

**INNOVATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**

**(Innovation Academy)**

**Parent/Student Handbook 2021/2022**

**Innovation Academy develops student innovators who grow up to be innovative, inventors, creative, problem solvers and agents of change.**

Innovation Academy does not discriminate with regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or handicapping condition in an educational or employment policy or practice. Questions or complaints should be addressed to the Executive Director.

Dear Innovation Academy Parents,

Welcome to the exciting year at Innovation Academy! Our school provides a STEM based learning environment using innovative curriculum with the collaborative support of parents, staff and the community to develop globally conscious student inventors. We look forward to an excellent year of academic success as we promote our vision of developing globally conscious student inventors. The administration and staff are exceedingly proud to have the opportunity to make a difference in the student's life and improve the learning for this high-quality charter school and supportive community.

We are so fortunate to have professional, dedicated faculty and staff members who strive to maintain high expectations, rigorous standards, and excellence in education for all our students. Our primary goal is to develop students who are actively engaged in the process of doing, building, and creating in a classroom enriched with activities promoting collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and social-emotional skills. With the tremendous support of our Innovation Academy parents, we can meet lofty academic goals and develop high achieving future STEM professionals. We value the contributions that you make to our school through your interest and support of our educational programs, and your commitments to all the children at Innovation Academy. We look forward to your continued involvement at home and at school. Together and united in efforts, we can make a tremendous difference in the successful outcome of every one of our students.

This Innovation Science and Technology Parent/ Student Handbook should serve as guides for you and your child in developing an understanding of expectations and procedures at school. Please feel free to visit our school and share with us any concerns, suggestions, or ideas that you may have as we all begin this exciting journey of an outstanding year at Innovation Academy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Omotoke Olatoye  
Executive Director

### School Directory

Title	Name	Contact Information
Executive Director	Dr. Olatoye	763-339-0642 oolatoye@innovationsta.org
Special Education Director	Ms. Lisa Greenberg	lgreenberg@designlearn.net
Office Manager	Ms. Ciera Scholl	763-2738684 cscholl@innovationsta.org
Pre-Kindergarten (PreK)	Ms. Hawa Muse	hmuse@innovationsta.org
Kindergarten	Ms. Kelly Border	kborder@innovationsta.org
First and Third Grade	Ms. Susan Rauchbauer	srauchbauer@innovationsta.org

Lead Teacher		
Second Grade	Ms. Samantha Pohlen	spohlen@innovationsta.org
ESL Teacher	Mr. Abdinasser Ahmed	aahmed@innovationsta.org
Fourth Grade	Ms. Heather Pierson	hpierson@innovationsta.org
Fifth and Sixth Grade	Ms. Juliette Pouliot	jpouliot@innovationsta.org
Special Ed Teacher		
Paraprofessional	Ms. Amina Hussein	ahussein@innovationsta.org
Educational Assistant/STEM Specialist	Ms. Allie Pybas	apybas@innovationsta.org
Educational Assistant/Lunch Assistant	Ms. Abigail Babalola	ababalola@innovationsta.org

### **Vision Statement**

Innovation Science and Technology is committed to developing globally conscious students.

### **Innovation Academy Mission Statement**

Innovation Academy will develop talented student innovators using innovative curriculum with the collaborative support of staff, parents, and community. Our healthy school climate fosters personalized learning and ignites the power of imagination and creativity in our students who will grow to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, and agents of change.

### **School History**

The founder of the school, Dr. Olatoye, along with the founding team saw the need to design a high-quality charter school that would close the achievement gap in science. Repeatedly, the test scores of students labeled underprivileged are significantly lower than other students. The teaching of science has been customarily neglected in lower grades as schools focus intently on reading and math. This approach leads to an ever-increasing gap in developing problem-solving skills necessary for success in science, engineering, and innovation. Many schools do not begin science and engineering curriculum until students are older, missing the critical years when natural curiosity leads to deep learning and creative solutions.

The Innovation Academy founding team shares in the common aspiration that age is no barrier to the learning of science. Studies show that the underprivileged lag behind in their conceptual and procedural knowledge of science. Another problem confronting the learning of science in schools is that many schools approach science in the lower grades as a subject to read about rather than an active, hands-on experience where students learn by doing the science and making discoveries. The read about science approach does not make it relational to students and discourages students in the higher grades from pursuing science classes. Students continue to cringe at the word science. This should not be. Students should be encouraged to fall in love with science, math, engineering, and technology right when they step into the school, the same way we instill the love for learning reading and math.

Literacy is the key to the success of learning any content. Students must be scientifically literate, mathematically literate and technology literate. Our students will eagerly use their literacy, mathematical, and science skills by gathering information, making observations, writing hypotheses, researching topics, conducting experiments, collecting and analyzing data, inventing new things, and communicating data when given the opportunity to do, build, and create at all grade levels including Pre-K and kindergarten. Technology is integrated into all those processes. Our students are living in a world that is technologically driven and making technology transforming is a task that must be done. Our students will understand that technology is important and integral to modern life.

The underprivileged lag in their science proficiency. When they are denied the learning of science in schools, they fall behind compared to their counterparts who may have the opportunity outside school. Innovation Academy is designed to help our students grow as future STEM professionals as they apply their literacy and numeracy skills in their learning of STEM. This approach makes our students better readers, writers, communicators, and problem solvers who will thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond!

## **Educational Philosophy and Instructional Approach:**

Our educational philosophy is that students become better thinkers and problem solvers when given the opportunity to do, build, create, and connect the curriculum learning to real world situations. At Innovation, the instructional approach will foster blended personalized learning and direct instruction. Students will be encouraged to take ownership of their learning in a teaching and learning environment that uses theme-based learning, project-based learning, student self-assessment, goal setting, timely feedback, and multi-tiered system of support, data for continuous improvement and high expectations for ALL students. The purpose of the educational program is to establish broad curriculum parameters for the charter that encompass the Minnesota Graduation Standards and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. The educational program is designed to meet four important criteria: 1) align with Minnesota Academic Content Standards and Benchmarks, 2) Federal Every Student Succeeds Act, 3) National Standards, and 4) relevant and responsive to industrial needs. Innovation implements to fidelity standard based curriculum, instruction, and assessments.

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

#### **K-6, Monday through Thursday**

**8:30 a.m.** Teachers arrive

**9:00-9:15 a.m.** Buses and car-riders arrive/breakfast served

**9:15 a.m.** Homeroom begins/Tardy bell rings

**4:10 p.m.** Afternoon Announcements

**4:15 p.m.** Dismissal for students

**4:30 p.m.** Dismissal for teachers/staff

**5:00 p.m.** Building closes - Executive Director and Office Manager leave

**K-6-Friday-Half Day**  
**9:30am-1:15pm**  
**1:15pm-4:30pm-PD for Staff**

**PreK**  
**Monday-Friday**  
**9:30am-1:30pm**  
**Parents pick up their children at 1:30pm**  
**There is no Midday bus for PreK.**

Arrival time for our students is **9:10 a.m.** (unless on early buses). Please do not drop students off prior to the official opening of school.

Please call before 3:30 PM if there are changes in your child's end of day transportation plan.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Daily student attendance is a key factor in student success in school. Being present each day contributes to a student feeling connected to the school and to the student's learning. Innovation Academy takes seriously our obligation to provide high quality, engaging, and purposeful learning experiences designed to meet students' needs and to prepare them for future opportunities. Our goal is to create and sustain a school with classrooms to which students are eager to go and learn. Innovation Academy welcomes you as a valued partner in supporting acceptable levels of school attendance for our students. We want to keep you informed of student attendance procedures that Innovation Academy follows to support this cooperative effort.

Beginning with the 2020- 2021 school year, Innovation Academy schools will follow the procedures below for student attendance. If you have any questions, please contact the Executive Director.

### **Excused Absences and Tardies**

During the 2021-2022 school year, Innovation Academy recognizes that COVID-19 may cause extended or repeated absences. In cases where COVID-19 is the cause for a student's absence, due to illness, quarantine, or isolation requirements, Innovation Academy will work with each family regarding absences.

Parents of students who are absent or tardy must inform the school **in writing** of the reason for the absence or tardy no later than upon the student's return to school (emailed message is acceptable). School staff records the student's absence or tardy for each day as "excused" or "unexcused". **Please be aware that, if absences and tardies that are excused solely by**

**parent explanation become excessive, the school will require additional documentation to ensure compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.**

### **Acceptable Excuses**

1. Absences and tardies are excused for the following reasons with **written explanation** from the parent:
  - a. illness of the student
  - b. doctor or dental appointment
  - c. approval from administration prior to the absence
  - d. death in family/funeral
  - e. school-sponsored activities
  - f. observance of a nationally recognized religious holiday if such holiday is verified and the school is notified in advance.
2. Absences and tardies are excused for the following reasons with appropriate **written documentation**:
  - a. hospitalization or extended illness (with documentation from physician)
  - b. mandatory court appearance (with court documentation)
3. A student whose absence is excused due to the observance of a nationally recognized religious holiday is not deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, which the student missed by reason of such absence.
4. Absences and tardies that do not meet the criteria for being excused absences or tardies are considered unexcused absences or tardies. Students may be denied full credit for assignments missed due to an unexcused absence or tardy.
5. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of the administration or to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

### **Excessive Absences or Tardies Without Adequate Written Documentation**

**If absences or tardies excused solely based on parent explanation become excessive, the school will require additional documentation to ensure compliance with the compulsory student attendance law.** Such additional documentation may include written documentation from a physician treating the student for a chronic or extended illness or court documentation resulting from student involvement in a legal matter.

School principals and school counselors regularly collaborate with school social workers to monitor student attendance and communicate with students, parents, and families regarding excessive absences unsupported by adequate documentation.

For the purposes of avoiding excessive tardiness to school that results in frequent loss of instructional time, **five (5) tardies to school without adequate written documentation will be considered the equivalent of one (1) absence. The following procedures are followed when a student has been absent excessively without adequate written documentation:**

### **First Notification Letter**

1. Within the first semester, if a student accumulates five absences excused solely based on parent explanation, the school will notify the parent of the student (First Notification Letter) and list the dates the student has been absent.

2. During the second semester, if a student accumulated fewer than five (5) absences excused solely based on parent explanation within the first semester, but the student subsequently accumulates ten (10) such absences during the second semester, the school will notify the parent of the student (First Notification Letter) and list the dates the student has been absent.

### **Second Notification Letter**

1. Within the first semester, after the First Notification Letter has been sent to a parent as required in section (a)(i), the school will send a Second Notification Letter to the parent if the student accumulates ten (10) absences without adequate documentation. The Second Notification Letter will list the dates the student has been absent, and the parent will be advised that the matter may be referred to the District Court Service.

2. During the second semester, after the First Notification Letter has been sent to a parent as required in section (a)(ii), the school will send a Second Notification Letter to the parent if the student accumulates an eleventh (11th) absence without adequate documentation. The Second Notification Letter will list the dates the student has been absent, and the parent will be advised that the matter may be referred to the District Court Service.

### **Student Support Meeting**

1. Within the first semester, after the school has sent the First and Second Notification Letters and upon the eleventh (11th) absence without adequate documentation, the school will schedule a mandatory Student Support Meeting with the parent to address the excessive number of absences and develop a plan of support. The Student Support Meeting will include the parent, student, administrator, school counselor, and school social worker.

2. During the second semester, after the school has sent the First and Second Notification Letters and upon the twelfth (12th) absence without adequate documentation, the school will schedule a mandatory Student Support Meeting with the parent to address the excessive number of absences and develop a plan of support. The Student Support Meeting will include the parent, student, school-level administrator, school counselor, and school social worker.

3. If the parent has been adequately notified of the Student Support Meeting but fails to attend the meeting, the meeting will be rescheduled at the Executive Director's office.

### **Notification of Absences**

Minnesota State Law requires that parents be contacted when a child is absent from school. Parents are asked to call the school when their child is going to be absent. Please call the office before 8:30 AM. If the parent is unable to call, school personnel will contact the parent as early in the day as possible.



### *MAKE-UP WORK FOR EXCUSED & UNEXCUSED ABSENCES*

Students are expected to make up all missed work from an absence within 10 school days upon the student's return to school. If the student does not complete the make-up work within that time frame, the student may be denied full credit for that assignment. Assignments made prior to an absence are due upon the return to school. Exceptions may be granted by individual teachers. Teachers are expected to contact parents regarding the completion of makeup work to ensure that the student completed the work and meets the 10-school day deadline.

### Incomplete work

A grade of incomplete (I) will be entered on a student's report card when make-up work has not been completed, and the allowed make-up time extends across the end of a grading period into another. After make-up work is completed, a corrected grade will be submitted by the teacher. If the work is not completed by the established deadline, the incomplete will be changed to the computed average with the incomplete work averaged as a zero.

### *RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE*

1. Outstanding school attendance recognition will be presented at the end of each school year to students who have been absent no more than 5 days and tardy no more than 5 days.
2. **At Innovation Academy**, perfect school attendance recognition will be presented at the end of each school year to students who have 0 absences and no more than 5 tardies.

### *LATE ARRIVALS*

**Students arriving IN THE CLASSROOM after 9:15 AM are considered tardy.** Tardies can adversely affect a student's progress because the student misses the instruction at the beginning of the day. Tardies will be noted on attendance records.

**Parents must sign their child** in at the office and the student will receive a tardy pass before proceeding to class.

### *HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT REQUESTS*

Parents are asked to call the school prior to 9:00 A.M. if they would like for teachers to have the assignments and make-up work ready by 4:15 PM.

### *EARLY RELEASE POLICY*

To assure the safety of the children, release of pupils during the school day requires these procedures to be followed:

1. The parent (or other named adult in the note) **MUST COME** into the school and sign your child out through the electronic security system. Identification will be required to complete this process.
2. If any person other than the parent or guardian is to pick up your child, the school **MUST** have a statement from the parent or guardian specifying the necessary information. Please inform designee that identification will be required.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each nine weeks for grades K-5. Conferences are scheduled three times during the year but are also available upon request between the teacher and the parents throughout the school year.

### Grading Policy

The parent and the child have a right to know how the student performs in relation to his/her ability, in relation to established standards, and in relation to school and national norms. At Innovation Academy, such information is made available to parents and students by a full range of evaluation and reporting procedures. The standard testing program reflects the student's ability and his level of achievement in relation to school and national norms. Conferences provide the opportunity to provide more in-depth communication regarding the performance of the individual student within the content of a class.

### Kindergarten-Fifth grade

The improvement of learning is the main function of evaluation; therefore, a letter grade should measure the degree to which educational programs have succeeded in helping students master material within the level assigned. This material may be on or below grade level. The proper function of a letter grade should be to assess knowledge and understanding and not for reward or punishment. Attitudes, abilities, disabilities, and work habits may have a bearing on the level of the student's mastery of material. The letter grade should reflect student performance as objectively and accurately as possible and be understood by the teacher, the student, and the parent.

### GRADING SCALE:

- A: 90 – 100 %
- B: 80 – 89 %
- C: 70 – 79%
- D: 60 – 69%
- F: 59% or below

### *INTERIM REPORTS*

All schools are required to send interim reports in each subject area to parents of students who have an average of "N," "D" or "F" in that subject. These reports are sent home during the middle of each nine weeks grading period.

### INTERIM REPORT PERIODS AND REPORT CARDS

Report Period	Interim Date	Interim Sent	Report Cards Sent
1st Nine Weeks	Oct. 5	Oct. 9	Nov. 11
2nd Nine Weeks	Dec. 14	Dec. 18	Jan. 27
3rd Nine Weeks	March 1	March 5	April 1
4th Nine Weeks	May 10	May 14	June 10

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent teacher conferences are scheduled three times during the school year. Additional conferences can be arranged by calling the teacher ahead of time to schedule a meeting. Conferences can be held immediately between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. or from 4:15 – 4:30 . Due to safety concerns, unscheduled visits and/or conferences will not be allowed during the school day. Instructional time cannot be taken for conferences. Conferences should be held before or after school hours.

## **MULTIPLE HOUSEHOLD COMMUNICATION**

Upon request, Innovation Academy will make available to the non-custodial parent any information, unless otherwise instructed by the court.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

Homework may be assigned at the discretion of the teachers and shall be in accordance with the needs of the individual student. Homework can provide an essential communication link between the school and the home. One measure of a program or course is the quality of the work done at home by the student. A strong home-school partnership, with many lasting benefits for the individual student and his/her family, can be greatly enhanced by a sound program of homework. In addition, homework should be an important tool in developing independent thought, self-direction, and self-discipline. It can assist the student in developing good work habits and in the wise use of time.

Elementary teachers will not assign homework and tests during their grade level state testing window, weekends, or extended breaks. Students in grades K-5 should not be required to spend more than one hour each day on homework for all classes. The amount of homework should remain age appropriate, with less homework assigned in lower grades.

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION/SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY**

Homebound instruction is offered without cost to parents for any pupil who is unable to attend school for fifteen (15) days or more because of disability (injury, disease, emotional disorder, deformities, etc.) as determined and certified by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, or licensed clinical psychologist. All paperwork may be completed in advance of the student's absence in those cases where the physician can determine in advance the need for a student to be absent for fifteen or more days. For more information, please contact the school.

## **SCHOOL TRANSFERS**

Parents who plan to leave the Innovation community and transfer their child to another school must contact the school for a transfer form which is presented to the new school for proper transfer of student records. If you are moving to a new school district, please register your child within the 15-day time frame.

## **TELEPHONE USE**

*Please understand that instructional time cannot be used to RETURN OR ANSWER calls. Most return calls will be made after the students have left for the day.* Students should not be called

during the school day except in emergency situations. Students are not allowed to make phone calls home unless they have permission from the classroom teacher or the office staff.

## **CONDUCT/WEAPONS/DISCIPLINE**

The faculty and staff feel strongly that listening to and following directions is one of the most important skills that your child must learn. This skill is essential for your child to grow academically.

At Innovation Academy, you will hear about choices. Each student is responsible for the choices that he/she makes. Innovation Academy has adopted a positive school-wide behavior plan. All teachers, staff, and students are expected to implement and follow this plan.

We expect students to make appropriate choices on the bus, in the halls, cafeteria, assemblies, and in the classrooms. If the choices are inappropriate, natural consequences will be given.

If the student continues to make inappropriate choices, the teacher and/or administrator will be asking for your support with consequences at home.

Educating your young student is a team effort between home and school. Your support is essential.

### **CONDUCT**

An atmosphere for learning must exist in any school if quality education is to prevail.

### **WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS**

CARRYING, BRINGING, USING, OR POSSESSING ANY FIREARM, DEVICE, OR WEAPON WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE SCHOOL OR THE SCHOOL DIVISION IS PROHIBITED AND IS GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION. VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY SHALL REQUIRE THAT PROCEEDINGS FOR THE STUDENT BE INITIATED IMMEDIATELY BY THE PRINCIPAL. FOR A SPECIFIC LISTING OF ITEMS THAT ARE CONSIDERED TO BE WEAPONS OR DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS, SEE STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY.

Specific consequences for violations of this rule are listed in the Student Conduct Policy.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The violation of any of the rules of conduct as stated in the Student Conduct Code shall be subject to such disciplinary action as may be appropriate. Appropriate disciplinary action can range from a conference, warning, reprimand, assignment to the in-school disciplinary program, and out of school suspension, to expulsion.

All students at Innovation are entitled to the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights, and their rights will not knowingly be denied by the required code of conduct or by any disciplinary actions taken by the school. Our due process is aligned with the Fair Pupil Dismissal Act (MN Statute 121A.40 to 121A.56), the state law that governs student discipline.

Any student who exhibits any of the unacceptable student behaviors listed in this handbook or added to this list later will suffer immediate consequences. These consequences range from notification of parents, detention, and emergency removal from a school activity to suspension, expulsion, and/or a criminal prosecution.

### **DETENTION**

Detention may be held during lunch, recess time, or after school. For after school detention, students will have at least one day's notice to plan to be picked up from school. If a delay of detention is requested, parents must make that request in person.

### **SUSPENSION**

Prior to any suspension, the Director must hold an informal administrative conference with the student, except where it appears that the student will create an immediate and substantial danger to self or to surrounding persons or property. In such a case, the conference will take place as soon as practicable following the suspension. A written notice of suspension and the reasons for the suspension will be served upon the student at or before the time the suspension is to take effect, and upon the pupil's parent or guardian by mail within 48 hours of the conference. Students and parent or guardian may appeal a suspension within one school day of the suspension being issued. This appeal will be made to the Executive Director and heard by a disciplinary board made up of three staff members. Students may not attend classes until the appeal is heard but will be able to turn in work for the classes missed while waiting for the appeal and receive credit for that work.

### **EXPULSION**

A written notice of intent to expel any student will be made in writing and will include the reasonably convenient date, time, and place of the hearing. The hearing will be scheduled within ten days of the service of the written notice. No expulsion will be imposed without a hearing unless the right to a hearing is waived by the student and parent or guardian.

The student and parents or guardian will have a right to have a representative, including legal counsel, during the hearing, and respond to charges, present evidence, confront and cross-examine witnesses. The case will be heard by an expulsion committee, which consists of an administrator, school counselor or social worker, and three teachers. The notice of decision will be mailed to the student and parent or guardian via registered mail within 48 hours. Student and parent or guardian may appeal an expulsion within three school days of the expulsion being issued. This appeal will be made to the Executive Director and heard by the Board of Directors at their next regular meeting. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

### **STUDENT DISCIPLINE RECORDS**

It is the policy of the school that complete and accurate student discipline records be maintained. The collection, dissemination, and maintenance of student discipline records shall be consistent with applicable school policies and federal and state law, including the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. Ch. 13. Records will be destroyed pursuant to Innovation's Records Retention and Destruction Policy.

## **ILLNESS, INJURY AND MEDICATION**

Innovation has a part time school nurse or first-aid trained professional available to discuss or assist with medical problems or concerns.

### **ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING SCHOOL DAY**

Innovation Academy has a COVID-19 response plan. Symptoms that indicate a possible COVID-19 case will be treated according to the schools COVID-19 response plan.

If a student becomes ill or is injured during the school day, the student must obtain a nurse or office pass from the teacher and report to the nurse or main office. Upon examining, the nurse or main office will send the child home if he or she has:

- a temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- a rash/skin eruption, with or without drainage, of unknown origin
- active vomiting or diarrhea
- suspected contagious illness
- a serious injury

### **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION**

Medication should not be brought to school unless it is essential to the health of the student. If a student must take medicine at school, medication must be sent directly from the pharmacy or physician's office or brought to school by the student's parent/guardian and administered by designated school personnel.

Students are not allowed to carry any medication with them to school. Students may only carry and administer their medication if these conditions exist: It is warranted by a potentially life-threatening condition and advised by their physician and a Medication Self-Administration Form is on file in the office signed by the student's parent/guardian, physician and the principal.

### **POLICY ADMINISTERING MEDICATION TO STUDENTS**

To protect the safety of all students from the misuse of medication, the policy of Innovation Academy Board for administering medication is as follows:

1. School personnel shall give medication to students only when prescribed by a physician or dentist and written parent permission and instructions are supplied to the school. Parents must deliver the prescribed medication in person to the school in its original container.
2. If over the counter (OTC) medication is required, it must be supplied to the school in the original container by the parent. Written parent permission must be provided with specific directions for administration. Cough drops can be distributed by the classroom teacher with a note from the parent. Lotion, hand sanitizer, chap stick, or Vaseline may

be carried in the student's book bag. None of the above items may be shared with other students.

3. Exceptions to these regulations may be necessary depending on individual circumstances. Exceptions may only be authorized by the principal or designee.

## **HEALTH SCREENINGS**

Pre Kindergarten and Kindergarten students should have had a preschool screening prior to starting the school year. The health nurse and trained volunteers conduct hearing, vision, and scoliosis screenings.

*With COVID-19, these screenings may be altered or delayed this year.*

## **ILLNESS AT HOME**

Please notify the school if your child will be absent for an extended period due to illness.

## **ALLERGIES**

If your child has been diagnosed with specific allergies, please send written notification from your child's physician to the office or your child's teacher.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

*As per MN. Statute 123B.90 "Riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right." This privilege may be revoked for a violation of school bus safety or conduct policies. Students who can ride school buses may do so as long as they display behavior that is reasonable and safe. The school bus is an extension of the classroom. It is expected that the students will behave according to the rules of classroom behavior. Choosing to engage in unacceptable behavior will result in loss of bus service.*

## **BUS RIDERS**

For the safety of all students who ride buses to and from school, we must always require good behavior while on the bus. This can be done by speaking in a quiet manner, remaining seated, not throwing articles, and not disturbing the driver.

Most students ride the bus for a short distance, and it should not be difficult to behave for that length of time. Any student who chooses to misbehave on the bus and has received **3 bus conduct reports will be taken off the bus for a given time.** During the time the child cannot ride the bus, it will be the responsibility of the parent to see that the child has a ride to and from school.

***DISMISSAL/PERMISSION NOTES-*** Students must ride their regular bus to home or day care.

## **Students who wish to ride a different bus MUST:**

- Bring a note from their parents.
- The note MUST have the bus number and the address.
- The note is to be taken to the office to be approved and given to the bus driver.

**Students who wish to get off at a different stop with a friend MUST:**

- Bring a parental permission note with the bus number and the name and address of the friend.
- The friend's parent must also write a note stating that they are aware that the other child is coming home with their child.
- Both notes need to be taken to the office for approval and then given to the bus driver.

No child may walk home without a note from home and/or the approval of the principal. This also applies to children who wish to stay after school. For your child's safety, we do not encourage walking home unless accompanied by a supervising adult.

Students will be walked to the front of the school by their classroom teacher. Students riding the bus will board the bus in a safe manner. Children being picked up by parents will wait with a staff member until they can safely enter the parent's car.

If you need to pick up your child earlier than 4:15 please go to the front office and sign out your child after he/she has been called to the office. Parents should **NOT** wait in the hallway or lobby when students are being dismissed. We need your cooperation to ensure a safe dismissal procedure for all students.

**CAR RIDERS**

**There is no parking on the south side of the school from 8:30 – 9:30 and from 3:45 – 4:15. This will be a drop-off zone only.**

If you are dropping off your child, please enter the south driveway. Proceed to the back parking lot, circle around and drop your child off in the drop-off zone. Your child must exit the car on the side closest to the building. Staff will be outside to monitor safe arrival of students.

Morning car riders:

Students are NOT to be dropped off until 9:00AM. Teachers are prepared to supervise their students at 9:00 AM and there will not be adequate coverage until this time.

After School car riders/Pick-ups:

Students who are being picked up in cars after school, must follow the same procedure as morning drop-off. Your child will be excused to your car when you are in the drop-off or pick up zone. We do not want students walking through parked cars alone. If you prefer, you may park in the back parking lot and walk to meet your student, maintaining social distancing as the adult in charge hands the child/children over to the parents.

**SAFETY**

**BAD WEATHER OR EMERGENCY CONDITIONS**

Please listen to your local radio and television stations when it appears that the school schedule will be affected by bad weather or some other emergency condition. It is vital that all emergency numbers remain updated so that our Instant Alert system will keep you posted on school delays and openings. Notification will come by email, text, and phone.



If worsening weather conditions force the early closing of the school, parents will be notified through our Instant Alert system. If the school is closed early, students will be sent home by the usual method unless you have noted on the early dismissal form for your child to go someplace else.

Since parents are not always at home, please plan and have an understanding with your child about where he/she is to go when he/she returns home early due to bad weather.

If school opening is delayed, regular dismissal will still be observed.

## **SAFETY DRILLS**

Students are instructed in the necessary safety procedures to follow in case of an emergency. Fire drills are practiced monthly. Lockdown, bus, silent evacuation, and tornado drills are periodically practiced throughout the school year.

## **VISITATION BY PARENTS**

*Due to COVID-19, there will be limited access to the building. Keeping our students safe and healthy through strong mitigation efforts is the best way to prevent spreading COVID.*

To ensure the safety of all the children and personnel in the building, ALL visitors to the building must check in electronically/manually in the front office. After checking in you will receive a volunteer/visitor badge that will always need to be visibly worn while you are in the building. Safety is our number one concern and we must follow all procedures to ensure your child's safety. Thank you for your help with these matters.

**It is requested that parents *not go to the classroom during school hours unless you have scheduled a time with your child's teacher or for schoolwide functions. This helps to minimize interruptions to instruction. Any adult wishing to observe a classroom during instructional hours must arrange visitation with an administrator.***

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN**

Innovation Academy's Safety and Security Plan follows county-wide guidelines to promote consistency in dealing with a crisis. What is a "crisis"? A sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and could involve serious injury or death.

Innovation Academy's crisis team is made up of school personnel and office administration. This team continually monitors and updates the safety and security plan.

Communication with parents during a crisis will be handled in the most effective, comprehensive manner possible. We are confident that we will have your support and cooperation.

Crisis situations may be handled by evacuating the school or by holding student and personnel in the secured building. Evacuation will be under the supervision and direction of Innovation Science and Technology School Administration.

**Breakfast**

Students will be served their breakfast in individual bags. The classroom is organized to maintain social distancing.

**LUNCH PROGRAM**

Students will be served cold lunch in a bag. Every student will pick up the bag under the supervision of an adult. To maintain the social distance measures and keep safe, students will eat lunch in their classroom under the supervision of an adult.

**Milk Allergy**

If your child has been identified by a medical doctor as having an allergy to milk, the school should be provided a written note from your child's physician stating this. In this case, juice may be substituted for milk if there is a note on file in the school.

**Food allergies**

Please notify the homeroom teacher and /or the office IN WRITING from your child's physician if your child has food allergies.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Due to COVID-19, field trips are planned by the classroom teachers virtually to extend and enrich instruction.

**PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES****KINDERGARTEN BUDDY PROGRAM**

The Kindergarten Buddy program is an opportunity for 5th graders to serve as role models for the kindergarten students. Special activities are planned throughout the school year.

**DIFFERENTIATED AND GIFTED PROGRAM**

It is the position of Innovation to actively promote and develop a differentiated educational program for gifted students. The School Board shall establish a local advisory committee for the gifted education program. Annually, the committee shall review the gifted education program, including any revisions to the program. The committee shall also determine the extent to which the program for the previous year was implemented by the division. The recommendations of the committee shall be provided in writing through the Executive Director to the School Board. The program shall follow the Standards of Quality and the Minnesota Statute.

A student transferring from a program for the gifted or talented in another school system is not enrolled automatically in Innovation Academy's program for the gifted or talented. With parental permission, the student will be screened to determine eligibility.

**Library**

*Due to COVID-19, a school library will not be available this year. Classroom teachers may have classroom libraries and will develop a system for the return of books in a safe manner. Books used by students will be held for three days and wiped down to decrease the spread of COVID-19 by contact.*

## **MUSIC/ART**

The arts are important for student development. Classroom teachers will integrate the arts into their instruction and content.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Physical education is an integral part of the total educational program at Innovation Academy. Our physical education curriculum will include a variety of skills, movement concepts, games, rhythms, and dance experiences designed to enhance the cognitive, affective, motor, and physical development of every child.

Physical education is provided in a safe, learning environment for all students Kindergarten through fifth grade. Students participate in physical education every other day for 30 minutes. Proper footwear, such as tennis shoes, (no flip-flops or sandals, no crocs, heellies) is required for participation in physical education activities to ensure the safety of everyone.

Children that need to be excused from physical activity must bring a note from a parent/doctor explaining the reason he/she cannot participate.

Above all, physical education will provide meaningful learning experiences that are FUN for all those involved.

On days that children do not have a scheduled PE class, they will engage in appropriate physical activity under their teacher's supervision. Tennis shoes are required for PE class and outdoor recess.

*Based on recommendations from MDH and MDE to limit interaction with others, music, art, and physical education will be led by the classroom teacher.*

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Innovation is continuously striving to improve technology in our school. Every student is assigned a Chromebook . The responsible use policy is attached and must be followed by ALL the students. Please read it over with your student. Students and parents must sign and return the form.

## **PTO**

Innovation Academy will work to establish a PTO that is active and supportive of the total school program. The goal of the PTO will be to provide support for a wide range of programs and activities designed to improve educational opportunities for our children and enhance school-community relationships. It may sponsor fund-raising activities which provide much-needed equipment, instructional materials, and operating expenses for special programs for our students. All fund-raising activities prohibit door-to-door solicitation, in compliance with Innovation Academy Board Policy.

You are encouraged to join the PTO and attend PTO meetings. Notices will be sent home prior to each meeting and a calendar of meetings is published on the calendar page of this handbook. Please consider volunteering your time to help with the many opportunities our PTO provides our students.

## **PARTIES**

*Due to COVID-19 and social distancing, traditional classroom parties will not be held this year. Teachers may do simple celebrations and will communicate with families the dates and plan. Traditionally, three parties are held each year. A fall celebration, a winter celebration, and a spring celebration. Guidance on these events will come from MDE and MDH.*

Birthday treats are not allowed at Innovation Academy. Due to allergies and other diet considerations, please do NOT send treats on your child's birthday. The classroom teacher will recognize your child's birthday in the classroom in a special way. **Flower and/or balloon bouquets are discouraged; they will not be delivered to the classroom**, and may not be taken home on the bus due to safety precautions.

**Distribution of birthday party invitations at school is prohibited** UNLESS there is an invitation for every class member. All other celebrations/observances must be approved by the principal.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

*COVID-19 and MDE/MDH recommendations prevent us from having adults in the school. If you are interested in doing at home projects, please let your child's teacher know. Depending on the materials and distribution procedures, there may be opportunities for you to help from your home.*

## **DRESS CODE**

The uniform policy of Innovation Science and Technology Academy (Innovation Academy) is intended to build a closer community, enhance the learning environment, and reduce competition among students. At Innovation Academy, students are expected to be in full uniform each day, and neatness, cleanliness, and modesty should be observed at all times. Please see the guidelines below.

*If students have ordered uniforms and are waiting for the delivery, clean and appropriate dress is acceptable until the uniform is received.*

### **I. Uniform Provider**

Uniform clothing must be ordered through Donald's Uniform or purchased from any vendor. If buying from outside vendors, make sure you go to the uniform section of the store.

**Ordering information is available on the school website.**

## **II. School Uniform Guidelines**

### **Shirts**

- All grades must wear a Hunter green knit polo shirt (long or short sleeve) with the Innovation Academy logo.
- All shirts must be buttoned modestly at all times. Only the top button may be undone.
- Long sleeve shirts may not be worn under short sleeve shirts.
- Any top layered clothing item must have an Innovation Academy logo.

### **Jumpers/Skirts**

- Only Grades Pre K - 5 can wear a green V-necked jumper.
- White Peter Pan collar (rounded collar) or uniform Hunter green polo shirt must be worn under the jumper.
- Only grades 6-12 can wear navy blue skirt or skort (**skort is a skirt with a pair of integral shorts hidden underneath**).
- Skirts length should be no shorter than 2” above the knees. Skirts are not to be rolled at the waist.
- Bike shorts, navy or black leggings, or tights **MUST BE WORN** under skirts and jumpers.
- No pajama pants under jumpers/skirts.

### **Pants**

- All grade pants and shorts must be navy blue uniform pants for boys or girls with no more than 4 pockets.
- Cargo pants or banded bottom cargo pants (“Joggers”) are not allowed.
- No skin or underwear must show.
- No rolling/cuffing of pants.

### **Sweatshirt/Sweater (Optional)**

- Innovation Academy embroidered green sweatshirt or fleece jacket, long-sleeved cardigan, or V-neck sweater are permitted.
- Students must have a uniform shirt underneath the sweatshirt if the sweatshirt/fleece jacket or cardigan/sweater is removed during school hours.

### **Shoes**

- Shoes should be neat, modest and secured to the feet and should not draw undue attention to the student.
- Flip-flops, slippers, clogs, sports sandals or slides are permitted.
- Boots (except snow boots) or clogs are not to be worn with uniform pants or skirts.

- Tennis shoes are acceptable with all uniform combinations, including shorts, dress pants, or skirts. Shoelaces should match the color of the shoe.
- Tennis shoes for Physical Education and shoes that are safe for running and climbing on the playground must be worn.

### **III. Additional Notes**

- Worn, damaged, faded, or outgrown uniforms should be repaired and/or replaced.
- No letter jackets are to be worn in the classrooms.
- Leg coverings (socks, leggings, or thighs must be black or navy blue).
- Hats and sunglasses are not allowed to be worn in school except for special event days that specifically allow for these to be worn.
- Hairstyles and accessories should not draw undue attention to the student. Hair should not extend below the eyebrows in the front. Neatness, cleanliness, and modesty should be observed at all times.
- The dyeing or bleaching of hair to extreme or unnatural colors will not be allowed.
- Shaving the scalp to show some designs will not be allowed.
- Facial hair is not permitted. These expectations will be enforced on non-uniform days, as well as regular uniform days.
- All jewelry must be modest and contain no inappropriate symbols. Pierced earrings are allowed; however, other visible body piercings (including facial piercings) or visible tattoos are not acceptable. These expectations should be followed on non-uniform days too.
- Yoga pants and leggings (except leggings worn under uniform jumpers/skirts) are not to be worn during the school day. (This expectation should be followed on non-uniform days too).
- Excluded accessories include arm warmers, bandanas, or clothing ornamentation such as scarves and pins.
- Belts are acceptable only with bottoms that have belt loops and belts must be worn through the belt loops.
- There should be no tying shirts in the back.
- Families who are eligible for educational benefits are eligible to receive benefits for school uniforms. Please contact the main office.

**IV. Dress Code Violations** Students and parents/guardians will be informed of dress code violations. Dress code violations will result in disciplinary actions, which may include but may not be limited to the following:

- Parents may be contacted to bring an appropriate uniform or be given at school.
- Reoccurring uniform violations may result in further disciplinary actions.

**V. Opt-Out Provision** Parents or guardians may apply to the school for full or partial exemption from the dress code in the following situations:

- A student’s disability or medical condition which would substantially interfere with a student’s ability to comply with the dress code. This exception will only be granted with a signed note from a physician.
- A student’s religious observation which would be substantially hindered by compliance with the dress code.

**VI. Non-Uniform Days** Non-uniform days will be scheduled throughout the course of the year. Students and parents will be informed of the dates in the school announcements. Students must demonstrate neatness, cleanliness, modesty, and pride in their appearance on non-uniform days. Joggers, yoga pants, or leggings (except leggings worn under uniform jumpers or skirts) are not allowed on non- uniform days. Shorts and skirts that are shorter than mid-thigh are not allowed on non-uniform days. Hats are also not allowed on non-uniform days.

### **Non-Uniform Day Guidelines**

- Students have the option of wearing their regular school uniform on a non-uniform day.
- Students can also wear a uniform top on a pair of clean solid blue or black jeans (jeans with holes, rips or fraying will not be acceptable).
- No spandex pants or shorts of any kind – i.e., yoga pants, joggers, leggings, and/or biker shorts.
- Shirts must have sleeves or have another shirt over the top and must be modestly buttoned. Only the top button may be undone. No tank tops or spaghetti straps. No underwear, bra straps, cleavage or midriff may be showing.
- All other general Innovation Academy dress code guidelines should be followed.

### **Clothing**

#### **General Guidelines:**

- Short/skirt length should be no higher than 5” from the top of the knee. Skirts shorter than the guideline must have a pair of shorts or pants underneath.
- Sleeveless shirts are allowed; however, shoulder straps must be a minimum of 3 inches in width.
- No undergarments, cleavage, or midriffs should be exposed.
- Safe shoes are always required. (Heelies will NOT be allowed)

#### **The following should not be worn in school:**

- Sleeves with oversized armholes (boys and girls).
- See through garments
- Form-fitted shorts (i.e., biker shorts)
- Cut offs, torn, or ripped clothing
- Shirts with spaghetti straps
- Tube/tank tops (unless under a sweater or jacket)
- Heavy or long winter coats

- Pajamas/bedroom slippers
- Heelies

### Accessories

The following should not be worn IN school:

- Heavy, metal chains
- Any accessories with spikes (jewelry, belts, etc.)
- Dog chains or collars
- Sunglasses
- Headgear including hats, caps, sweatbands, bandanas, hoodies, wave caps, or scarves (except for religious beliefs)

In choosing student dress, the parents and students should consider modesty, safety, weather, and scheduled activities. Students should not wear clothing that disrupts the education process of the school.

Hairstyles and dress should be neat and not distracting to the class. Pants that touch the floor are not allowed because of safety. Parents will be notified if clothing is inappropriate.

**Rolling book bags are not allowed.** Anything considered dangerous, distracting, or disruptive to the instructional environment is prohibited.

Clothing or accessories should not bear messages or pictures that are profane, obscene, offensive to others, or promote gangs, violence, drugs, or alcohol.

**Please mark your child's clothing and other possessions with his/her name.** There is a lost and found area in the school. Please check in the office.

**Remember: Tennis shoes are required for daily physical activities. Also, students are required to wear tennis shoes on the playground. Flip-flops are a safety hazard and are not allowed during recess or gym.**

The administration reserves the right to judge appropriate appearance.

### **SCHOOL CLOSING**

In the event of inclement weather or other calamity situations, school closing notification will be sent to families by phone and posted on the school website and social media accounts. Moreover, notification will be sent to media outlets. Inclement weather includes, but is not limited to, extreme cold, wind chill, snow, and hazardous driving conditions.



## Responsible Use Policy

### Innovation Science and Technology Academy

Students are expected to be responsible digital citizens and technology users and follow the guidelines for acceptable use of the Internet. All students will understand and agree to the following guidelines:

#### **I can use technology devices and Internet resources to ...**

1. complete classroom assignments
2. collaborate with other students and my teacher
3. search and use information for assignments and research projects
4. publish and share my work
5. print with my teacher's permission
6. learn through educational game sites that are approved by my teacher and assigned
7. access files that belong to me or are shared with me

#### **While using technology devices and Internet resources I agree to...**

1. only give out personal information such as last name, address, or phone number, with teacher or parent/guardian permission
2. respect and follow all copyright laws
3. contact my teacher if I accidentally access inappropriate materials on the Internet
4. only access materials appropriate to the learning activity
5. be a careful, responsible and respectful user of all school technology devices
6. always THINK (Is it...True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind?) before you post
7. only post and share photos with permission from my teacher or parent/guardian
8. send or receive e-mail only if my teacher has designed a project calling for e-mail use
9. always use appropriate, respectful language when using a digital device

I have read and understand the above guidelines.

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Student signature

My child will follow the responsible use policy as stated.

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Parent Signature

Please return this page to your classroom teacher.