

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Amended June 2021



Governing Board Members

Clayton Becton, Chair
Cathy Townsend, Vice-Chair
Sandra Crouch, Secretary-Treasurer
Glenda Macon, Member
Art Cross, Board Member

Director of Operations: Ms. Sandy Krischke

School Principal: Ms. Tamara Gavin

Understanding Independence Classical Academy's Discipline Policy

Whereas discipline at Independence Classical Academy serves our educational mission, this policy is developed with our core values and pillars of character in mind.

The establishment of the *culture* at ICA is not only a necessary condition for our educational success, it is also a core component of our educational program. Our purpose is to create an intentional culture which seeks to draw students out of the youth culture that pervades much of their adolescent lives and into the community of learners, whereby each person is actively engaged in pursuing a habitual vision of greatness not only in themselves, but in others.

The foundation of discipline and order at Independence Classical Academy is the realization that an effective learning community demands certain fundamental norms of courtesy, ethics, and orderly behavior to fulfill its mission. The intent to create an orderly, disciplined community is evidenced by the Independence Classical dress code policy, a safe and closed campus, a constant focus on good character centered on the virtues of truth, goodness, and beauty.

We welcome children into the Independence Classical Academy program and family with the understanding that they will be on time for class, properly groomed, complete their assignments, follow rules of good classroom order, be honest, and follow the spirit and letter of the Student Code of Conduct. This Student Code of Conduct will be available to students and parents upon enrollment and electronically on our website. Parents and students must sign a document that they have read and understand the expectations set out in the Student Code of Conduct as well as Family Handbook at the beginning of each school year. Consequences of the failure to accept the ICA Code of Conduct will result in the forfeiture of a seat at ICA.

Unless there are clear mitigating circumstances, we hold that students are responsible and accountable for their actions. It is our conviction that students in the sixth through twelfth grades are entirely capable of living appropriately in the Independence Classical Academy culture. Students in the earlier grades will receive more guidance in developing good habits and character, an effort in which parents are also included.

We place a high premium on the teacher's personal investment in the student and we resist the practices that depersonalize so many schools. We do not relate to students principally under the rubrics of rules and regulations; rather, we emphasize the dignity of the teachers and students and of a culture marked by friendliness, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, and beauty. Within that framework, rules, regulations, and consequences are merely means to an end. Just as we expect teachers to expend considerable energy into coaching and directing the students to take on the educational goals of the school, we also expect teachers to encourage students in the face of difficult tasks and to praise them for work well done.

Students who do not live up to these fundamental expectations need to be corrected. In many cases, a verbal correction is sufficient. Faculty may expect this correction to suffice. If it does not, however, further penalties may be required, in accordance with our policy.

ICA distinguishes between academic deficiencies (which require an academic response and are addressed through remedial and corrective action) and nonacademic misbehavior.

The activity of learning requires students to be attentive and respectful to both peers and adults on campus. Students are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Character Pillars they have agreed to. If a student does misbehave, the consequences for the infraction will be immediate, relevant, and effectual. In evaluating consequences, teachers and administrators will determine if the act is a “first time,” a “repeated,” or a “habitual” offense.

The following curriculum insertions and consequence systems have been developed to adequately address, direct, as well as appropriately handle behavior and/or misconduct at Independence Classical Academy when appropriate.

Curriculum- our classical literature (exposed to all students at all grade levels) expresses the idea of living a virtuous life, and models examples of good character from lessons told in *Winnie the Pooh* and *Johnny Appleseed* to the consequences expressed in *Charles Dickens’ writings* our upper elementary will be exposed to. Our curricular content introduces behavioral expectations for both our small learning community and society.

Classroom Management – Our classroom management techniques and classroom rules are all approved by our school leaders and reflect our core values, which are tied to our Mission & Vision at ICA. In the classroom teachers will: set/define expectations, maintain consistency across campus, respond to individual needs, reinforce positive behavior, and set a culture inside the classroom which clearly exhibits the traits of classical education.

Within each Level of disciplinary infractions at ICA consequences may include detention, probation, suspension, and expulsion. These consequences are *defined* as follows:

- **Detention:** A teacher or an administrator may assign detention. Detention may be served before school, during lunch, or after school. The duration of detention may be between fifteen to sixty minutes, depending on the offense.
- **Probation (In School Suspension):** The Principal or School Administrator may assign probation. This will be an automatic three-days from attending a specific class. The student will be assigned work from the teacher of the specific class that he/she has been removed. The student will be allowed to reenter the class only after a consultation meeting including the student, parent/guardian, teacher, and administration.
- **Suspension:** Only the Dean, Principal, or School Administration may suspend a student. These suspensions shall last from one to five days in length. If the suspension is an out of school suspension, the student will not be allowed on campus for the duration of the suspension. The student will not be allowed to return to school until a parent or guardian attends a complete day of class with the student at the end of his suspension term and attends a meeting with the School Administrator. Suspensions may become recommendations for expulsion.

• **Expulsion:** Only the School Administration may recommend a student for expulsion. The decision to expel a student is reported to the appropriate party at the St. Lucie County School District and will then be directed to the School Board for final decision. *St. Lucie County Schools is the sole arbitrator for expulsions because if expelled from ICA, a student is expelled from all public schools in the county.*

Possible Infractions/Violations

In general, students must be polite and attentive or there may be consequences. Infractions and violations include but are not limited to:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a School building without authorization from an administrator.
- Students being caught out of area without reason or pass from class. All students should move only to the designated area and back again quickly and quietly for safety reasons.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to School property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to prevent people from entering or leaving School property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on School property or on public property that is within 500 feet of School property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in school-operated or private vehicles.
- Use of prohibited electronics while on campus
- Dress code infractions
- Disrespect of or acts of insubordination towards ICA faculty, staff, administration, or parents/volunteers. There will be a zero tolerance for the showing of disrespect of teachers and peers at all ICA campuses.
- Disruption of teaching/learning, including but not limited to: talking out in class, disturbing other students, moving from one's space without permission, etc..

In accordance with this policy, Independence Classical Academy has adopted the following procedure for disruptive behavior that requires an office referral. The teacher issues the student a *Discipline Referral* form, and the student is required to visit the Dean. The following actions will be taken according to the number of referrals. Referrals are cumulative throughout the school year but do not carry over from year to year.

Please note that any students serving suspension in a quarter (regardless of number of days) will not be on the honor roll for that quarter.

Students' misbehavior will not be used to "teach" the class a lesson.

At no time will a student's disciplinary record be discussed with another student or parent. However, other students or parents may be consulted regarding an incident in attempt to discern truth. Independence Classical Academy desires to educate all students who enter our school, expecting nothing less than the best from one another.

What Happens After 4 (Referrals)?

Independence Classical Academy cannot and does not tolerate students who disrupt class.

The following consequences, may be applied upon the issuance of a fourth referral:

- Student will not be allowed to attend annual end-of-year school events (field day, class parties). Alternative assignments will be given.
- Automatic suspension from attending field trips (6-12). Elementary students may attend **only if** accompanied by a parent.
- Student is ineligible for any ICA awards/scholarships for the current school year.
- Potential recommendation for expulsion.

Recommendation for expulsion from Independence Classical Academy will be mandatory for the following violations:

- Carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon;
- Sale or distribution of a drug or controlled substance;
- The commission of an act which, if committed by an adult, would be robbery or assault other than third-degree assault.

This is in line with the Sponsor's Zero Tolerance policy and is hereby adopted by Independence Classical Academy.

Dress Code

Students not within "code" may not attend class. Teachers are expected to enforce the dress code. Parents will be contacted to bring proper dress code attire if a student is in violation of dress code.

To ensure the safety and security of students and staff, each student will receive a copy of the Family Handbook which clearly outlines the behavior expectations of the School.

Students who become violent or disruptive shall, when safety permits, be removed from other students. If safety does not permit the removal of the student, the School staff will immediately remove the other students from the area and relocate them in a safe area. The student's parents/guardians shall be immediately notified and when possible, the student will be counseled by school staff. If a student becomes violent, law enforcement shall be immediately notified, and the appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken.

Students with chronic behavior issues may be referred to school's ESE Specialist to develop an individual behavior plan alongside the dean of students.

The School will always maintain a safe learning environment. The “Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act” (F.S. 1006.147) prohibits the bullying and/or harassment, including cyber bullying, of any public K-12 student or employee. Pursuant to this statute, the Florida Department of Education adopted a model policy to prohibit bullying and/or harassment and directed all school districts to adopt a similar policy. School districts are required to report all instances of bullying and/or harassment and to notify the parents of the bully and the parents of the victim. This required communication among parents, students and teachers concerning incidents of bullying will mitigate risk in this area. Schools should be a safe place for teachers and children to teach and learn. The School will follow the district policy to meet these required standards.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are neither immune from the Independence Classical Academy disciplinary process nor entitled to participate in programs when their behavior impairs the education of other students. ICA will comply with the Individuals and Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in disciplining these students. Students with disabilities who engage in disruptive activities and/or actions dangerous to themselves or others will be disciplined in accordance with their IEP, behavioral intervention plan, and school policy. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit an IEP team from instituting consequences for disorderly or unacceptable actions as a part of the student’s IEP. The Plan shall be subject to all procedural protections established by the IEP process.

All students, including students with disabilities, may be suspended for violations of the student code of conduct. The procedure for suspension is the same as outlined in the Student Handbook. For suspension of a student with disabilities, a team including the ESE Coordinator, and the Principal and Dean, will determine whether the student’s behavior is a manifestation of the disability and whether the student’s disability impaired his or her ability to control or understand the impact or consequences of the behavior. Once the team determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of the disability, disciplinary procedures shall be applied to the student in the same manner as applied to non-disabled students. A student with disabilities whose behavior is determined to be a manifestation of his or her disability may not be dismissed but will be disciplined in accordance with his or her IEP, any behavioral intervention, and this policy.

Appeal Process

Independence Classical Academy makes use of a three-step appeal process in dealing with student disciplinary matters. First, either the student or his/her parent/guardian corresponds, orally or in writing, with Principal. The Principal has the authority to informally determine routine matters of student discipline without consulting with other members of the administration. The Principal may choose to speak with whoever proves helpful under the circumstances.

If the situation is not resolved at this first level, then the student or his/her parent/guardian may communicate, orally or in writing, with the Director of Operations. If, on the other hand, the first step is skipped, then, absent unusual circumstances, the Director of Operations will direct the student/parent/guardian to first speak with the Principal. The Director of Operations may take any appropriate steps to hear all perspectives on the issue and then provide a plan on how to

resolve the appeal. The Director of Operations may require any person to submit a written statement about the situation.

If the student or his/her parent/guardian is not satisfied with the decision of the Director of Operations, then they shall submit a written statement to the Governing Board to the Parent Liaison at Independence Classical Academy. At the direction of the Parent Liaison, the Director of Operations shall place the item on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, or, if circumstances demand, call a special board meeting to address the issue. The Board Chair, or his/her designee, may call for others to present written statements as well prior to the meeting.

The appeal will be heard in an executive session of the Board unless the parent, guardian, or non-minor student requests the appeal be conducted in an open meeting. At the Board meeting, the student/parent/guardian and/or their representative shall have the opportunity to address the Board. The Board may also choose to hear from any other person. The Board shall allot time enough for all sides to be given an adequate hearing. The Board, having final authority over Independence Classical Academy, shall then deliberate and render a final decision, which is not subject to further appeal.

Students who do not live up to these fundamental expectations need to be corrected. In many cases, a verbal correction is sufficient. Faculty may expect this correction to suffice. If it does not, however, further penalties may be required.

We at ICA believe children want to behave in a way that pleases the adults around them and will naturally be inclined to follow the rules. However, we want to create a culture of excellence, and by creating a reward system for exemplary behavior, we feel that other students will want to model that behavior.

The administration will implement a reward system based on the 8 pillars of character, overall merit awards that recognize exceptionalism of one's character and citizenship-these will be in addition to the academic awards offered to students as a form of positive behavior support.

We recognize that a failure to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), due to a lack of incentives or negative attitudes toward children with challenging behaviors by administrators, policy makers and school personnel, is unacceptable. Students should not be excluded from school based solely upon inappropriate social behavior. Appropriate services can readily address and modify many of these behaviors, leading to more positive outcomes than simple punishment. We therefore will allow our teachers to implement inclusionary programs in their classrooms, as they see fit. We recognize that this can be a great incentive for students who are otherwise unable to control certain aspects of their behaviors-and is the reason we address these students specifically in our discipline policy.