



DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL
800 CANONIE DRIVE | PORTER, IN 46304
219-983-9800 | DISCOVERYCHARTER.ORG

Policy Manual

Culture and Care Policy

Adopted: 2019

Last Revised:

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 in regards to 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 kids 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 very hard to maintain consistent messaging in these areas and we find it immensely positive when parents support and model these principles as well.

Sustainability Policy

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.

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



DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL
800 CANONIE DRIVE | PORTER, IN 46304
219-983-9800 | DISCOVERYCHARTER.ORG

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 classroom 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, and community engagement in goal-setting and decision-making.
3. Developing and monitoring indicators of progress toward greater sustainability.
4. 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.



DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL
800 CANONIE DRIVE | PORTER, IN 46304
219-983-9800 | DISCOVERYCHARTER.ORG

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.
6. At all school events and all events on school grounds, including events held by student and volunteer organizations, the use of reusable water bottles will be encouraged.

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. The effective communication of annual goals and objectives helps us to advance the efforts of the School.

Superintendent  Board President 