer and Visitors Background Checks**

All visitors and volunteers must enter through the main office. Should they wish to go beyond the main office, a background check will 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 who wish to complete service hours on campus must apply to the front office to be cleared to do so by ICA through our Raptor and CCIS systems.

#### *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 will be 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 the complete background check to ensure the individual is clear of anything in their past which would prevent them from working with children.

### **Policy SE 31.1 - Volunteer 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, Principal, Administrator, or a member of the BOD. If a volunteer disregards this policy, the privilege of volunteering will be revoked.

### **Policy SE 32.0 - Chaperone Policy**

The number of chaperones for an event will be established prior to the occurrence of the event. This number will be strictly adhered to.

No siblings or individuals other than assigned chaperones may attend the event. Fees for the event 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 must 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 33.0 - 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 officiates a single Facebook page (ICA Anglers) for parents of currently enrolled students only. In order 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 persons 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 34.0 - 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 35.0 - 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 36.0 - 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 after the peak traffic of carline has settled, to ensure their safety.

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

### **Policy SE 37.0 - 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 the purpose of 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 schools name or property to mislead the public to believing 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.”

### Handbook Approval

Reviewed and Approved by:

*Clay Becton*

*07/01/2021*

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Board Chair, Independence Classical Academy

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Date

***\*Parent/Guardian will be required to sign in receipt of this Handbook and return to front office for student files upon start of each school year. Back page has signatures by both students (grades 6-8) and parent.***

Handbook Certification

I hereby certify that the enclosed 2021-22 Family Handbook was reviewed by the School Advisory Council (SAC) and contains all recommended changes by that Committee. The policies within the handbook were reviewed and approved by the Governing Board at a regularly scheduled and publicly held meeting on **June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021**. Policy adoptions were recorded in the meeting minutes and were ratified by the board prior to the printing of this handbook.

*Sandy Krischke*

*07-01-2021*

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Executive Director of Operations (Secretary to the Board)

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Date)

## 2021-22 Handbook Acknowledgement

Independence Classical Academy is a private, 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 students of Fort Pierce! 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. As a voluntary school of choice, I accept that these policies meet the needs of our family and I am 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 my child's seat within this institution.

By signing below, I hereby agree that I have read and understand and will abide by all policies set forth in the 2021-22 Family Handbook while my child(ren) attend Independence Classical Academy. By returning this page, I am agreeing to abide by the grievance policy should any issues arise at ICA regarding my child or our family and the staff or instruction at ICA. I 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student #1 Signature (grades 6-8 only)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student #1 Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student #2 Signature (grades 6-8 only)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student #2 Printed Name

**\*\*PLEASE SIGN AND LEAVE WITH SCHOOL OR RETURN TO FRONT OFFICE THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL\*\***

RECEIVED BY (Stamped):