



DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL

Vision:

An inclusive community that nurtures how to think, not what to think – one child at a time.

Mission:

Discovery Charter School will foster in its students the passion and curiosity necessary for lifelong learning. Students will develop the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and **excel academically**. Through an integrated, **place-based education**, our students will become **stewards** of their environment and **community**.

Keys to our Mission:

Excel Academically: Inspire and support each student to reach their fullest potential.

Place-Based Curriculum: An educational approach which incorporates local and regional partnerships to develop a sense of community and a student's place in it.

Stewards: Students are given the knowledge to become active caretakers for our communities and environment.

Community: Staff, students, families, and the spaces around us.

ENGAGE. *Discover*. GROW.

2023-2024
Student Handbook

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Note: Throughout the Parent-Student Handbook Discovery Charter School may also be referred to as “Discovery” or “DCS”.

Discovery Families,

On behalf of the board of directors, it is our privilege to partner with you in the education of your child(ren). We know what an exciting, stressful and exhilarating time that each new school year brings for our students and families. Discovery has provided a well-rounded education to our Kindergarten - 8th grade students since 2010 and we are excited to continue our record of excellence with the 2023-2024 school year.

The Board of Directors is committed to keeping our mission and vision at the forefront of our decision making. We commend Principal Weller and our dedicated teachers and staff for making Discovery an exceptional learning environment where students are excited to learn. We are thrilled to welcome our new Executive Director, Mr. Guernsey and Assistant Executive Director, Ms. Jones, to Discovery's administration team and are excited to see them work with Mrs. Weller and the staff to continue to grow and build on our past success.

Education is a team responsibility that takes our staff and parents/guardians working together with the community to ensure that we are delivering the best education to fit the needs of our students. We hope that you will take the time to read through our handbook, with your student, before signing it off. The policies and procedures included in this handbook have been established to ensure a safe and positive learning environment that best positions all of our students to succeed.

Discovery would not be where it is without volunteers! We encourage volunteering where it fits your schedule, for those that are able. Discovery offers many ways for parents/guardians to get involved and take an active role in their students' education by participating in the Parent Advisory Council, attending School Board meetings, volunteering and attending various special events and other activities throughout the school year.

We know Discovery is a public school of CHOICE and that you have other options for your children's education. We are both thrilled and honored that you chose us and recognize the important responsibility you have entrusted us with. We look forward to another year of Engaging, Discovering and Growing!

Best-

The Discovery Charter School Board of Directors

Lisa Gonzalez - President, Director Jessica Lynch - Vice President, Director Mylese Tucker - Secretary, Director Suzanne Radzik - Treasurer, Director Kelly Hunt Vander Vliet, Director Lori Lindsay, Director Ryan Schoffelmeer, Director Tiana Clark, Director Miranda Wilkening - PAC Representative

Dear Discovery Families,

We hope you enjoyed summer break by spending time outdoors with family and friends. A new school year is upon us, and the staff at Discovery are excited to begin!

Thank you for choosing Discovery as your school of choice. Our administration team is eager to work with stakeholders to fulfill the vision and mission of Discovery Charter School. Discovery staff will continue fostering an engaging and supportive environment promoting the academic, social, and emotional development of all students. Please review the Student Handbook as it provides necessary information to support our students.

Regards,

Greg Guernsey, Executive Director

Vera Jones, Assistant Executive Director of Curriculum

Debra Weller, Principal

Discovery Charter School

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION **Family Friendly School**



Parent/Guardian Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Before admittance to Discovery Charter School **all parents/guardians** are required to read the following statement, read the parent/student handbook outlining school procedures and policies, and sign the Parent/Guardian Agreement form located at the back of the handbook.

There are a few key points to be made when discussing charter schools:

1. Charter schools are funded by public taxpayer money. Thus, they are “public” schools, but fall into a special category. Charter schools are given freedom from certain rules, regulations and policies that other “regular” public schools must follow. This freedom is granted so that some new and innovative directions might be taken and diversity in delivering education to young people might be encouraged. There is a price to be paid for such flexibility however, and that price is strict accountability. Unless charter schools are successful in providing a quality education to students, Ball State University is authorized to close the school. All students would be forced to go elsewhere; all employees would lose their jobs. Such an action does not happen in the non-charter schools. It is because of these stringent requirements that our charter schools have policies that are strictly enforced.
2. Charter schools are schools of “**choice.**” ***This is a crucial point.*** There are no laws that require that students come to our schools. Parents/guardians and students **choose** our schools as opposed to some other public or private schools. Choosing our schools also means that parents/guardians and students **must understand and accept** the overall philosophy Discovery Charter School as well as the academic program, rules, regulations and policies of the district.
3. Discovery Charter School is organized on the premise that parents/guardians are responsible for instilling discipline, respect and academic encouragement in their children. It is the joint responsibility of the parents/guardians as well as the school to encourage good character and good work habits in their children. Likewise, it is the joint responsibility of the school and parents/guardians to support and encourage academic achievement. Responsible parents/guardians are, after all, the first educators and the single most significant element in the mix of factors that result in high academic performance. Thus, parents/guardians who enroll their child(ren) in our school **must** be prepared to accept this partnership role. Individuals unable to accept this joint partnership role and adhere to the rules, regulations and policies of Discovery Charter School are encouraged to seek other school options and **should not** enroll their child(ren) in our school.

We require that parents/guardians sign the form at the end of this handbook which signifies that the policies, rules, regulations and information have been read and that both students and their parents/guardians agree to abide by them. If the form at the end of the handbook is not signed and returned, it will be assumed that you agree upon all policies and statements in this handbook.



Discovery Charter School

Board of Directors

Lisa Gonzalez, President
Jessica Lynch, Vice President
Suzanne Radzik, Treasurer
Mylese Tucker, Secretary
Tiana S. Clark, Director
Kelly Hunt Vander Vliet, Director
Lori Knox-Lindsay, Director
Ryan J. Schoffemeer, Director
Miranda Wilkening, PAC Representative

School Information

Greg Guernsey – Executive Director
Vera Jones – Assistant Executive Director
Debra Weller, Principal
800 Canonie Drive
Porter, IN 46304
Phone: (219) 983-9800
Fax: (219) 929-5723
www.discoverycharter.org

General Information

School Hours

Monday – Friday 8:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

1st Wednesday Each Month Dismissal is at 1:30 P.M.

*Tardies will be given starting at 8:05 AM

**The Main Office Closes at 3:45 P.M.

***Doors will open at 9:45 AM in the event of 2-hour delays.

Transportation Policy

Discovery Charter School does not provide transportation for students to or from school and/or school related functions. The responsibility of providing transportation falls on the families of our students. It is up to families to determine the mode of transportation to use. The school does not assume a duty, liability, or responsibility for the transporting of students to or from school and/or school related functions. In such, families assume all liability in transporting their students to and from school each day. Please be aware that during arrival and dismissal times the school's geographical area is heavily congested. Families should use caution and keep this in mind when selecting and providing transportation for their children. We ask that families adhere to the below stated procedures when dropping off or picking up students.

Arrival Guidelines

Students will be permitted into school at 7:45 a.m. and must be in class at 8:05 a.m. Students are to be dropped off at the front doors. Parents who wish to accompany their child to class the first two weeks of school are to park by the south entrance and enter the building through the front doors. Parents should never park in the front lot during arrival as this disrupts the traffic flow of arrival and becomes a safety concern with people walking through traffic. After the first week of school, parents are strongly encouraged to drop their child off by going through the car line or walking them to the front steps. Beginning Monday, August 22nd, the gym will be open at 7:30 a.m. for drop off. Students should not be dropped off and left unattended until 7:30 a.m. Students will wait in the gym until doors open at 7:45 a.m., at which point they will be released to their classrooms.

Parents/guardians should not exit their cars to assist children getting out of the car. Staff members are stationed outside to assist students.

Dismissal Guidelines

Students will be dismissed by exiting through the front doors. Before the school year starts, you will receive information about pick-up procedures. All parents should pick up their child in a car line instead of parking and walking into the school building. The main entrance is a high traffic area during dismissal, so to maintain a safe dismissal, parents are not allowed to wait inside or walk to the front doors to pick up their child (ren). All families are expected to pick up their student(s) via the established dismissal procedures. If your child is participating in a carpool, please make sure they know what carpool name they should be looking for at dismissal. LATE PICKUP: Families will be charged at a rate of \$1.00 each minute students are picked up after 3:30 p.m. Parents/guardians should not exit their cars to assist children in getting into the car. Staff members are stationed outside to assist students.

Early Dismissal

If you need to pick up for early dismissal, you must notify the office in advance. All early dismissals must be picked up before 2:15 PM. Early dismissals after 2:15 p.m. will not be allowed.

Safety on Canonie Drive

When lining up in the car line for dismissal on Canonie, it is imperative that no one passes the line on the left (south) side of the line up in order to access the driveway to our back parking lot. Traffic coming from our back parking lot does not have a stop sign and the right (eastbound) turn has a blind spot. There have been several near accidents at that corner. Please do not let impatience override the concern for the safety of all. In addition, please do not begin lining up for dismissal until 2:30 p.m.

Walking/Bike Riding Policy

Due to the nature, location, and logistics of our arrival and dismissal procedures we ask that no students/families walk or ride bikes along Canonie Drive or along any path that crosses traffic.

Before and After School Care

Before and after school care will be provided on-site by the Boys and Girls Club. Before care will be available from 6:30 a.m. until the start of school and after school care will be available from the close of school until 6:30 p.m. Arrangements can be made directly through the Boys and Girls Club (219-241-9416). More information will be provided to you before the beginning of the school year.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.bgcgreaterwi.org/kidstop/>

School Closing

Parents/Guardians may contact any of the following mediums to find out if the school is closed:

1. Check e-mail. We will have a family distribution list for emergencies and updates. Be certain to update e-mail changes promptly.
2. Check the Discovery web page or the official Discovery Facebook page.
3. A School Messenger call will be made to the child's home phone number and any other number you request the office add to the list.
4. School Remind text message group.

***It is the parent/guardians' responsibility to make sure that the school office has current phone numbers and emails for each family.**

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

Cell phones that are brought to school MUST remain in the off position, unless otherwise allowed by the teacher, during school hours. **The school claims no liability for any lost or stolen cell phones.** All other electronic devices are not to be brought to school. This includes "Nintendo DS," "iPod Touch," etc. Parents/guardians are urged to help children understand that these items are not to be brought to school and why.

Items such as Nooks and other electronic readers can be used at the discretion of the individual teacher. However, these should only be used in an educational manner and the school assumes no liability for any lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Search and Seizure

Desks, lockers, and storage spaces provided to students without charge are the school's property. The Administration or designee may conduct general inspections on a periodic basis and may open desks, lockers, and storage spaces in the presence of a witness and examine the contents, including personal belongings of students, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that they contain illegal drugs, contraband, weapons, or stolen property, or the student has violated or is violating state or federal law, city codes or Board of Directors' policies and regulations provided the search is conducted primarily for enforcing order and discipline in the school and not for criminal prosecution. If the student is not present, he/she will be informed of the search. Stolen items and items that are specifically prohibited by law, city codes or school regulations will be impounded.

Promotion and Sales

Students and parents/guardians are not to participate in any fundraising activity without the express approval by the Board of Directors and School Administration. Students selling candy, toys, or related items while at school will face disciplinary action. Additionally, parents should not request to leave items in the office for other parents to pick up.

Snack Policy

To ensure our students can perform at their highest potential, students are allowed to bring snacks to school daily. The timing of the snacks will be dependent on the class schedule. Students are responsible for bringing in their own snacks each day; no communal snacks will be organized. In keeping with Discovery's Culture of Care and our students' overall health and wellness, ALL snacks should be healthful, nutritious, and sustaining. Please refer to the school website for the most current snack list. Discovery is a Nut-Free Snack School.

School Celebrations

Birthdays

To reduce the amount of instructional time lost for birthday celebrations, students' names will be read over the loudspeaker with morning announcements. Students will then come down to the office to receive a special birthday surprise. Students are also welcome to dress up/down in appropriate school attire on their birthdays.

Party Invitations

Students and parent/guardians distributing invitations for birthday parties or other outside of school parties will be expected to either distribute invitations to the entire class or distribute the invitations outside of the school setting.

Celebrations

Discovery Charter School will have three class parties each year: Fall, Winter Holiday, and Valentine's Day. These are the only class parties where treats will be allowed. **A list of approved snacks for each party will be available before each holiday party.** As a reminder, any parent/guardian wishing to help with the holiday parties MUST have a background check with the school office.

Grade chairs will coordinate with teachers, room parent/guardians, and party volunteers on details for parties. All volunteers with current background checks are welcome to help manage the parties. A planning meeting prior to the party date will be arranged. Parties should consist of games, a craft (if desired) and fun! All plans and details for class parties must be reviewed and approved by the classroom teacher before being finalized.

Refreshments for class parties may include one healthy snack, one treat and one drink. All snacks and treats must be nut free. Please refer to the suggested snack list on the school website for guidance in planning snacks and treats. To be consistent with Discovery's Culture of Care, waste should be kept in mind while planning. Parent/guardians should use any reusable tableware made available by the school or the PAC.

For Fall party, costumes may not be demeaning to any ethnic group, race, religion, nationality, handicapping condition, or individual (staff or student) at the school. Costumes should not be revealing or inappropriate in any way. No costumes are allowed that would impair a student's vision or movement ability (such as ability to climb stairs).

December is a wonderful time to develop traditions and celebrate our school's community. In an effort to have those traditions and celebrations be representative of the entire student body and to be inclusive of all students and faculty, it is the policy of the Board of Discovery Charter School that all decorations, celebrations, crafts, games, activities, learning lessons, and treats be seasonally-based, focused on winter and nature, and have no religious representation.

At the beginning of the school year, room parent/guardians will be given a handbook by Discovery PAC that will further outline guidelines for celebrations.

Enrollment

Enrollment Requirements:

The Board of Directors shall establish student entrance requirements which are consistent with Indiana law (IC-20-33-2-7) and sound educational practice and which ensure equitable treatment and proper placement.

A. Kindergarten

Each child of legal settlement shall be eligible for kindergarten providing that s/he has attained the age of five (5) on or before August 1st. This requirement also shall apply to children who transfer into Discovery Charter School and who may have attended, but not completed, private or public kindergarten in another locality.

If a student turns six (6) on or before August 1st and has not completed kindergarten s/he will be placed in kindergarten unless otherwise requested by the parent/guardian or as otherwise determined in accordance with state law. Although it is not required, the Board strongly recommends that a child attend an accredited kindergarten program before entering first grade.

B. First Grade

If a child seeking to enroll in first grade has not attended kindergarten, the Executive Director shall decide as to whether the student will enroll in kindergarten, or first grade based upon the assessment model found in the administrative guidelines.

C. New Students

Except as provided in A and B above, a New Student is defined as one not enrolled in an accredited school during the previous year. In such cases, the Executive Director shall determine what grade the student will enroll in based on the assessment model found in the administrative guidelines.

D. Transfer Students

A transfer student is defined as a student who is currently enrolled in an accredited school wishing to transfer to Discovery Charter School upon acceptance of an offer of enrollment. Transfer students will be placed in the appropriate grade based on the previous school's recommendation. The Executive Director shall make the final decision.

The Executive Director shall establish administrative guidelines which ensure compliance with State Law, proper documentation of birth as well as a certified copy of any custody order and decree, appropriate screening, placement, and periodic assessment of children in kindergarten and first grade programs, certification that proper immunization is completed or in process, and the prompt transfer of records. Any indication that a student might be a missing child should be reported immediately to the Executive Director who, in turn, shall communicate with the appropriate authorities.

Teacher Requests

Discovery Administration has final say in any student's placement. Parent/guardian teacher requests will not be accepted.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

Discovery Charter School maintains a nondiscriminatory policy toward all applications and students. Discovery does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin, or any other unlawful basis.

Textbooks, Library Books, Audio/Visual Equipment & Other School Materials

Discovery Charter School students are responsible for returning textbooks, library books and any other school materials at the end of the school year in good condition. In accordance with stated DCS policy, it is the responsibility of a parent/guardian to instill respect for property in their children. Thus, parents/guardians **MUST** assume responsibility for damage to or loss of any textbooks, library books, audio/visual equipment or other school materials used by their child/children. Replacement costs and/or damage fines will be assessed for any lost or damaged materials. The teachers, in conjunction with the School Administration, will determine these fees.

Lunch

Discovery Charter School, in cooperation with a contracted vendor, operates the National School Lunch Program, with a focus on nutrition and sustainability practices. Students can purchase a full lunch and/or additional la carte items such as milk or fruit.

All students are provided with a Mealtime lunch account. Students use this lunch account at checkout in the lunch line regardless of student eligibility. If not directly notified by Discovery Charter School that your student qualifies for free or reduced lunch, please fill out a free and reduced lunch application (this must be done each year) to determine eligibility. A la carte items are not included in the free/reduced benefit and are charged at the normal rate.

Student balances must remain in good standing; failure to do so may result in an alternative meal being served.

The Discovery Lunch Line is cashless – please utilize the Mealtime account for all payments. Parents may deposit funds to their students' Mealtime account(s): preferably online at: <http://www.mymealtime.com/>, or via cash/money order/check in a sealed and labeled envelope to the school office. Note: there may be a delay before the funds appear in the student's account when using the latter form of deposit.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Discovery offers a complete special education program as required by state and federal laws. Special education students will have Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) written for them annually. This plan must be

implemented in the least restrictive environment. Please contact the Special Education Teacher or School Administration for further information.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights statute which provides that: “no otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance or activity by any Executive Agency or by the United States Postal Service”. There are ways that a person may qualify as an individual with disabilities under the regulations. Please contact the School Administration for further information.

Title I Services

Discovery Charter School is a Title I, Targeted Assistance School. Students receive assistance based upon academic performance in relation to overall school performance. Students are identified for services after an initial screening conducted within the first 4 weeks of school. A letter will be sent home this fall with additional information about Title I, any corresponding activities and parent/guardian meetings.

PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW In accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Section 1111(h)(6), this is a notification from Discovery Charter School to every parent/guardian of a student in a Title I school that you have the right to request and receive information in a timely manner regarding the professional qualifications of your student's classroom teachers.

This information regarding the professional qualifications of your student's classroom teachers shall include the following:

- If the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade level and subject areas taught;
- If the teacher is teaching under emergency or temporary status in which Indiana qualifications and licensing criteria are waived;
- The teacher's baccalaureate degree major, graduate certification, and field of discipline; and
- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications. If at any time your student has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher that is not highly qualified, you will be notified by the school of this information.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the school administration.

Title IX

The Discovery Charter School Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as the “Board” or “Corporation”) adopts the following policies, procedures and protocols regarding matters specifically relating to the prevention of discrimination on the basis of sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression) in the Discovery Charter Corporation’s education programs or activities and is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations not to discriminate in such a manner. It is the express intention of the Board that these policies, procedures, and protocols (collectively “Title IX Policy”), notwithstanding anything contained in the other policies of the Board, take precedent over and supersede such other policies as to all matters at Discovery Charter School (“Corporation”) falling within this Title IX Policy as described herein, to the extent that such other policies are in conflict with this Title IX Policy. The full Title IX Policy and Procedures can be found on the school website:

<https://www.discoverycharter.org/policies-docs>

Health Services Information

MEDICATION

No medications will be given at school except those prescribed by a physician and needed to maintain the child in school or over-the-counter medications upon the request and direction of the child's parent/guardian. Any medication taken at school must be brought to the office in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or in the original over-the-counter package. Alternative medications, such as herbal or homeopathic medications, will not be administered without a written physician's order.

Medications should be transported to and from school by the parent/guardian and be given directly to school personnel. If this is not possible, the parent/guardian is to call the nurse's office to alert the school nurse that a student is bringing in medication. The student should be directed by the parent/guardian to go to the nurse's office immediately upon arrival. The parent/guardian is also responsible for picking up their child's medication if it has been discontinued. If the medication is not picked up promptly, it will be discarded. All expired medication will be thrown away at the end of the year.

Before medication can be dispensed at school, the parent/guardian and the child's physician must complete the required form. The form can be obtained from the school nurse.

All medications must be kept in the school nurse's office, except cough drops which may be kept in a secure location by the teacher, if the teacher permits. For a student to self-carry their inhaler or epi- pen, a note from the physician indicating this option is required.

Please indicate in the Health Survey (that must be completed for every student at the start of the school year, unless a physical is submitted) if your child is taking any medications regularly at home.

ILLNESS/INJURY DURING SCHOOL

The classroom teacher refers students to the school nurse whenever symptoms indicate the possibility of illness, injury and/or pain. Minor injuries may be treated at school with basic first aid and over-the-counter preparations and supplies. In emergency situations, 911 would be called and transport by ambulance would occur to the nearest hospital if indicated.

*Each child is required to have an Emergency Contact Form on file. The form requires the names and phone numbers of two responsible people 18 years or older that can be contacted if the child must be picked up due to illness and the parent/guardian cannot be reached within one hour. Children that become ill during the school day **must** be picked up in a timely manner.

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME

1. Students with a fever of 100.0 F or higher will need to stay home and not attend school until fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications.
2. Students with a new onset of cough, or a red, sore throat.
3. Vomiting or diarrhea, until symptom-free for **at least** 24 hours, but preferably 48 hours.
4. Conjunctivitis (pink eye), until treated for at least 24 hours.
5. Lice, nits (lice eggs), or scabies until treated and nit/lice free.
6. Body rash of unknown origin.
7. Acute cold symptoms or flu-like symptoms until symptoms improve and fever-free for at least 24 hours.

The parent/guardian must contact the school nurse via phone or email at kbyrt@discoverycharter.org as soon as possible if their child has a communicable illness diagnosed by a doctor.

Additionally, if a student is absent on any given day, they cannot participate in any after school sponsored event

on that day including; but not limited to sporting events and practices, clubs, tutoring, band practice or event, musical, etc.

If activities are to be limited after a serious illness or accident, a statement from a physician is required. The statement must indicate the length of time the limitation must be in place.

In addition, if an assistive device is required (i.e., crutches, wheelchair, etc.), the physician must indicate that in the note and this must be turned in prior to the student's return to school.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to communicate with the school nurse and/or administration if any physical accommodations are required for the student. If more information is required to maintain the student's health and safety, the parent/guardian may be asked to complete a form to allow communication with the student's physician.

Children cannot be left in the classroom during recess without a teacher present. **All** children who attend school are expected to participate in recess, gym, and outdoor activities. If a child is too sick to go outdoors for fresh air and exercise, the child should be kept at home. Exceptions will be made upon written request from a physician.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS/VACCINATIONS

All children entering school must comply with the minimum vaccination requirements of the State of Indiana. A copy of these standards will be distributed prior to registration for the new school year. A copy of the vaccination record must be presented at registration for all new students, and students entering grades requiring additional vaccinations. The vaccination record submitted must be an official copy from the physician office record or from the state immunization registry database. Handwritten "shot records" will not be accepted. Waivers can be honored for the following reasons: medical reasons authorized by a physician or religious reasons authorized by a parent/guardian. Waivers must be updated annually to remain in effect. Please be aware that in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, students that have waivers on file and are not up to date on their vaccinations will be excluded from school for a duration of time determined by the local or state health department during the outbreak.

The school nurse will submit student immunization data to the State of Indiana's immunization database (CHIRP) for students entering kindergarten, 1st and 6th grade.

A student is not permitted to attend school beyond the first day without furnishing vaccination documentation or a waiver form.

A physical examination report must be submitted for students enrolling in school for the first time. The physical examination form must be on file no later than the first day of school. The physical must have been conducted within the last school calendar year (i.e., an exam provided for August 2022 must have been completed after August 2021). Students participating in after-school sports will need to have a sports physical completed and submitted to the coach before the sports season starts. A cumulative health record is kept for every student. In the event of a transfer, the student's health record is sent to the new school.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

The State of Indiana requires that students in specific grades receive hearing and vision screenings while at school. Hearing screenings are performed in grades 1st, 4th, and 7th. Vision screenings are performed in grades K, and/or 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 8th.

In addition, any child suspected of having a vision or hearing defect will also receive screening. Screenings will be performed on all students in the required grade levels unless a written objection is received by the school nurse from the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be notified if their child did not pass the required screening and that physician follow-up is recommended.

Additionally, height, weight and BMI screenings may be performed in certain grade levels during the school year. Information about screening results and health promotion information may be sent out to parent/guardians.

WELLNESS PROMOTION

As part of our health and wellness promotion, the following items should not be brought into the school by students:

1. coffee or iced coffee
2. fountain sodas
3. energy drinks
4. fast food items

Guidelines for Management of Peanut/Tree Nut and other Severe Food Allergies

The risk of accidental exposure to allergy inducing foods can be reduced in the school setting if schools work with students, parent/guardians, and staff to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for students with severe food allergies.

Although schools cannot guarantee an allergen free environment, we can utilize strategies to minimize the risks associated with peanut and nut allergies. These strategies will focus on prevention, education, and emergency response. The goal is that children eventually learn through guidance and support to keep themselves safe by making good choices and advocating for themselves.

Discovery parent/guardians play an essential role in helping to keep students with food allergies safe. Please read the following guidelines detailing safety precautions that parents/guardians should be aware of and follow.

FOOD SERVICES/ CAFETERIA

1. All school lunches are prepared and served nut-free. Parent/guardians requesting further information on food preparation for school lunches may contact the food service company. There will be a nut-free table clearly labeled in the cafeteria. Separate cloths and buckets will be used to clean the nut-free table.
2. Parent/guardians should discuss with their children that food sharing should not occur in the lunchroom.

CLASSROOM PRECAUTIONS

1. Nut products will not be consumed in the classroom. Signs will be posted outside of the classroom indicating that it is a nut-free classroom.
2. **All daily snacks brought in by students must be from the approved nut-free snack list on the school website.**
3. Students will receive information at the beginning of the school year regarding safety procedures in place related to food allergies.

4. Epinephrine devices for students with severe food allergies will be present in the classroom and locations that the students travel to during the school day. Students in the classroom will be made aware of this necessity and that the red bags the devices travel in should not be opened by students.
5. Classrooms that have student(s) with peanut allergies will be encouraged to wash their hands before class starts and when returning from lunch. Students from any classroom that consume peanut butter at lunch will be encouraged to wash their hands after lunch to prevent the transfer of peanut oil on surfaces.
6. The teacher will be aware of snacks brought into the classroom and will try to ensure that no nut products are introduced. The teacher will reinforce that no food sharing should occur during snack time.
7. Any project that may involve food will be discussed in advance with parents/guardians of students with food allergies. Special events and classroom parties will be carefully planned so that there is minimal chance of exposure.
8. Classroom room parent/guardians will be made aware of food allergies in their classroom and will plan food for parties accordingly.

EDUCATION OF STAFF/ PARENT/GUARDIANS/ VOLUNTEERS

1. Parent/guardians will receive information at the beginning of the school year regarding safety procedures in place related to food allergies. Nut allergy information will be posted in the school's newsletter and will include a link to the approved nut-free snack list.
1. Before school starts, all staff will be informed about how to maintain the safest environment for students with severe food allergies. Signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction will be taught as well as how to administer an epinephrine auto-injector. Standard protocol regarding epinephrine usage will also include 911 to be called and student transport by ambulance to the nearest emergency department.
2. Education and training will be required for all staff members and substitutes.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES (FIELD TRIPS)

1. It is recommended that the parent/guardian of a child with a severe food allergy attend learning experiences if possible. If the parent/guardian or designee cannot attend, the student will be chaperoned by the teacher who will carry the epinephrine auto-injector and a copy of the Food Allergy Action Plan.

PARENT/GUARDIAN-NURSE-STUDENT COMMUNICATION

1. The parent/guardian of a student with severe food allergies must inform the school nurse of the allergy at registration.
2. A meeting will occur between a student with severe food allergies, their parent/guardian, and the school nurse prior to the start of school to discuss the development of an IHP (Individual Health Plan).
3. A Food Allergy Action Plan must be completed by the child's physician and brought into the school nurse by the parent/guardian in addition to supplying an unexpired epinephrine auto-injector device. It is the preference of the school that the parent/guardian supplies two epinephrine auto-injectors if available.
4. The nurse will talk to the student about their understanding of their allergy, symptoms, and reactions. They will discuss how to avoid the allergen and what they would do if they thought they were having an allergic reaction.

STATE LAW REGARDING EPINEPHRINE ADMINISTRATION IN SCHOOL

1. Effective July 1, 2014, a new Indiana Code (IC 20-34-4.5-2)) was placed into effect regarding auto-injectable epinephrine. If a student's own epinephrine device is not available or if any student, staff member, or volunteer experiences symptoms of life-threatening anaphylaxis, epinephrine may be administered as allowed by state law. This is subject to availability of a prescribed epinephrine device for use in such situations.

Discovery Culture of Care

Discovery Charter School is built on the philosophy of Place Based Learning. There are many important facets to Place Based Learning. "Culture of Care" is a phrase we use to encompass our approach to some of these facets that make our school life and culture unique from other public schools. Often, this term is used for sustainability and the healthy body/healthy mind connection. Discovery Charter School's culture is unique, and we are proud of it!

The principles of "learning by doing" permeate every aspect of our children's lives, in school and at home. One of the founding principles in Place Based Learning is teaching our kids to become stewards of their environment. This means that we teach our students about caring for our environment from a local to world perspective. We teach them to be mindful, noticing the small positive changes they can make daily to their environments. In school the students compost lunch scraps, bring reusable water bottles rather than disposable cartons/cans, limit paper waste, etc. They are encouraged daily to think about the impact of their actions on the world around them. We also know that healthy bodies grow healthy minds. DCS believes that proper nutrition and activity is absolutely essential to our kids' minds, bodies and spirits. This belief is the foundation for the healthful snack guidelines, which can be found on the school website. This list of snacks should be used for daily classroom snacks as well as classroom parties and celebrations.

We call this our "Culture of Care," principles born out of the emphasis DCS puts on the care of the environment and the healthy mind/body connection. The DCS teachers/staff work hard to maintain consistent messaging in these areas, and we find it incredibly positive when parent/guardians support and model these principles.

Sustainability

Sustainability is the concept of meeting our current needs through behaviors, practices, and policies that do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Board of Directors recognizes sustainability as a guiding principle and believes that Discovery Charter School should be committed to developing and integrating sustainability practices in all aspects of our school.

Sustainability efforts will balance the interconnected areas of education, environment, society, and economy to contribute to a healthy future for our students, faculty, staff, and community. The Board believes that these actions are a natural extension of the school's core mission and values. To effectively achieve these commitments, school administration may develop additional plans and regulations to implement the sustainability policy.

Sustainability will be demonstrated through:

Sustainable management: Striving to incorporate educational, social, and environmental values in our daily decision-making. Specific areas include, but are not limited to:

1. Reducing energy and water consumption.

2. Purchasing more sustainable products and materials.
3. Reducing waste by cutting consumption and increasing recycling efforts.
4. Lessen overall environmental impact.

Sustainability education: Integrating environmental and social sustainability concepts in our education of students. Specific areas include, but are not limited to:

1. Encouraging sustainability-focused student organizations and projects.
2. Promoting sustainability-related resources for teachers and staff.
3. Developing a better understanding of the local, regional, and global impacts of the school's activities.

Fostering health and well-being: Providing a physical environment that promotes the health, productivity, and safety of students and staff. Specific areas include, but are not limited to:

1. Continuing to strengthen the school's nutrition standards and policies.
2. Examining the use of more sustainable cleaning products and methods.
3. Reducing the school's carbon footprint.
4. Providing safe and healthy classrooms and workspaces.

Continual Improvement: Seeking new, expanded, and improved ways to create a sustainable and restorative future. Specific areas include, but are not limited to:

1. Constructing new buildings and completing renovations to high performance building standards.
2. Increasing school, student, parent/guardian, and community engagement in goal setting and decision-making.
3. Developing and monitoring indicators of progress toward greater sustainability.

Promoting and celebrating student and school accomplishments.

Inclusion and Participation

All constituencies in the Discovery Charter School community are encouraged to contribute thought and action to sustainability challenges in the communities to which we belong. We include sustainability and care for the environment among the core issues such as discrimination, equality of opportunity, citizenship, social equity, cultural and awareness that inspire members of our community to take positive and constructive actions.

There are specific practices that the school staff, school organizations, volunteers, students, and families are asked to engage in, as members of this community:

1. Waste

1. Classroom party totes have been purchased and include cloth napkins, small plates, bowls, cups, and silverware. These are always the first choice for food consumed in each classroom.
2. Families and staff will take steps to eliminate or reduce the use of disposable packaging of food brought to school for lunch, snacks, or parties. The use of reusable water bottles by students during the school day and at all learning experiences and other school-sponsored events will be encouraged.
3. Printing shall occur on both sides of paper. Documents will be printed as half or quarter sheet pieces, when possible.
4. Both sides of paper should be used before it is placed into the recycling stream.
5. All areas that have garbage cans will have an accompanying recycling bin with a list posted that details what can be recycled.

2. Energy

Promote a 'switch off' policy for equipment, lighting and heating that is not being used.

3. Biodiversity

New trees and plantings shall be species native to NW Indiana.

4. Travel and Traffic

Discovery Charter School promotes transportation to and from school that minimizes negative environmental impacts and reduces emission levels and congestion. We continue to urge an end to automobile idling during afternoon pick up and encourage car-pooling.

Monitoring, Transparency, and Accountability

Sustainability planning, implementation and review are ongoing processes that require education and participation of the community. We establish organizational structures to enable this process. Administrative leadership directs and facilitates our commitment. Effective communication of annual goals helps us advance the school's efforts.

Attendance

***When Your Child Must Be Absent from School Parents/Guardians Are Required to CALL (983-9800) Or EMAIL (attendance@discoverycharter.org) Prior To 8:30 AM**

Absences

The Indiana Compulsory Attendance Law IC 20-20-8-8 states habitual truancy to include students absent ten (10) days or more from school within a school year without being excused or without being absent under a parental request filed with the school. Chronic absenteeism includes students absent from school for 10 percent or more of a school year for any reason. Under IC 20-33-2-25, the "Executive Director or an attendance officer having jurisdiction shall report a child who is habitually absent from school in violation of this chapter to an intake officer of the juvenile court or the department of child services".

Excused Absences

Excused absences are defined as absences that the school regards as legitimate reasons for being out of school, as included in the school policy. These could include:

1. Illness verified by note from parent/guardian (after 5 cumulative absences, these will be marked as unexcused absences)
2. Illness verified by note from Physician
3. Family funeral
4. Maternity
5. Military connected families (e.g., absences related to deployment and return)

Multiple absences may negatively affect a student's academic growth which may put a student at risk for being retained. The school will regularly monitor student absences and reach out to families should the number become a concern. Actions of the school may be notification (phone, email, letter sent home), meeting with family, development of attendance plan, a referral to project attend, or other actions.

Unexcused Absences

When a student misses more than five (5) unexcused days in a semester, parent/guardian will be notified by administration. **Should a student accumulate (10) unexcused days in a school year, administration will notify parent/guardian of referral juvenile court or the department of child services.**

5 total Unexcused Absences

A letter will be sent home with the student notifying the family of the concerning number of days absent and outline further actions should the problem continue.

10 total Unexcused Absences

School Social Worker will reach out to family to notify them of absences and work with family to address absences which will include an attendance plan.

The attendance committee will meet to discuss attendance concerns.

10 + Unexcused Absences

The attendance committee will meet with family to inform them of next steps in accordance with Indiana State code.

Extended Absences

If it is known that a child will be absent for an extended period of time, the parent/guardian should state the reason and expected return date at the time of their 1st notification. The parent/guardian need not call again if the child is absent during the reported amount of time. If, however, the time is extended, the parent/guardian **MUST** notify the school.

Make-up work

For excused absences, students will be given the number of days absent, plus one to complete missed work for full credit. However, if the absences coincide with the end of a quarter, the number of days plus one may not be possible, and work will be due at discretion of teacher in order for credit to be given before gradebooks close. If the absence is considered unexcused, teachers are not required to provide special assistance and homework is still required to be completed.

STUDENTS WHO ARE ABSENT, WHETHER EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED, MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY EXTRA-CURRICULAR OR ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES FOR THAT DAY.

Tardiness

Tardiness is disruptive to the educational process and is inconsiderate to both teachers and other students; therefore, it is imperative that students are punctual. A student is considered tardy when he/she arrives to class after 8:05 a.m. All tardies are considered unexcused unless they are accompanied by a physician's note. The following information will be applicable to all students:

5 Tardy Arrivals

A letter will be sent home with the student notifying the family of the concerning number of days tardy and outline further actions should the problem continue.

7 Tardy Arrivals

School Social Worker will reach out to family to notify them of absences and work with family to address tardies.

The attendance committee may request a meeting with the family.

10 Tardy Arrivals

The attendance committee will arrange a meeting with parent/guardian which may result in an attendance plan or other action.

Early Dismissal

No child is allowed to leave the building or playground during school time unless a parent, guardian or an adult accompanies the child from the school. All-day attendance is important for every student, every school day. If it is known in advance that an early dismissal is absolutely necessary, parent/guardians must call, email, or write the office and classroom teacher. Children who leave early must be picked up and signed out from the school office.

*Please keep in mind that early dismissals are recorded and count towards your child's attendance. There will be NO early dismissal after 2:15 pm.

Dismissal for Vacation

Family vacations and trips taken during the school year are strongly discouraged. Please notify the school office and your child's teacher(s) of all family vacations and trips at least 2 weeks in advance. Any absence over two (2) days for a family trip will be considered unexcused.

Students who are absent over a period of 2 weeks because of extended vacations should not expect to receive homework assignments ahead of time and are at risk of being retained.

Policy Enforcement

Consistent attendance and on-time arrival at school is an important part of any student's education. Because of its importance, the school administration can enforce the policy through a variety of methods. *The School Administration may, at his/her discretion, apply penalties to ensure compliance with the attendance and tardy policies. These may include attendance plans, referrals to juvenile court or the department of child services for Educational Neglect, or any other measure deemed necessary.*

Report Cards and Retention

Report Cards

Final grades for each quarter can be found in PowerSchool. If a family would like a paper copy, they can contact the main office to request a copy.

If you need help accessing PowerSchool, please contact the main office.

Retention Policy

It is the policy of Discovery Charter School that retention be the last resource as a means for remediation for a child. Therefore, the following steps will be taken:

1. After the second quarter reporting period, teachers will identify any candidate that is a possibility for retention and discuss concerns with the school administration.
2. After the meeting with administration, the classroom teacher will set up a meeting no later than the conclusion of the 3rd quarter with parent/guardians, teacher, and administration to discuss a plan to avoid retention.
3. The classroom teacher will maintain weekly updates with parent/guardians regarding student progress as it relates to the plan to avoid retention.
4. A final meeting will be scheduled with parents/guardians, teacher, and administration to discuss a student's progress before the last day of school.
5. Administration will determine retention or promotion before the end of the school year. Administration has the ultimate decision regarding placement of the student at Discovery Charter School.

Grading Scale

Kindergarten	
4	Exceeds Grade Level Expectations
3	Meets Grade Level Expectations
2	Developing Towards Grade Level Expectations
1	Below Grade Level Expectations

Grades: 1-8	
100-90	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69-60	D
59-0	F

Weighted Average Grades: 1 - 8	
Tests	40%
Classwork	30%
Homework	30%

Student Enrichment

Homework

Homework is an integral part of the child's educational process. The Discovery curriculum requires student preparation outside of school and is enhanced by a parent/guardian's involvement with homework completion. Homework assignments are a part of each student's grade; therefore, missing assignments must be turned in as soon as possible. Students are also responsible for homework assignments missed during an absence from school (see section on student absences).

Students are responsible for completing their homework on time. Continual failure to complete or to turn in homework assignments on time will result in appropriate consequences determined by the classroom teacher and/or school administration.

1. Parents/guardians may be required to work with their child on special projects and provide materials that can be found in the home.
2. Reading with your child, particularly in the primary grades, is strongly recommended.
3. Parents/guardians have the responsibility to discuss and check homework assignments on a daily basis with their child.
4. Parents/guardians have the responsibility to review their child's Homework Folder in order to be informed about current units of study, their child's progress, etc.

Learning Experiences

Cultural and educational learning experiences are scheduled during each school year. Learning experiences are planned to enhance your child's educational process and covers what is currently being studied in the classroom.

***Learning experiences are scheduled on school days and are, therefore, NOT OPTIONAL. Students not present on the day of a learning experience will receive an unexcused absence. No opportunity to make up work or receive credit for lost points/grades will be given.**

Written notification of each learning experience will be sent home to parents/guardians and must be signed and returned to the classroom teacher acknowledging receipt of this information.

Chaperones - The ideal ratio of chaperone to student is:

1. Kindergarten – 2nd grade: 1 parent/guardian for every 6 students
2. 3rd – 8th grade: 1 parent/guardian for every 10 students

The teacher will provide a brief outline of the guidelines to chaperones before the trip which will include expectations of how the class will travel (as a whole, in small groups, etc). Any questions regarding the rules and responsibilities should be directed to the classroom teacher, grade level chair, or school administration.

Dress Attire - Students attending a learning experience are required to wear their complete Discovery Charter School uniform, unless otherwise noted in the permission slip sent home to parent/guardians prior to the learning experience.

Fees – In the fall, an activity fee is paid to cover transportation costs and school-based activities. In the event a learning experience is taken to a fee-based destination, a learning experience admission fee will be charged. Exact change is required for all learning experience fees.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE PAYMENTS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE: Since we must pay in advance, we are unable to refund learning experience costs as a result of illness/other absence factors.

Any parent/guardian invited to be a chaperone must have a background check via our Volunteer System ([Raptor](#)) in order to attend a Learning Experience. Information on background checks can be found on the school website. Additionally, parents/guardians that are not chosen as a chaperone should not show up at Learning Experience locations to join the group unless otherwise directed by the classroom teacher.

Field Experiences

Field Experiences are a crucial part of daily learning. As a school of choice, Discovery Charter School feels that children learn best in a place based environmental setting where learning can be anchored in his/her surroundings. For this reason, all students, parent/guardians, and teachers need to be committed to making this happen for all children. However, should accommodations need to be made that would affect the safety and learning experience for the entire class, it is ultimately the parent/guardian's responsibility to assist in making these accommodations.

Athletics, Band, and Extracurricular Programs and Clubs

It is our belief that a child's participation in extracurriculars is important in the development of character, teamwork, self-discipline, healthy living, integrity, respect for others and positive, competitive behavior. As we investigate additional athletic opportunities, the following policies will be applicable:

Expectations:

1. Extracurricular program(s) will not interfere/disrupt the academic programs of the school. Early dismissal, excuse from classes, or "away" events during school hours will not be permitted.
2. Participating students must show respect for coaches, team members, opponents and the officials of the sport. The student is also expected to demonstrate respect toward the spectators and play by the rules of the competition.
3. The student must be present and on time for all practices and games. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the coach if he/she is unable to attend a practice or a competition.
4. The student is expected to return his/her uniform or materials in good, clean and reusable condition, if applicable.

Blatant disrespect and disregard of the expectations mentioned above will result in limited or revoked playing time or participation and the potential withdrawal of the student from the team and competition.

Responsibilities:

1. A student must have parental approval to participate on the team. A permission slip will be sent home to parents/guardians at the beginning of the season.
2. Students participating in the following school sports during the 2023-2024 school year will need a current physical on file: volleyball, cross-country, and basketball. Students in K - 4th grade should have a general physical on file (done within past 12 months), and 5th - 8th grade should have a sports physical done after April 1st of this year in order to participate in after school sports.
3. A student must be in good academic standing upon joining the team. Students must pass all classes as determined by quarterly report cards. A grade of "F" in any class, on a report card, will automatically make the student ineligible. Reinstatement will be based on grade and/or behavior status as determined by administration, coach/sponsor, and student.
4. All students participating in extracurricular programs must present a grade verification form (provided by the coach of the team) at the end of each quarter, to each of their teachers for a signature. All coaches/ sponsors must submit a list of players/participants to the office for grade verification at the end of each grading period.
5. Any student who has incurred an out of school suspension will be subject to missed participation time from all extracurricular related activities during the length of suspension. Student infractions may also result in additional consequences up to and including removal from extracurricular activity.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Purpose of Use

Through technology, Discovery Charter School provides access for students and staff to resources from around the world. Expanding technologies takes students and staff beyond the confines of the classroom, and provides tremendous opportunities for enhancing, extending, and rethinking the learning process. This new capability, however, requires guidance for students and staff use.

The Opportunities and Risks of Technology Use

Discovery Charter School believes that the value of information and the opportunity for interaction that technology offers outweighs the hazards of its misuse. Making network access available, however, carries with it the potential that some network users will encounter sources that could be considered controversial or inappropriate. Because information on networks is ever-changing and diverse, DCS cannot completely predict or control what users may or may not locate when on-line. Technology provides a conduit to information: the users must be wary of the sources and content and be responsible in choosing information to be accessed.

No technology is guaranteed to be error free or totally dependable, nor is it safe when used irresponsibly. Among other matters, the school is not liable or responsible for:

1. Any information that may be lost, damaged, or unavailable due to technical, or other difficulties;
2. The accuracy or suitability of any information that is retrieved through technology;
3. Breaches of confidentiality;
4. Defamatory material; or
5. The consequences that may come from failure to follow DCS policy and procedures governing the use of technology.

Privileges of User

Users may access technology for educational purposes only. Exercising this privilege requires that users accept the responsibility for all material viewed, downloaded, and/or produced. Users will need to evaluate the validity of materials accessed through technology and cite their resources when appropriate.

The actions of users accessing networks through Discovery Charter School reflect on our organization. Users must conduct themselves accordingly by exercising good judgment and complying with this policy and any accompanying administrative regulations and guidelines.

Definition of Acceptable Use

Users will:

1. Adhere to the rules of copyright and assume that any software that they did not create is copyrighted (unless it is labeled "freeware" or "public domain");
2. Adhere to the licensing agreements governing the use of shareware; note that e-mail is not guaranteed to be private;
3. Be responsible at all times for the proper use of their access privileges and for complying with all required system security identification codes, including not sharing such codes;
4. Maintain the integrity of technological resources from potentially damaging messages, physical abuse, or computer viruses;
5. Respect the rights of others to use equipment and therefore use it only for school-related activities;
6. Treat all computers, printers, cameras, and other electronic hardware and software with great care;

7. Abide by the policies and procedures of networks and systems linked by technology; and protect the privacy of other users and the integrity of the system by avoiding misuse of others' files, equipment, and programs.

Users will not:

1. Use offensive, obscene, inflammatory or defamatory language;
2. Harass other users;
3. Misrepresent themselves or others;
4. Violate the rights of others, including their privacy;
5. Access, download, and/or create pornographic or obscene material;
6. Use the network for personal business or financial gain;
7. Vandalize data, programs, and/or networks;
8. Degrade or disrupt systems and/or equipment;
9. Damage technology hardware and/or software;
10. Spread computer viruses;
11. Gain unauthorized access to resources or entities;
12. Violate copyright laws;
13. Damage computers, printers, cameras, or other hardware;
14. Use technology for illegal activities; and
15. Reveal their name, personal address or phone number, or those of other users without parental permission.

Right to Monitor

Discovery Charter School, as provider of technology, email, and Internet access, has the right to monitor any and all use of the system. Any individual right of privacy is superseded by the school's need to maintain its system.

Penalties for Improper Use

If users of the technology do not follow these rules of Acceptable Use, disciplinary action may be taken, and alternative assignments may be required.

Uniform Dress Code

The appearance and hygiene of the student body affects the educational environment and the climate for learning in our school. Discovery believes that helping students become aware of the appropriate dress for various activities is part of the educational process. The nature of our curriculum demands that students have the correct clothing and footwear in order to be safe and to learn effectively.

Marking Clothing

Articles of clothing, including coats, sweatshirts, hats, gloves, boots, tennis shoes and lunch boxes should be marked with the child's **FIRST AND LAST** name so they may be returned if lost.

Personal Appearance

Students are expected to be dressed and groomed in a manner that will not be disruptive to the educational process, constitute a health or safety hazard or violate civil law.

Upper Garments

Upper garments shall consist of any shirt that is available through the Discovery apparel line. Shirts must be properly fitted (not oversized or overly tight and must cover the top of the lower garment). Shirts must not have holes or embellishments. Sweatshirts or sweaters available through the Discovery apparel line may be worn during the school day. All shirts, hoodies, and zip ups must have the Discovery logo.

Lower Garments

Lower garments shall consist of appropriate jeans, khaki pants, walking shorts, capris, skorts, leggings, or athletic pants. Pants and shorts must be properly fitted (not oversized or overly tight) and must not have holes. Pants must fit at the waist, or a belt must be worn to prevent them from falling. A student's skin, underwear, or other undergarments must not be exposed due to sagging or see-through lower garments.

Footwear

Shoes or boots must have both closed heel and toe:

- No Crocs
- No flip-flops
- No sandals

Outerwear

Discovery students are often outside in all types of weather and should assume that they will be outside everyday. For cold weather, students must have heavy jackets, snow pants, hats, waterproof gloves/mittens and snow boots. During the fall and spring seasons, students should have a light jacket and a raincoat/poncho. It is recommended that a hat is available at all times to protect from the sun and insects.

Any family in need of assistance with uniforms should reach out to the administration or the school social worker.

Dress Down Days

At the discretion of the school, dress-down days will be added to the calendar (both as fundraisers and for special occasions). On dress-down days students are still expected to adhere to the dress code guidelines. Clothes should not be overly tight or overly baggy. Lower garments should still adhere to length requirements and undergarments

should not be visible at any time. Students will not be permitted to wear clothing advertising or promoting alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or other substances or clothing with inappropriate language or suggestions.

Dress Code Infractions

It is imperative that Discovery and the families work as a team to follow dress-code guidelines. Discovery relies on care-givers to ensure that children arrive at school wearing appropriate uniform attire. If a student is found to be out of compliance with this uniform policy, the following disciplinary action will take place:

- **1st Offense** - student will receive a written warning from staff to take home.
- **2nd Offense** - student will receive a second written warning from staff to take home.
- **3rd Offense** - student will receive a third written warning from administration, participate in a discussion with administration, and parents will be notified directly.
- **4+ Offenses** - infractions will be considered Category 1 discipline offense and be carried out according to Discovery's Discipline Policy.

In any case of found infractions listed above: Depending on the severity of the non-compliance, the student may be referred to administration to change clothes or call parents to bring in appropriate attire. This is at the discretion of the administrator and/or teacher.

Students are expected to be dressed in a manner that will not be disruptive to the educational process, constitute a health or safety hazard or violate civil law. Any clothing or jewelry that is disruptive to the learning process is not permitted.

Policy Enforcement

Policy Statement

Discovery Charter School is responsible for establishing and carrying out the following discipline policy. It is in stating this that DCS wishes to ensure that the school environment is safe for all students. Furthermore, DCS expects all students to accept full responsibility for their actions and behavior.

Discovery Charter School will be implementing a Positive Behavior System and other programming in order to assist the children we serve in developing strong social skills. These systems and programs will proactively address issues such as expectations, conflict resolution, and bullying. It is our goal to work diligently to set each student up for success. However, in the event that discipline action needs to be taken, the following discipline code will be followed.

DCS Discipline Code

The Discovery Charter School expects all students to conduct themselves in a socially responsible manner. Disciplinary measures are used to maintain a safe and orderly school environment that promotes Discovery Charter School.

This discipline code applies to the actions of students during school hours, before and after school, while on school property, at all Discovery Charter School sponsored events and when the actions affect the mission of Discovery Charter School. Students may also be subject to discipline for serious acts of misconduct, which occur either off-campus or during non-school hours, when the misconduct disrupts the orderly educational process at Discovery Charter School.

Each discipline case will carry its own merit and will be adjudicated according to the facts accompanying the case. The Discovery Charter School's staff shall consider all mitigating circumstances prior to disciplinary action. Mitigating circumstances shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Age, health, maturity and academic placement of a student
2. Prior conduct
3. Attitude of a student
4. Cooperation of parent/guardians
5. Willingness to make restitution
6. Seriousness of offense
7. Willingness to enroll in a student assistance program

In some cases, the school's administrative personnel may deem public service a necessary component of the disciplinary action. Public service may include but is not limited to repairing or cleaning property damaged as a result of the offense(s); participating in landscaping, gardening and/or other projects aimed at beautifying school property or the community; and/or providing services that improve the quality of life for community members.

Each category of offense listed below has a minimum and maximum disciplinary action associated with it. After considering the actual disciplinary violation and factors such as those listed above, Discovery Charter School staff will determine the disciplinary action within the minimum/maximum range to which the student shall be subjected.

CATEGORY I

These acts of misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Running and/or making excessive noise in the building
2. Repeated failure to complete homework on time
3. Repeated failure to follow school rules
4. Insubordination – refusing to participate in classroom activities and assignments
5. Horseplay
6. Cheating
7. Repeated Attendance and/or Tardiness violations

Students who commit any of these acts are subject to a detention for a 1st offense, as determined by administration. As a result of repeated violations and depending on the circumstances, a student may be subject to an in-school suspension or other appropriate action as determined by the administration with the seriousness of offense(s) considered.

CATEGORY II

These acts of misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following student behaviors that disrupt the educational process at Discovery Charter School:

1. Repeated Category I offense
2. Use of profane, vulgar or obscene words, gestures or other actions which disrupt the school environment or are disrespectful
3. Participation in acts designed to disrupt classroom or school activities
4. Leaving the classroom without permission
5. Bullying, including verbal harassment
6. Minor physical actions against another student or staff member
7. Disrespect to staff members
8. Theft
9. Plagiarism

Students who commit any of these acts are subject to an after-school detention, and/or an in-school suspension as a result of a 1st offense and may, as a result of repeated violations and depending on the circumstances, be subject to the maximum penalty of a 5 day out-of-school suspension and teacher-parent/guardian conference, or other appropriate action as determined by administration with the seriousness of offense(s) considered. The degree of the suspension whether in-school or external, as well as length of suspension, shall be determined by the school administration.

CATEGORY III

These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors that very seriously disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or on the school grounds. These acts of misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Fighting or threatening any student or staff member
2. Major physical actions against another student or staff member
3. Persistent refusal to follow stated school rules and procedures
4. Arson
5. Destruction of property/graffiti
6. Creating a false fire alarm
7. Repeated Category I and Category II offenses
8. Possession of weapons
9. Any act that endangers the safety of the other students, teachers or any school employee
10. Theft of valuable items
11. Trespassing
12. Involvement in gang activity
13. Sex violations/sexual harassment
14. Use, possession, sale or delivery of alcohol, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substances, contraband or look alike contraband/drugs

Based upon the discretion of the school administration and the age of the student who commits any of these acts, the student is subject to a maximum 10-day, out-of-school suspension and teacher-parent/guardian conference and may, depending on the circumstances, be subject to the maximum penalty of expulsion.

SUSPENSION PROCEDURE

When the principal or assistant principal (or designee) determines that a student should be suspended, the following procedures will be followed:

1. A meeting will be held prior to the suspension of any student. At this meeting, the student will be entitled to:
 - a. a written or oral statement of the charges;
 - b. if the student denies the charges, a summary of the evidence against the student will be presented; and,
 - c. the student will be provided an opportunity to explain his or her conduct.
2. The meeting shall precede suspension of the student except where the nature of the misconduct requires immediate removal. In such situations, the meeting will follow the suspension as soon as reasonably possible following the date of the suspension.
3. Following the suspension, the parent/guardian of a suspended student will be notified in writing. The notification will include the dates of the suspension, describe the student's misconduct, and the action taken by the principal (or designee).

EXPULSION PROCEDURE

When the principal or assistant principal (or designee) recommends to the Executive Director (or designee) that a student be expelled from school, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The Executive Director (or designee) may conduct an expulsion meeting, or may appoint one of the following persons to conduct the expulsion meeting:
 - a. legal counsel
 - b. a member of the administrative staff so long as the staff member has not expelled the student during the current school year and was not involved in the events giving rise to the expulsion.
2. The Executive Director, or the other person designated above assigned to conduct the expulsion meeting, may continue the initial suspension of a student beyond 10 school days to the date he/she makes a determination on the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken if the continued suspension is necessary in order to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of:
 - a. An interference with an educational function or school purposes; or
 - b. A physical injury to the student, other students, school employees, or visitors to the school.
3. An expulsion will not take place until the student and the student's parent/guardian are given notice of their right to appear at an expulsion meeting conducted by the Executive Director or the person designated above. Failure to request and to appear at this meeting will be deemed a waiver of rights administratively to contest the expulsion or to appeal it to the school board of directors.
4. The notice of the right to an expulsion meeting will be in writing, delivered by certified mail or by personal delivery, and contain the reasons for the expulsion and the procedure for requesting the meeting.
5. If the student or the student's parent/guardian requests an expulsion meeting, the Executive Director or person designated above will issue written notice of the date, time, and place of the expulsion meeting, delivered by certified mail or personal delivery, and advise the student and parent/guardian of their opportunity to present evidence to challenge the expulsion.
6. At the expulsion meeting, the principal or assistant principal (or designee), will present evidence to support the charges against the student. The student or parent/guardian will have the opportunity to answer the charges against the student, and to present evidence to support the student's position. *An attorney may not represent the student at the expulsion meeting, but the attorney may be available for consultation outside the meeting room during the course of the expulsion meeting.*
7. If an expulsion meeting is held, the person conducting the expulsion meeting will make a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting, take any action found to be appropriate, and give notice of the action taken to the student and the student's parent/guardian.

NO RIGHT TO APPEAL

The student or parent/guardian has no right to appeal an expulsion decision to the school board of directors as they have chosen not to hear expulsion appeals.

PROCEDURAL DISCIPLINE GUIDE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with a disability are subject to the discipline rules adopted by the board of directors and, therefore, may be suspended or expelled for any violation(s) of the rules for which nondisabled students could also be suspended or expelled. In accordance with I.C. 20-33-8 and 511 IAC 7-44, administrators may take the following disciplinary actions:

REMOVAL UP TO TEN (10) CONSECUTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

A student with a disability may be removed from school for up to ten (10) consecutive instructional days for a violation of school rules. Removal for any part of an instructional day constitutes a day of removal. A removal constitutes a suspension as defined at IC 20-33-8-7 and the student with a disability must be afforded the same suspension due process procedures as are provided to nondisabled students.

A short-term removal of a student pursuant to the student's individualized education program (IEP) is not a removal. An in-school suspension is not considered a removal as long as the student has the opportunity to progress appropriately in the general education curriculum, receives the special education services specified in the student's IEP, and participates with nondisabled students as the student would have in the student's current placement.

Educational services do not have to be provided to the student with a disability during the first ten (10) cumulative days of removal if educational services are not provided to nondisabled students who have been similarly suspended.

SERIES OF REMOVALS

Additional removals of up to ten (10) consecutive instructional days for each separate act of misconduct are permissible in the same school year if they do not constitute a pattern of removals resulting in a change of placement. If a student with a disability is removed for more than ten (10) cumulative instructional days in a school year, school officials must determine if a change of placement has occurred. A change of placement may occur if the series of removals exceeds ten (10) cumulative instructional days, the student's behavior is substantially similar to the student's behavior in the previous incidents that resulted in removals, and the proximity of the removal are close in time. If the student's parent/guardian disagrees with the school's decision as to whether there is a change of placement, the parent/guardian may request mediation and/or expedited due process hearing.

If the removals exceed ten (10) cumulative instructional days, but do not constitute a change of placement, educational services must be provided to the student, beginning on the eleventh (11th) cumulative instructional day of removal. School personnel, in consultation with at least one (1) of the student's teachers, determine the extent to which services are needed to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and progress toward meeting the goals of the student's IEP.

If a pattern of removals constitutes a change of placement, the student must be afforded the due process procedures below.

REMOVALS THAT RESULT IN A CHANGE OF PLACEMENT

A change of placement occurs when a student with a disability has been removed from school for more than ten (10) consecutive instructional days or a series of removals exceeds ten (10) cumulative instructional days and constitutes a pattern that results in a change of placement. When a decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement, the principal must notify the parent/guardian of the student of the decision on the date that the decision is made. The parent/guardian must also be provided with the notice of procedural safeguards described in 511 IAC 7-37-1.

Within ten (10) instructional days of the decision to remove the student, the case conference committee must meet to conduct a manifestation determination. If the case conference committee determines that the student's conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may not be disciplined and the student must return to the placement from which the student was removed unless the parent/guardian and school agrees to a change in the student's placement. The case conference committee must also either conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavioral intervention plan for the student or if a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the case conference committee must review the plan and modify it, if necessary, to address the student's behavior.

If the case conference committee determines the conduct of the student was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may be disciplined consistent with the due process procedures for nondisabled students. The parent/guardian of the student may request mediation and/or an expedited due process hearing to challenge the manifestation determination of the case conference committee.

If the student has been removed from the school pending the due process proceedings, the student must return to the placement from which the student was removed after ten (10) consecutive instructional days unless the parent/guardian of the student and school agree otherwise or an expulsion examiner orders a continuation of the removal in accordance with IC 20-33-8-23.

If a change of placement is ordered, the student must be provided educational services during the removal period. The case conference committee must determine the appropriate services that will be provided that will enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, progress toward meeting the goals of the student's IEP, and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the student's behavior.

DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT PLAN

As a part of the emergency procedures in place in our school, no student will be restrained and/or placed in seclusion by school staff unless the student's behavior poses an imminent risk of injury to him/herself or others. However, significant violations of the law including assaults on students and staff will be reported to the police. As soon as possible after any such use of restraint and/or seclusion, the parents or guardian will be informed when any of these actions have occurred and will be provided with a detailed account of the incident including the circumstances that led to the use of restraint and or seclusion. Please read our full Seclusion and Restraint Policy, which can be found here: [Seclusion and Restraint Policy](#)

Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy

The School Board is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The Board encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community. Bullying behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, and psychological abuse as provided herein. The Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. Engaging in "cyberbullying," which is bullying that occurs through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or cellular telephone or other wireless or cellular communications device also is prohibited. This policy applies when a student is on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or, using property or equipment provided by the school. Additionally, this policy applies regardless of the physical location when:

- A. the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending the School Corporation; and
- B. the bullying behavior results in a substantial interference with school discipline or an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment.

Bullying as defined in State law means overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts committed, aggression, or any other behaviors committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- A. places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to the targeted student's person or property;
- B. has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
- C. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
- D. has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, and privileges provided by the school.

This type of behavior is a form of harassment, although it need not be based on any of the legally protected characteristics, such as sex, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. It includes, but is not limited to, such behaviors as stalking, intimidation, menacing behavior, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. It also includes the use of digital or electronic communications to engage in such behaviors.

However, Indiana law exempts the following from the definition of "bullying":

- A. Participating in a religious event.
- B. Acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger.
- C. Participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's rights protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 31 of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, or both.

- D. Participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one or more adults.
- E. Participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent.
- F. Engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

Any student who believes s/he has been or is currently the victim of bullying should immediately report the situation to any staff member. The student also may report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator. This report may be made anonymously. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Executive Director. Complaints against the Executive Director should be filed with the Board President. A parent may file a complaint on behalf of a student in the same manner.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student. Reports may be made to those identified above. Staff members who fail to report bullying or who fail to conduct an investigation when assigned that duty are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Once a complaint about bullying behavior has been received, the principal (or designee) will initiate an investigation of the alleged incident within three (3) school days.

If, during an investigation of reported acts of bullying and/or harassment, the investigator believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile learning environment and may have constituted unlawful discriminatory harassment based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, or disability, the investigator will report the act of bullying and/or harassment to one (1) of the Compliance Officers so that it may be investigated in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Title IX Policy.

If the investigator finds an instance of bullying behavior has occurred, prompt and appropriate action or responses shall be taken to address the behavior wherever it occurs including, as appropriate, disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students, discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Bullying acts shall be reported to law enforcement officials immediately upon determining that a report to law enforcement is necessary.

Discovery Charter School requires that all school administrators develop and implement procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences AND remedial responses to a student or staff member who commits an act of bullying:

Factors for Determining Consequences:

1. Age, development, and maturity level of parties involved Degree of harm
2. Nature and severity of the behavior(s)
3. Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior(s)
4. Context in which the alleged incident occurred.

Examples of Consequences:

1. Admonishment
2. Temporary removal from classroom Loss of privileges
3. Classroom or administrative detention
4. Referral to administration
5. In-school suspension
6. Out of school suspension
7. Expulsion

8. Legal action

The parents of the targeted student and the reported bully shall be notified of the alleged bullying incident at the beginning of the investigation, the findings of the investigation at the conclusion of the investigation, and, as appropriate, any remedial action that has been or will be taken to the extent disclosure is permitted by law. In addition to discipline, remedial action may include support services for the targeted student and bullying education for the bully, among other actions.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying. Making intentionally false reports about bullying for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and making intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

The Corporation shall maintain a link on its internet website to the internet website resource page maintained by the Indiana Department of Education that provides parents and school officials with resources or best practices regarding the prevention and reporting of bullying and cyberbullying.

Confidentiality

To the extent appropriate and/or legally permitted, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations.

Safe School Committee

In accordance with State law, there shall be a Safe School Committee in each school within this Corporation.

The Administration is directed to develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy. Guidelines shall include reporting and investigative procedures, as needed. The complaint procedure established by the Administration shall be followed.

Observation, Volunteering and Visitation Policy

Classroom Observations

Discovery Charter School provides unique and exemplary educational programs. These programs have attracted the attention of many other interested educators throughout Indiana and surrounding states. It is the position of Discovery Charter School that sharing ideas and programs with fellow educators is good public relations.

The following guidelines will be observed to facilitate the most desirable process for visitation:

A. All requests for general visitation will be coordinated by the principal in cooperation with building staff.

B. All requests for specific visitations will be sent directly to the principal for coordination. Requests must state the reasons for the visit, the amount of time requested for the visit, and the dates requested for the visit. Requests must be submitted no less than two (2) business days in advance of any requested visitation date. Requests for visitations made by persons who are not the parent or legal guardian of a student in a classroom, but at the request of student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), must be accompanied with an unlimited written authorization to release information between the third-party visitor and school personnel.

C. The principal shall be responsible for determining the desirable number of visits, so it does not infringe on the educational opportunities of the students. The principal shall be instructed that multiple visits within one (1) grading period should be discouraged. Visitations may be limited to no more than 2 hours. Visitors shall not be permitted to interact or otherwise work with any student(s) during the instructional day.

D. Visitations should be structured by the principal in cooperation with teacher(s) involved to assure minimal infringement on the educational experience of students.

1. Other staff should be utilized to accompany visitors during the visitation.
2. Visitors will not be allowed to interrupt instructional practices.
3. Visitors shall not use recording devices at any time on school property during the visitation period.
4. Visitors will not be allowed to ask questions of teachers, students or other staff members during instructional time. Any questions need to be directed to the designee assigned to accompany the visitor outside of the instructional setting.
5. Teacher(s) and/or principal may determine the hours and days that are the least intrusive of student instruction for any arranged visitation.
6. The principal and/or teacher may determine that a visitation must be cancelled without advanced notice when circumstances warrant.

7. The principal or designee may terminate any observation at his/her discretion.

E. Any questions regarding school visitation should be directed to the principal.

Parent/Guardian Volunteer Opportunities

There are numerous ways that parent/guardian can be involved in a child's education in addition to parental/family educational opportunities. Discovery Charter School has an active Parent Advisory Council that provides additional opportunities for getting involved.

Prior to volunteering at the school, each parent/guardian must:

1. have an approved background check on file
2. adhere to HIPPA and FERPA privacy laws

Please note: **Parent/guardians are not allowed to bring siblings to the school while volunteering or attending learning experiences. Bringing siblings provides a distraction and does not allow the parent/guardian volunteer to give undivided attention to our Discovery students. Additionally, parents/guardians that are not chosen as a chaperone should not show up at Learning Experience locations to join the group unless otherwise directed by the classroom teacher.**

All volunteers are required to undergo a background check annually. Information on the process for obtaining a background check can be found on the following link: <https://www.discoverycharter.org/volunteer>

Additional information regarding background checks:

- A volunteer background check will expire one year from date of completion and must be completed annually to be considered for volunteer opportunities.
- Only those with an approved background check status are qualified to volunteer.
- All volunteers must sign in and out in the main office.

Visitation

There may be other times when parents/guardians may visit the school (have lunch with their student, mystery reader, etc.). In those situations, the parent/guardian will need to present their state issued, picture ID to be scanned upon entry into the building if they do not have a background check on file.

Discovery Breastfeeding Policy

Discovery Charter School supports the rights of breastfeeding mothers and their children. If you find yourself needing to breastfeed your child while at Discovery and are unable to find a comfortable location to do so, please feel free to ask the office for assistance.

Conflict Resolution Policy

Purpose

The Board welcomes inquiries, suggestions, and constructive criticism from parents/guardians, District residents or community groups regarding the District's programs, personnel, operations and facilities. The Board adopts this policy to establish procedures for seeking appropriate resolution to complaints.

Authority

The Board encourages stakeholders who have complaints about Board policy and District procedures, District programs, personnel, operations and facilities to follow the complaint procedure established in this policy. Any requests, suggestions or complaints first directed to individual Board members and/or the Board shall be referred to the Executive Director or legal representation for consideration, investigation and action. If further action is warranted, based on the initial investigation, such action shall be in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

The Board shall ensure this policy is posted on the district's publicly accessible website.

The District is under no obligation to act on an anonymous complaint, except as required by law.

Delegation of Responsibility

The District shall annually notify stakeholders of this policy and established complaint procedures via the District website, newsletters, posted notices, student handbooks and/or other efficient communication methods.

Definitions

Types of Complaints:

1. **General Complaints** are defined as complaints, concerns and suggestions about Board Policy, District procedures, programs, operations, facilities and personnel that are not Educational Complaints.

2. **Educational Complaints:**
 - a. **General Educational Inquiries** are defined as complaints, concerns, and suggestions about the District's curriculum, assessments, and instruction that are not specific to one's own child and/or his/her current course of study.
 - b. **Specific Educational Inquiries** are defined as complaints, concerns, and suggestions about the District's curriculum, assessments, and instruction that are specific to one's own child and/or his/her current course of study.

Guidelines

Educational Complaint Procedure

General Educational Inquiries shall be directed to the school principal.

Specific Educational Inquires shall follow the General Complaint Procedure process as outlined in this policy.

General Complaint Procedure

It is the intent of the Board that complaints, concerns, and suggestions be addressed and/or resolved at the lowest appropriate level.

At all levels of this procedure, district employees shall make a determination as to whether the complaint should proceed as outlined in this policy or if the complaint should be submitted through a specialized complaint process addressed in a separate Board policy, District procedure or administrative regulation that is directly related to the nature of the complaint.

First Level - Complaints and requests shall be addressed initially to the concerned employee, who shall discuss it with the complainant and attempt to provide a reasonable explanation or take appropriate action within the employee's authority.

As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter and the resolution to the building principal or immediate supervisor.

Second Level - If the issue cannot be resolved satisfactorily at the first level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the building principal or the employee's immediate supervisor.

Third Level - If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the building principal or immediate supervisor, the complainant should provide a written summary of their complaint with the Executive Director or designee. The principal or supervisor shall provide to the Executive Director or designee a report that includes the specific nature of the complaint, brief statement of relevant facts, how the complainant has been affected adversely, the action requested, and the reasons why such action should be taken or not taken.

Fourth Level - Should the matter not be resolved by the Executive Director or designee or is beyond his/her authority and requires Board action, the Complainant may bring the issue to the Board by submitting a written report to the Board President. This written report should include the specific nature of the complaint, a brief statement of relevant facts, how the Complainant has been affected adversely, the action requested and reasons why such actions should or should not be taken.

After receipt of this written complaint/report, the Board will review and determine next steps. Thereafter, the Board shall provide the Complainant with a written decision.

Please note:

Personnel complaints directed toward a specific individual are not subject for discussion, comment, or review at a public meeting of the Board of Directors.

At any point in the process of a complaint, the Executive Director or Board may designate legal representation to oversee the investigation.

Any review by the Executive Director or Board will be focused on the following two questions:

1. Did an action occur that violated school policy?
2. Was there an application of board policy that involved professional judgement in which the professional judgement was unreasonable, unethical, or otherwise violated the law?

The Board's decision on the matter will be final, and it will not provide a hearing to other complainants on the same issue.

Note: The time period between receipt and resolution of any complaint shall not exceed sixty (60) calendar days unless circumstances require additional time.

Complaint Procedure for Federal Programs

Complaints alleging violations of law in the District's administration of federally-funded programs shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure.

The complainant shall submit a written, signed statement to the District's administration office that includes

1. Contact information of the individual or organization filing the complaint.
2. Alleged federal program violation.
3. Facts supporting the alleged violation.
4. Supporting documentation, such as information on discussions, correspondence, or meetings with District staff regarding the complaint.

District staff shall forward complaints to the District administrator responsible for federal programs, who will notify the Executive Director and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing.

The District administrator responsible for federal programs shall conduct an independent investigation, which may include but not be limited to:

1. On-site visit to the building that is the subject of the complaint.
2. Opportunity to present evidence by all individuals and/or organizations involved.
3. Opportunity for participants to ask questions of each other and witnesses.

When the investigation is completed, the District administrator responsible for federal programs shall prepare a written report with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The report shall include:

1. Name of the individual or organization filing the complaint.
2. Nature of the complaint.
3. Summary of the investigation.
4. Recommended resolution.
5. Reasons for the recommended resolution.

The District administrator responsible for federal programs shall submit the written report to the Executive Director or designee, who will determine whether further investigation is required and/or the District's final response.

All individuals and/or organizations making the complaint or that are the subject of the complaint shall be notified of the resolution of the complaint by the Executive Director or designee.

The District administrator responsible for federal programs shall ensure that the resolution of the complaint is implemented.

School Communication Policy

The Board of Discovery Charter School believes that clear and timely communication is an important priority. To that end, it is the policy of Discovery Charter School that Discovery School personnel (including administration, teaching staff and the Board of Directors) should answer all inquiries within 24 hours of receipt (or immediately in case of emergency). If a complete response cannot be made within 24 hours, communication to that effect should be made within 24 hours and then a complete response should be made as soon as possible.

School Civility Policy

Note: Discovery Charter School “staff” includes all employees within the DCS building.

Staff of DCS will treat parent/guardians and other members of the public with respect and expect the same in return. DCS is committed to maintaining orderly educational and administrative processes, in keeping the school and administrative offices free from disruptions and preventing unauthorized persons from entering the school grounds and building.

This policy promotes mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among DCS staff, parents/guardians, and the public. This policy is not intended to deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of expression, but only to maintain, to the extent possible and reasonable, a safe, harassment free workplace for our students and staff. In the interest of presenting DCS employees as a positive role model to the children of our school, as well as the community, DCS encourages positive communication and discourages volatile, hostile, or aggressive speech or actions. DCS seeks public cooperation in this goal.

1. Any individual who disrupts or threatens to disrupt the school or office operations, threatens the health and safety of students or staff, willfully causes property damage, uses loud and/or offensive language which could provoke a violent reaction will be directed to leave the school property by school administration.
2. If any member of the public uses obscenities or speaks in a demanding, loud, insulting and/or demeaning manner whether it be in person or on the phone, school administration or the employee to whom the remarks are directed will calmly and politely admonish the speaker to communicate civilly. If the abusive party does not take corrective action, the school administration or the employee will verbally notify the abusing party that the meeting, conference or telephone conversation is terminated. If the offending person is on school property, he/she will be directed to leave promptly by the school administration.
3. When an individual is directed to leave under Paragraph 1 and 2 circumstances, the school administration will discuss future actions with the DCS Board. Those actions may include informing the disruptive person that he/she will be guilty of a misdemeanor in accordance with Indiana Criminal Code IC 35-43-2 if he/she reenters the school within 30 days of being directed to leave or within 7 days if the person is a parent/guardian of a student attending DCS. If an individual refuses to leave upon request or returns before the applicable period of time, school administration or designee may notify law enforcement officials.

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/guardians and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parent/guardians or eligible students should submit to school administration [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parent/guardians or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write to the administration [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the School will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Directors; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice for Directory Information

[Note: Per 34 C.F.R. § 99.37(d), a school or school district may adopt a limited directory information policy. If a school or school district does so, the directory information notice to parent/guardians and eligible students must specify the parties who may receive directory information and/or the purposes for which directory information may be disclosed.]

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Discovery Charter School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Discovery Charter School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the Discovery Charter School to the contrary in accordance with Discovery Charter School procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Discovery Charter School to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent/guardian's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parent/guardians have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. **[Note: These laws are Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).]**

Disclosure of Information to Third Parties

If you do not want Discovery Charter School to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the Discovery Charter School in writing by September 1 of the current school year. Discovery Charter School has designated the following information as directory information: **[Note: an LEA may, but does not have to, include all the information listed below.]**

- **Student's name**
- **Address**
- **Telephone listing**
- **Electronic mail address**
- **Photograph**
- **Date and place of birth**
- **Major field of study**
- **Dates of attendance**

- **Grade level**
- **Participation in officially recognized activities and sports**
- **Weight and height of members of athletic teams**
- **Degrees, honors, and awards received**
- **The most recent educational agency or institution attended**
- **Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user**
- **A student ID number or other unique personal identifier that is displayed on a student ID badge, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.**

Discovery Charter School

School-Home Contract

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We value your role in working to help your child achieve high academic standards. The purpose of the school-parent/guardian contract is to communicate a common understanding of home and school responsibilities to assure that every student attains high academic standards leading to a quality education. The following information will serve as an outline of various ways you and the school staff can build and maintain a partnership of shared responsibility for your child's learning.

School's Responsibility:

- Provide high quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children to meet Local, State, and National student academic standards.
- Provide you with assistance in understanding academic achievement standards and assessments and how to monitor your child's progress.
- Provide opportunities for ongoing communication between you and your child's teachers through:
 - Annual parent/guardian teacher conferences
 - Frequent reports regarding your child's progress
 - Opportunities to talk with members of the staff, volunteer in class, and observe classroom activities.
- Provide the staff with appropriate professional development activities.
- Maintain highly qualified teachers.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.

Parent/Guardian's Responsibility:

- Ensure that my child attends school daily and arrives to school on time.
- Encourage my child to follow the rules and regulations of the school.
- Monitor my child's homework.
- Attend parent/guardian teacher conferences and participate, when appropriate, in discussions relating to the education of my child.
- Volunteer in my child's school and classroom if time or schedule permits.
- Communicate positive information regarding teachers, administration, and other school personnel when discussing school with my child.
- Seek information regarding my child's progress by conferencing with teachers, administration, and other district personnel.

Student's Responsibility:

- Attend school regularly.
- Complete and turn in all classroom and homework assignments on time.
- Accept responsibility for my own actions.
- Show respect for myself, other people, and property.
- Make the effort to do my best to learn.
- Resolve conflicts peacefully.

School, Parent/guardians, and Student Responsibilities:

- High student expectation.
- Improve student academic achievement.
- Build and develop a partnership to assist the children of the school community achieve high academic standards.

Please review this contract with your child. The contents of the contract may be discussed with you during a parent/guardian teacher conference as it relates to your child's school progress.

Thank you for your support and involvement in your child's education.

I have read and discussed the contents of the document with my child as it relates to his/her education at Discovery Charter School. By signing, we are not only agreeing to the contents of this contract, but also all of the policies, guidelines, and procedures outlined in the Discovery Charter School Handbook