

## **Innovative Learning WELCOME TO ALL PARENTS**

**Welcome to Innovative Learning Academy! We are excited to have you as a part of our family. At Innovative Learning every child is important. Our program is academically rich and designed to promote your child's growth and development. Thank you for choosing Innovative Learning for your child.**

**This handbook will help you understand our school goals and policies. Our guidelines are all designed to make sure that each child receives the best education possible. Please look over the information given, so that you are familiar with our operation and guidelines. Also included with this packet is the paperwork for your child's file, including pick-up permission form, emergency medical consent form, child information form, fee agreement, etc. Please complete these and return them.**

During Parent Orientation you will be taken on a tour to meet your child's teachers and get a general idea of a day at our Innovative Learning. You may also schedule a time to observe in the classroom. Please let us know of any area in which we can be of particular assistance to you. We are looking forward to getting to know you and your child and providing a rich learning environment where all our children develop to their full potential.

Irene Buntyn  
Superintendent

## **General Guidelines for Parents**

1. Parents should read through the Parent/Student Handbook and familiarize their children with its contents.
2. Parents are asked to support the activities and programs of ILA Christian Academy.
3. Parents will pay all financial obligations to the Academy on or before the due date(s). If this is not possible, parents will notify the Business Manager's Office in advance to make special arrangements.
4. Parents are responsible to ensure that the students arrive at school on time each school day.
5. Parents should help ensure that their children participate in scheduled field trips and other school related activities.
6. Parents are responsible to see that the students arrive at the Academy dressed in accordance with the uniform dress code.
7. Parents understand that the Administration has full responsibility for placing a student at the proper grade level and/or in a particular classroom.
8. Parents understand that the Academy reserves the right to dismiss any student who does not respect its spiritual standards or cooperate in the educational or disciplinary process of the Academy.
9. Parents agree that the teacher has full responsibility for classroom management/discipline in accordance with the discipline policy of the Academy.
10. Parents who are dissatisfied with the Academy should seek to resolve the matter with the person or persons directly involved, following the Biblical principle of reconciliation set forth in the Bible (Matthew 18 - enclosed).
11. Parents are expected to fully support the Academy's mission and philosophy. The Academy reserves the right to dismiss any family found to cause divisiveness or disharmony among the school community.

## **What Makes the Christian School Experience Different**

The Christian School experience is a wonderful opportunity for children and their families because distinctively different from that which is offered by public schools. It is the desire of the entire ILA Christian Academy Community (administration, faculty, and Board) that each child receives an excellent and rewarding, educational experience in a safe, nurturing environment that addresses the academic, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of each child. The following guidelines are designed toward this end:

1. All staff members are seeking only the best for each child. This perspective helps to put teachers and parents into a healthy, positive partnership when dealing with difficult issues.
2. Early communication about a problem is critical so that small problems do not become large problems.
3. The Academy endorses the Biblical principle of reconciliation as described in Matthew 18.
4. Policies and procedures, such as the uniform dress code, help children become aware of structure and rules. These are meant to help train the child. A child who feels he is allowed to break these smaller rules will develop a similar attitude toward larger rules. Please be cooperative when a teacher asks your help in enforcing a school policy.

5. Parents and teachers should work together to solve problems that arise. When children observe this type of partnership, they benefit greatly from the process and the outcome.
6. Help your child with homework. Check nightly to see that work is being completed thoroughly. Signing of homework logs implies that you reviewed you child's homework.
7. Pray daily for your child's teacher, that he or she will have God's wisdom in all classroom situations. Modeling this attitude will encourage your child to honor and pray for those in authority.

## **WHAT IS "DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE"?**

### **WHAT?**

It just means simply that educators need to think first about what young children are like and then create an environment and experiences that are in tune with children's characteristics. A developmentally appropriate program like ours is age appropriate.

### **WHY?**

Early childhood is a time of life quite different from adulthood, and even from the later school years. Children 3-6 learn far better through direct interactive experiences than through just listening to someone talk. They learn extraordinary amounts through play and exploration.

### **HOW?**

To make the program a good place for every child, we gear our classroom environment and activities to this community and the families involved. We are eager to learn as much as we can about each child's family, cultural background, past experience and current circumstances; with this knowledge we work to create a program that fits the children and the families we serve.

### **SO WHAT?**

Research and experience tell us that to be effective with young children, teaching practices need to be "developmentally appropriate".

# Innovative Learning PARENT'S HANDBOOK

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

W. B. Yeats

## **INNOVATIVE LEARNING MISSION STATEMENT:**

**The ultimate goal of Innovative Learning Academy is to provide a solid, Christian foundation for students who will impact their family, community and the world through character and leadership.**

## **STATEMENT OF SERVICES:**

Innovative Learning is a Christian private school that follows the Ysleta Independent School District schedule. Our daily activities and program consists of a rigorous academic program that has been created to provide diversity and challenge for children in all age groups

## **HOURS AND DAYS:**

Innovative Learning school day is from 8:30 to 3:30. Monday through Friday.

## **SNOW DAYS:**

Innovative Learning will make every effort to remain open during the snow and ice.

## **Admission Requirements**

Though we are a Christian school, enrollment in our program is open to all families of our community. We operate on a non-discriminatory basis. No one shall be excluded from any of our programs because of race, color, , disability, sex or national origin. Only the child(ren)'s parent or legal guardian may enroll a child(ren) (Proof of custody may be required). All forms provided to you upon enrollment must be completed before your child may attend Innovative Learning. All requested personal information is kept confidential. Parent's are required to update all emergency data as needed, including address, home, cell, and work numbers and individuals authorized to pick up your child. Current immunization information must be submitted to the school upon enrollment, and all immunizations must be current. Innovative Learning must be informed of any custody situation in advance and will request that the proper paperwork be in the child(ren)'s file. Parents will be required to comply with all state regulations and school rules as set forth in this Parent's Handbook.

**Innovative Learning** Academy works on a "Guaranteed Start Date" rather than a "Waiting List". Upon deciding that Innovative Learning is the place for your child(ren), you will be asked to fill out a "Guaranteed Start Date Agreement" and pay a non-refundable deposit. This deposit consists of the **\$250** registration fee and is **non-refundable** Prior to your first day you must bring your child's(ren's) enrollment packet(s) (one for each child) along with the following for verification: Birth certificate, and shot records. Parents are required to notify the school prior to their child(ren) withdrawing including withdrawing from being on the guaranteed start list.

A Texas physical examination form, including eye and hearing exam and a completed shot record form are required when a student enters school for the first time in any one of these grades. Also, any child entering 7th grade must update his/her immunizations before the 1st day of 7th grade. **No exceptions may be made to the above requirements.**

At Admission, parents shall present:

- An official copy of the child's birth certificate
- A record of compliance with local and State of Florida health requirements
- A child's most recent report card and/or standardized test scores for children with previous school attendance.
- All documents as specified on the registration check list
- Any psychological educational exams administered in previous years
- Court orders pertaining to custody of child

## **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL**

Our school day begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. Parents are requested to drop off and pick up their children in the designated areas. PreK-2 may enter the building with parent through the main entrance and be walked to the lunchroom. Students are dismissed at 3:30. If your student is not picked up by 3:45 they will then go into afterschool care and you will be charged an additional fee.

## **ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL:**

Parents wishing to enroll their children in the school are encouraged to set up an appointment with the school office to come and tour the school and meet the director and their children's Lead Teacher. (Tours are scheduled at the parent's convenience, however, due to rest time and other challenges in our schedule we encourage tours to be scheduled between 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday). The purpose of the informal tour is to answer any questions you might have concerning our policies and procedures and make you aware of the flexible schedule of your child(ren)s average day. At this time we will give you a copy of the parent's handbook and any forms necessary to enroll your child(ren) in the school.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY *Tardiness*** Students begin class promptly at 8:30! A student is tardy if he/she arrives in the **classroom** after 8:30 a.m.. If a student comes to school after that time, he/she must report to the school office for a tardy slip. When a student is tardy, it not only affects them, everyone else around them is disrupted. **Your child's teacher will not be expected to re-teach concepts that your child missed due to tardiness.** Tardiness will be recorded on his or her permanent record. Since tardiness interferes with a student's progress and is a distraction to the class, it should be avoided. Tardy students will wait in the hallway until after prayer and then be admitted. They should be signed in by their parents. After 10:00 a.m., a student is considered absent for the morning. After the 3rd tardy in a month, students' parents will be called for a mandatory conference with administrator. After five consecutive tardiness within a month, students will be attend mandatory Saturday detention. Students who do not show up for Saturday detention will be expelled from the school.

## ***Vacations***

Vacations are discouraged during school time. If it is necessary to take a child out of school for a prolonged period of time, please consult the school calendar and the principal before making arrangements. Work will be assigned for make-up **after** the child returns to school. It is both parents and student's responsibility to request work missed during absence. Make up work should be submitted within 2 days of return to school.

## **Unexcused Absences**

An absence is considered unexcused if you do not call in for your child and/ or he/she is not sick. Family vacations and birthdays are not considered excused absences. In addition, three tardies are considered one unexcused absence. Unexcused absences will receive zeros for the day.

## **Absences**

If a student is absent more than 8 days per semester, he/she may not receive credit for that semester, especially if his/ her grades do not show the expected degree of progress.

## **PAPERWORK, FORMS and ANNUAL RENEWAL:**

We are required by the state to have current and updated information on each child in our school. This is also for your safety. As mentioned above, we require all forms to be filled out on each child prior to their initial attendance at Innovative Learning. Also, each year in June we will have you renew and refresh all your paper work and all forms. Annual registration fees and annual material fees will also be added each year at this same time. If Innovative Learning is penalized or fined for incomplete information on one of our admissions forms or for failure to update/renew this information due to a parent's neglect, that fine will be passed on to the client responsible including an additional \$50 administration fee.

## **DROP-OFF:**

Children will be permitted in the building at 7:30 a.m. prior to opening hours. The children in Pre-K – 2<sup>nd</sup> grades are not allowed to come into the Innovative Learning area alone unless prior written permission has been given by the parent and approved by the Principal.

**PICK-UP:**

All children must be picked up by an adult and/or person approved by the parent. All children must be listed on the Pick-up Permission form or be approved in writing by a parent. In an emergency, parents may call the school and give verbal approval of an alternate individual. The school reserves the right to not allow any individual onto Innovative Learning property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem. Anyone not recognized by sight will be asked for a picture ID. In the event anyone out of the ordinary is to pick-up the child, please alert the office prior to that time. This is in addition to them being on the Pick-up Permission form or approval as stated above. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office and make changes on this form whenever necessary. This form is re-done annually.

**PARKING POLICY:**

Innovative Learning has a drop-off area by the doors to each building. Due to the limit of the number of vehicles that may be in this area, please park in one of the parking spaces if you anticipate you will be in the building longer than 5-10 minutes. We strongly urge you to turn your car off and lock it when you come in to drop-off or pick-up your child(ren). INNOVATIVE LEARNING is not responsible for items lost or stolen from cars or from the parking lot or facility.

**PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM:**

All persons authorized to pick a child up from the school must be listed on the PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM. To avoid confusion, it is the responsibility of the parent signing the child into our school to properly fill out all forms. In a custody situation the parent signing the child into our school takes full responsibility to ensure that this is in accordance with their specific court agreement, which must be attached to the enrollment forms if any limitation of rights is suggested by the PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM. If a parent who is not listed, or who believes the information given to us was inaccurate, contests the authorization details they must first offer proof that they are indeed the legal parent or guardian and have legal rights to pick the child up. We then will require lawyers for both sides to be contacted and both attorneys will be requested to give us documentation as to the individuals approved for pick-up. The school reserves the right to not allow any individual onto our property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL CONSENT FORM:**

This form will give us your consent to call an ambulance or your child's doctor or dentist if he/she needs emergency care. Please list your child's doctor, dentist and the hospital you would prefer. Also, please list phone numbers, addresses, and additional emergency numbers of contacts. It is strongly suggested that all emergency contacts all be listed on your Pick-up Permission form. If your child has any allergies or is on any medications, please include this information on the form as well as filling out one of the food or non food allergy forms. All of these forms will be re-done annually. Immunization cards need to be presented on or before the first day the child attends the center. A photo copy of these will be kept on file. When your child receives additional immunizations, you are required to bring your immunization card back in for us to take a current photo copy of it so that we can up-date your file. Whenever any information on this card changes – it is your responsibility to notify us and up-date or re-do this form.

**INFORMATION CHANGE**

Parents are to notify the school of any change in home or work phone numbers and addresses. This is for your safety so that we may reach you in an emergency. The school requires that someone listed on the Pick-Up Permission form of each child be available within thirty (30) minutes notice to come and pick up a sick child or a child that INNOVATIVE LEARNING has determined needs to go home. It is required that all changes of phone numbers, places of employment, residence changes or changes in pick-up information be turned into the office immediately. Please give the administrators written notice of the change as soon as possible.

**IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:**

All children enrolled must have their immunization records up-to-date or provide an exemption affidavit. The child's immunization record must be provided by the parent and all information must be current. The parent shall also provide proof of this with a form signed by a health care provider. This form will state that the child has received all current, age-appropriate immunizations. Parent's wishing to take a religious exemption must contact the office to find out the proper procedure for providing an affidavit of such a religious opposition. If Innovative Learning is penalized or fined for non-compliance of immunization cards due to a parent's neglect, that fine will be passed on to the client responsible including an additional \$50 administration fee.

**MEDICATION:**

State law mandates that schools are not allowed to dispense medications at school unless medication is accompanied by a doctor's written authorization.

**ALLERGIES:**

We must be aware of any food or other known allergies that affect your child. If your child has any known food allergies, you will need to fill out an "Allergy/Food Exemption Medical Statement". This allows us to alert all of our staff to be on guard of their allergy. The Allergy/Food Exemption Statement must be turned into our office as soon as this allergy has been identified. This form must be updated annually. We also need to be aware of any Non-Food allergies that can affect your child. If your child has any Non-food allergies you will need to fill out a "Non-Food Allergy Medical Statement" (form on page Z-22) which must be turned in to our office as soon as this allergy has been identified. This form must be updated annually. You will also need to fill out an "Authorization to give Medication" form (Example on page Z-23) if your child requires an Epi-pen or other emergency treatment.

**ATTENTION: We are a peanut free facility ; therefore, no peanut or nut products are allowed on the school grounds at anytime.****ILLNESS AND CONTINUED HEALTH:**

These guidelines are for the welfare of all of our children. In order to provide a safe and healthy we rely on our parents to monitor their children with these guidelines in mind. Outdoor play is essential to your child's development. We feel that if your child is too sick to play outdoors then they are too sick for group care. A child that is ill or has a temperature of 101 degrees or above should be kept at home. All children shall have direct contact with a staff member upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior, see the Drop-Off section above. A child that is too ill to remain in the school shall be supervised and cared for until the child can be cared for elsewhere. The child will be sent home if he/she is running a temperature of over 101 degrees, if he/she is vomiting or has diarrhea, or if it is suspected that he/she has a contagious disease. In the event you are called to come pick up an ill child, you must pick your child up within 30 minutes. If a child needs to be sent home and their parents are unreachable, we will call the emergency contacts listed on the Pick-up Permission form.

**ACCIDENT REPORTS:**

Safety is a top priority of Innovative Learning . Yet, there are times when a child will have an accident/ incident between your child and another child. If the accident/incident requires "more than a hug and a kiss", our teachers will complete a report for you detailing what happened and the nature of the injuries. If any first aid is administered, the treatment will be described to you. A copy of this accident report, signed by the teacher in charge at the time of the accident, will be provided to you and a copy filed with the Director's office. We ask that you sign the copy provided to you and return it to the Director's office to confirm that you were notified of your child's injury. This system is aimed at ensuring communication at all levels and can be a very good way to be certain little things are not forgotten in a hasty departure. If your child happens to be injured by another child, we ask you to please respect the child's privacy by not asking us to reveal the name of the child. It not only puts our staff in an awkward situation but could cause a confrontation between our families. We will handle any and all behavior problems in a professional and appropriate way.

**School Supplies:**

Children learn and get along best when they feel they are part of a classroom community. At ILA, students learn to work collaboratively. In order to foster this sense of belonging, all student supplies are shared. Please do not label individual student items like pencils and scissors as they are all placed in baskets and shared throughout the day. If you wish for your child to have special items you do not wish them to share, please keep these items at home.

**CHILDREN REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Innovative Learning complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable regulations pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities. We desire to make special accommodations for children who require such accommodations, provided it is within our power and authority to do so. Accommodation can be a specific treatment prescribed by a professional or a parent, or a modification of equipment, or removal of physical barriers. The accommodation shall be recorded in the child's file. Whenever we deem it appropriate to the needs of the child to have a child with special needs in our center, the entire staff must follow the reasonable accommodations we have made for that child. Any questions about the accommodations of the child should be referred to the leadership staff.

## **CLOTHING/SCHOOL UNIFORM:**

Wearing of the school uniform is mandatory. If your child is not wearing the required uniform you will be called and your child will be asked to return home and change. We encourage the children to dress in the school uniform as the seasons change. Innovative Learning students will wear a purple, blue, or yellow polo with jean or khaki skirt/skort or pants. Pants should be worn at the waist and should at no time expose undergarments. Skirts should fall no more than two inches above the knee. Girls in lower elementary are strongly encouraged to wear shorts underneath their skirts. Boys may wear a belt with khakis or jeans. Children in lower elementary will have opportunities for outdoor play weather permitting. Children will go outside if the temperature is above 32 degrees or below 100 degrees with the wind chill and heat index taken in to consideration. Only Innovative Learning Academy hoodies are allowed to be worn in the school.

It is required that students in Kinder bring one set of extra clothes for your child in case of a spill or accident. We have some extra clothes available, but we may not have the item your child needs in his/her size. If your child comes home in school clothes, please wash the clothes and return them within one week. **It is strongly suggested that all clothing brought or worn to the school have the child's name on it.**

Girls in elementary ( Grades K-5) will not be allowed to wear makeup of any kind during the school day. This includes eyeshadow , mascara, blush or lipstick. Jewelry should remain tasteful at all times. Clothing and jewelry depicting drug paraphernalia, skulls, or any other non-edifying content are strictly prohibited.

**Students who do not come to school in uniform or who wear inappropriate clothing will be sent home to change.**

## **CURRICULUM:**

Children learn by doing. They learn through play, experimentation, exploration, and testing. Learning should be a joyful, natural experience. We have chosen a curriculum based on the developmental needs of the children each the room and to foster individual growth through opportunities for exploration. 90% of brain growth occurs from zero to 5 years old. Each class's lesson plans and your child's class flexible schedule are posted on the parent's board in your child's room. We incorporate current trends in Early Childhood and School Age Education and then structure this curriculum to meet the needs of the majority of the children in the group. Our curriculum, although it will vary depending on age, is guided by the following underlying principals:

- Children learn through dynamic investigation
- Children instigate their own learning
- Learning comes from open-ended experiences
- Adults are facilitators of children's learning

## **CLASS DIVISIONS AND CLASS SIZE:**

We endeavor to have a challenging and appropriate atmosphere for children of all ages. Homeroom class divisions are based upon three issues. These are: the individual developmental needs of each child, state set student to teacher ratios, and the overall enrolment management plan of the school. In many cases this may mean that students are divided according to ability levels rather than grade level. ILA calls this multi-age classes or mixed ability grouping.

## **MIXED-AGE GROUPING**

**Multi-age programs are designed so that a student works according to their ability level.**

### **TRANSITION PLAN**

Innovative Learning will create an individualized TRANSITION PLAN to help children are about to transition from one class to the next. This is to help the children become familiar with the new program, teachers and children. It also allows the new teachers to get to know the individual needs of each child prior to the transition of an entire class group or several children together. The plan allows flexibility in order for us to best meet the needs of each child. Each child's individual need is different therefore the TRANSITION PLAN may vary quite a bit from child to child. Your child's teacher or the director will provide more details about transitioning when your child will move to another classroom.

## **SUMMER CAMP**

A summer camp program is offered during the summer months for children of all ages. The camp is built around weekly themes. Activities include various art projects, music, water fun, sports, stories, cooking, theatre and field trips. A separate summer program fee is generally charged.

### **STAFF AND CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS:**

Innovative Learning considers it inappropriate for parents and clients to solicit our staff to work for them either in their business or homes. We are not legally or financially liable for our employees or any of their actions when they are off the clock or no longer employed by Innovative Learning. All employees have signed a statement saying that they will not engage in “care for hire” or any employment by or for any past or current client family of Innovative Learning while currently employed by Innovative Learning or for eighteen (18) months after their last day of employment. An employee who violates this policy has violated their employment agreement and is subject to possible termination. It is inappropriate for a client or parent to solicit any employee for any type of work. Clients who violate this policy may be subject to termination of services.

### **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:**

The success of our school is based on establishing a partnership between our parents and our staff. Open and frequent communication will help your child have a positive early learning experience. We will endeavor to keep you informed concerning your child’s day and overall development through several written means.

- Monthly parent newsletters to keep you informed as to the overall program.
- Parent Board – updated with current information about Innovative Learning and curriculum
- Daily written communication in the form of “Daily Report” forms, “Incident/ouch” forms, and classroom memos will be placed in the child’s “cubby” from time to time.
- Parent/Teacher meetings twice each year
- Parents always have the option of requesting specific parent/teacher interaction to aid in the child’s development.

### **VERBAL COMMUNICATION:**

We will endeavor to be communicative during drop-off and pick-up times. However, this is not a good time for extended conversations since the staff members/teachers have responsibilities for all of the children in the group. You can call to see how your child’s day is going or to speak to your child’s teacher for more detailed conversation. The best time to call and speak to your child’s teacher is during the teachers prep time. There is always a member of management available for you to talk to in person or on the phone. You may also e-mail us at [info@innovativelearningacademy.com](mailto:info@innovativelearningacademy.com).

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:**

We encourage all parents and or guardians to be involved in the activities. We believe that parental participation is key to any successful school. Children should be raised by parents. At Innovative Learning, we strive to fill the gap created during early separation and educational opportunities and when parents are not available. We welcome parental visits. We have an open door policy that allows parents access to the school during operating hours. We have enclosed a sample list of some of the opportunities for involvement in our school. Parents are in no way limited to the involvement listed below. Any parent wishing to be involved in another area is strongly encouraged to contact the Innovative Learning office with their suggestion.

1. Parent Meetings (Usually 2 times per year)
2. Fall Open House
3. 2 individual conferences/year
4. Programs and Special activities, such as the Christmas Program
5. Special parent’s involvement activities such as THANKSGIVING FEAST
6. Party Day Volunteer
7. Come and eat lunch with your child
8. Classroom Volunteer
9. Send special treats for snack or meals (please notify the teacher a day or two in advance)
10. Help with school Fund Raiser
11. Participation in a parent’s group
12. Reverse Field trips (When we bring a “field trip” type activity to our property)

**We also expect parental involvement in discipline and behavior intervention as outlined in these policies.**

## **POLICY FOR PARENTS WHO CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL EVENTS:**

In the event that a parent feels like they would like to be more involved in the school but cannot due to their work schedule, or due to other conflicts, we will help them find a project or area which they can do on their own time. A member of the leadership staff will meet with the parent to find their area of interest. We will offer suggestions to them based on their interests and time. For example, if the parent likes to sew, we may offer to have them make doll clothes or costumes for our school play.

## **CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are special days for children. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at Innovative Learning, please make early arrangements with your child's teacher. Hard or chewy candy and balloons are not permitted because they pose a choking risk. Items containing peanuts are also strictly prohibited!

If you would like to pass out invitations for your child's birthday party please make sure every child in your child's class is invited. Please do not hand out invitations when you are merely bringing cupcakes for the class. Parents should not be expected to send a gift to school for your child and teachers should not be used as party hostesses.

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday by taking them out to lunch, the child must be signed out during lunch time and signed back in prior to the beginning of class. Removing your child from school for full or half days because it is their birthday is strictly prohibited and will result in an unexcused absences.

## **VISITING THE SCHOOL:**

You are welcome to visit your child at the school at any time. We do ask that you check in with the office or sign-in desk before going to your child's room. It is the responsibility of each employee to make sure any visitor for a child or employee has checked in with the office. If you are coming to eat lunch with your child, please let us know in advance. Persons not listed on the "Pick-Up Permission" form, will not be allowed to visit your child. In a custody situation, please note that the same procedure will be followed as listed in the Pick-Up section. Parents are encouraged to pre-arrange opportunities to share lunch with their child or visit the class. Extended family members such as grandparents and aunts are also welcome to visit in certain pre-arranged situations. The custody challenges of our current society demand that we follow strict guidelines in this regard. Feel free to contact a member of the management team if you wish to set up a "visit" from an extended family member.

## **CLASSIFICATIONS:**

Due to strict licensing guidelines and safety issues we require that all individuals on our property be categorized as one of the following:

- 1) A scheduled employee during the regular course of their work day
- 2) A Child who is in our care (all paperwork has been filled-out)
- 3) Parents or others during the course of regular drop-off or pick-up (This to be approximately fifteen (15) minutes)
- 4) Delivery personnel – From a regular or expected company delivering items to the school(should be in eye sight of an employee at all times and arriving at an expected time)
- 5) Visitor's – Must be approved by the office and should be accompanied by an employee and limited to a maximum of 2 hours
- 6) Volunteers – Anyone who is helping with a class party or in any other capacity or anyone who has been a "visitor" for more than once a month or for over 2 hours.
- 7) An Intruder – Action will be taken by the staff to notify the proper authorities

Therefore anyone who is in the building or on the property for an extended period of time must be considered either a "visitor" a "volunteer" or an "intruder" including parents and employees who are off the clock.

## **VOLUNTEERS:**

Any parent wishing to help chaperone an event must go through our screening process. Volunteers are also welcome in our school. Anyone visiting or volunteering for more than one day per semester must go through a screening process. Our screening process includes, but is not limited to, 1) a signed statement indicating whether or not they have had a conviction of any law in any state, or any record of founded child or dependent abuse in any state; 2) a signed statement indicating whether or not they have a communicable disease or other health concern that could pose a threat to the health, safety or well-being of the children; 3) undergoing a fingerprinting and background check 4) a signed statement regarding child abuse 5) going through New Teacher Orientation. Any “visitor” who spends extended periods of time in the school will be considered a volunteer and be required to go through the screening and training listed above.

## **INTRUDERS:**

The safety of the children is our first concern. Although we have an open door policy and welcome parents to visit their children we also have a commitment to the parents of the other children in the program. Since we cannot attest to the background of anyone that has not gone through our screening process we also cannot allow parents to spend extended periods of time in our facility without requiring them to fulfill certain screening and training requirements. These are set by state law and our policies. Any individual who does not submit to our safety policies concerning “Visitors” and “Volunteers” must be considered an intruder and steps will be taken according to the “Intruder” portion of our “Safety and Evacuation” policies.

## **BACKPACKS**

Elementary students must have a backpack-style book bag without wheels in order to protect books and papers from inclement weather, needless handling, and above all, loss. Please check your child’s backpack to ensure toys and expensive games are not being brought to school. Upon arriving in the classroom, the students will put books in their desks and the book bags in their assigned cubby.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS:**

Our meal service consists of a hot lunch. All food served will be nutritious and healthy. Each child will be encouraged to eat what is prepared and to try new items as introduced. Please alert our staff of any food allergies or food restrictions as we want to accommodate and respect individual preferences.

## **BRINGING FOOD FROM HOME:**

Breakfast and lunch may be brought from home if your child is more comfortable eating a sack lunch, however please do not expect teachers to warm food for your child. Please bring food in appropriate thermos if it needs to be eaten warm. Food should meet nutritional guidelines. Perishable food brought from home should be contained so as to avoid contamination. Prepackaged snacks may be brought from home for birthdays and parties that do not meet nutritional guidelines. (Please notify the child’s teacher prior to bringing special treats.) Reminder: all food eaten at school must be nut free.

## **LUNCH CARDS**

Lunch cards are available for purchase from 8:00 -8:30 in the morning or afterschool *only*. Lunch cards are available in fifteen dollar increments. Credit will not be given for lunch or snacks. If your child runs out of a lunch card you will be required to pay your child’s balance by Friday of that week. Please do not buy a lunch card for one day. Give your child cash for that day. Teachers and administration are not responsible for your child’s lunch money.

**Half Days:** On half days or early dismissal days, the pick- up time is NOON . On these days, lunch will not be served. If you do not arrive to pick up your child by 12:20, your child will then go to afterschool care and you will be charged the regular afterschool, per hour fee.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL** It is **very important**, for **emergency** and administrative reasons, that every enrolled family maintains an up-to-date address/phone number and email address record at the school office. **Notify the school immediately if you have a change in this information.**

## **PORTRAITS AND PICTURES:**

We offer school pictures two times a year, in the spring and fall. The fall photos usually include two sittings per child and should be delivered in time for use as holiday gifts. The spring portraits include one sitting and a complete class portrait. You will receive proofs before purchasing. In addition we may take pictures of the children playing or for use on their cubbies or for use with a project or we may need pictures of children for promotional use. There is a "Photo Release form" (page Z-14) with your paperwork giving us permission to take your child's picture or include them in short video footage.

## **REGISTRATION AND MATERIALS FEES:**

As stated in the *Guaranteed Start Date* section of this policy, there is a registration fee that is due prior to the child's first day at Innovative Learning . These fees are due upon initial enrollment annually each June or at initial registration.

## **YEARLY TUITION FEES:**

It is our philosophy that parents are paying for the spot their child will take in our school. This is not based upon attendance but rather on a yearly fee, divided into ten payments, that is due regardless of the attendance habits of the child who has the spot. Our fee structure is based upon a yearly fee that is set by the contract which is signed by the parent's upon enrolling the child(ren) in the program. Payments for yearly fees may be paid monthly, once a year or twice a year. Parents who wish to pay twice a year or once a year will receive a five percent discount.

## **Administrator/Teacher Conferences**

Twice a year opportunities are given for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. Should you require an additional conference please make an appointment with your child's teacher.

Teacher prep times are vital to your child's educational growth. It is during this time that a teacher plans lessons, meets with parents, or prepares for her class. Please do not try to have a conference or a personal conversation about your child when a teacher is on duty or during her prep time. If you wish to speak to your child's teacher please make an appointment to meet with her.

Though Mrs. Zayas and Mrs. Buntyn are school administrators, they wear many hats. During prep times there are many administrative duties they have to deal with. They do have an open-door policy and love the personal rapport that they have established with the parents but if you should wish to speak to them at length please make an appointment.

## **PAYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

### **Tuition**

Innovative Learning Academy currently uses FACTS tuition management systems for **all** tuition payments. FACTS does charge a nominal \$41 convenience fee to set up your account. This fee is non-negotiable and allows parents to pay their yearly tuition in ten monthly payments as opposed to paying everything in full at the beginning of the year. If you would like to avoid FACTS altogether you are welcome to pay tuition in full by August 20 or in two semester payments due August 20 and December 20.

Providing FACTS tuition agreements is vital to the running of our school. Ensuring that we receive monthly tuition allows us to pay overhead costs such as rent and teachers on a timely basis. It also helps us to avoid costly add-on fees such as, playground, science lab, and art fees that so many other schools charge.

All tuition is non-refundable except for prepaid tuition that is over-and-above any additional charges, including the two weeks notice. All clients will pay the last weeks fees in advance. This will also be adjusted annually or as the contracted rates change. See the REFUNDS policy below. Registration fees are non-refundable. Innovative Learning may seek collection of fees due and clients may be required to pay a two week termination fee, and any collection costs and attorney's fees incurred by Innovative Learning to collect this amount. If Innovative Learning elects, it may immediately terminate all services provided by it including but not limited to the immediate dismissal of the children from it's facility.

## **REFUNDS:**

We do not issue refunds. In the event you have over-paid the credit will be applied to your next month's tuition. In the event you have a balance after your child's last day, all applicable fees including the two weeks notice required will be subtracted from any balance prior to a final refund being issued. Checks for this are cut monthly and will be mailed according to our monthly bill payment schedule.

### **Other**

1. If a student is voluntarily withdrawn from the Academy at any point in time once the school year has begun; tuition must be paid in full for each calendar month or fraction thereof that the student was in attendance.
2. If a student is withdrawn at the recommendation of the Academy, tuition will be due on the basis of total days enrolled.
3. In the case of any delinquent financial obligations, student records, report cards, and transcripts are withheld, and the student is not permitted to return for the following trimester – either at the start of a new academic year (first trimester) or at the start of the second or third trimester.
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4. In the unfortunate event that your account goes more than 45 days past due, your child will be placed in the school cafeteria and you will be asked to pick up your child immediately. The balance will still be owed and your transcripts will not be released until you have paid in full.

## **Biblical Principles for Reconciliation**

*“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church (higher authority)...” Matthew 18: 15 - 17*

### **Procedures for Handling Disputed Issues**

The most helpful principle to follow within a Christian school when handling complaints is found in the Bible - Matthew, Chapter 18. This should be the guiding principle for all members of the ILA community - board members, administration, faculty, staff and parents - to maintain harmony and unity. Following these principles, families may be asked to come before the Administration or School board for resolution of various issues. Questions or concerns should always be handled courteously, politely, and promptly by communicating directly with the person(s) involved.

Example: A parent who has a concern regarding a faculty or staff member should speak first with that person.

1. The parent meets privately with the teacher to seek a resolution in a spirit of reconciliation.
2. The parent meets simultaneously with the teacher and the Principal to seek a resolution in a spirit of reconciliation.
3. The problem is presented to the School board by the Administration, which then calls on the parties involved as seems warranted, all in a spirit of reconciliation.
4. The problem is presented to the entire Board of Trustees, which then calls upon the private parties involved as seems warranted, all in a spirit of reconciliation.

**The following step is taken when a situation remains unresolved:**

**The person(s) unwilling to reconcile is(are) asked to voluntarily withdraw from the school.**

## **CURRICULUM**

The Curriculum refers to all the guided experiences of the student under the direction of the school. The instructional program is monitored and evaluated by administrators and teachers on an ongoing basis, in keeping with the guidelines of ILA Office. The required subject areas for grades K-8 (independent or integrated) are:

- ❖ Art
- ❖ Computer /Technology
- ❖ Language Arts(speaking, listening, viewing reading, writing, spelling, grammar)
- ❖ Math/Algebra
- ❖ Music
- ❖ Physical Education
- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Science
- ❖ Social Studies
- ❖ Spanish

## **DAMAGES**

Parents/guardians are obliged to pay for damages to school property caused by their child, including lost or damaged books or equipment. If a child loses a book, a parent should contact the student's teacher to complete the book replacement form. The damaged book, if suitable, will be used as a classroom resource.

## **TOYS:**

Personal toys are not permitted in the school, as they can cause disputes and can be broken or lost. The exception to this is show-and-tell or sleep-toys which should be labeled with the child's name. Innovative Learning is not responsible for stolen, lost or broken toys or clothing.

*Do not bring toy guns, war toys or other toys of destruction.*

## **RECIPTS AND STATEMENTS:**

Receipts are available upon request. Annual statements for tax and accounting purposes are available upon request for all accounts with a zero balance.

## **LATE PICK-UP FEE:**

There will be a \$5.00 fee added per minute if pick-up takes place after closing. This fee is non-negotiable and is the responsibility of all clients. Parents, or those picking the children up, are required to call ahead if they feel they are going to be more than 5 minutes late. Parents notified that a child is ill and needs to leave the school for the day a "reasonable period of time" to pick-up the child or the above "Late Pick-up Fee" will also apply. If no parent or emergency contact can be located within 30 minutes of trying to contact the parent, the "Late Pick-up Fee" will also apply. An attempt will be made to contact individuals on the emergency contact list after children have been left 15 minutes past closing. Children left at the school later than 60 minutes past closing will be considered abandoned and Child Protective Services will be informed.

## **LEAVING THE SCHOOL:**

The school reserves the right to require the dis-enrollment of a child according to our "Discipline Policy" and or the "Behavior Intervention Policy". The school also reserves the right to require the dis-enrollment of any child whose parent and or guardian has become a problem at the school or who has developed and un-cooperative, aggressive, dissatisfied, or angry demeanor towards the center, its policies or its staff.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Fire drills are conducted once each month and tornado drills are conducted at least once each year.

1. **Emergency Evacuation Plan:** In the event of an Emergency Evacuation of the premises other than for weather conditions, classes will be notified via the Public Address System. Teachers will guide their students through an exterior door closest to their class. If there is an exterior door **in** the room, students will be led through that door to the basketball court. In rooms with no immediate access to an exterior door, students will be led through the door leading to main hall and then to the closest exterior exit and proceed to basketball court. If the need should arise for a process different from what is stated here, special directions would be given via the P.A. System.

2. **CHILD ABUSE Texas state** requires that Innovative Learning and all members of child care institutions be on the lookout for, and report to the State and appropriate authorities any and all suspected cases of abuse to a child.

At Innovative Learning our school and staff are mandatory reporters of Child Abuse. All incidents or suspected incidents will be turned over directly to the Child Protective Services for investigation. We are not allowed to do our own investigation and are required by law to report anything of a suspicious nature. It is advised that clients make the staff aware of any lingering bruising or other visible injury to minimize suspicion of possible child abuse or endangerment.

The following steps are to be taken if a staff member is suspected of child abuse:

- A staff member who has a situation or investigation pending should immediately notify the Director or most senior leadership staff member in the building.
- The person who suspects abuse should bring it to the attention of the Director or most senior leadership staff member in the building.
- The supervisor will check on the complaint and if they agree that there may be abuse, the supervisor will report the incident to Child Protective Services and our State licensing authority.
- We will then follow their advice regarding whether or not to suspend the staff member

If a staff member is founded in a case of child abuse, we will take the following steps:

- We will allow the staff member to appeal the decision
- The Director or an appointed member of the leadership staff will meet with the individual to go over the incident and form an opinion as to its validity and/or consequences to the School and the individual.
- Based on the advice of our licensing agent, we will either suspend the staff member or allow them to continue their job until the appeal is completed.
- The staff member will meet with the Director or an assigned member of the leadership staff during this time and steps will be taken to ensure that there won't be any problems.

If after the appeal the decision is still founded, we will take one of the following steps based on the advice of our licensing agent:

- The staff member will be terminated from their position at the Center, or
- We will inform the parents that we have a staff member who has a founded child abuse on record. We will also let the parents know what the charge was.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICY:**

Parents are responsible for their child's transportation to the school and for arranging their own car pools. Innovative Learning will provide transportation for school aged children to and from school at the locations that this service is offered. Innovative Learning will provide transportation for field trips as the opportunities arise. Parents will be notified about field trips in advance and written permission will be obtained. The school complies with all State laws that pertain to motor vehicles as well as transporting children who are enrolled in a licensed child care center. The transportation policy in its entirety is found in section K of this Handbook. Parents will also need to fill out the form on Page Z-13. This form should be re-done annually.

## **INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Innovative Learning complies with the minimum insurance coverage as suggested by our independent agent. For more information concerning policies and liability see management.

### **ADDITIONS AND CHANGES:**

Innovative Learning reserves the right to edit or adapt the policies in this handbook as the needs arise. The school will make all changes and additions available at the time these changes are made. Clients and customers will be notified of these changes through the normal written communication system of the school at the time they are made effective.

### **EXTENDED DAY**

Rates are charged by the hour (\$5.00). After the first quarter hour, you will be charged for the full hour. You will not be charged for an hour when the child is picked up within the first 15 minutes of the hour. The monthly bills are sent home in the Thursday folders. Any family whose bill is delinquent beyond 30 days may lose the benefit.

## **Innovative Learning DISCIPLINE POLICY**

We believe that children need limits in order to feel secure about themselves and their environment. The purpose of discipline is to help children learn acceptable behavior and develop self control. The basis for our Discipline Policy is an organized classroom and prepared staff members. At **Innovative Learning** we strive to develop a positive relationship between the teacher and the child. We also believe that if an interesting and challenging program is offered to the child, then discipline problems are at a minimum. **If inappropriate behavior does occur, we begin with a positive approach.**

### **DISCIPLINE**

In light of the ILA philosophy, we are committed to:

1. Assisting, working with, and caring about each student as an individual.
2. Providing a caring Christian environment which exposes its students to solid Christian, values, principles and attitudes. ILA is committed to maintaining a school environment in which students will demonstrate a positive influence on their peers. By implementing the, *ILA Christian Character Program*, our daily goal and overall plan will be strengthened by helping each child learn to make the right choices, and to develop self-discipline as well as a sense of personal responsibility. The teacher or school staff will handle most discipline situations as they occur and make appropriate decisions. If this offense is of a serious nature, it will be brought to the attention of the parent immediately.

***Behavior Management and Guidance.*** Attention spans and skills of children shall be considered so that caregivers do not require behavior of children which is developmentally inappropriate.

- (a) Discipline shall be reasonable, appropriate, and in terms the children can understand.
- (b) Praise and encouragement of good behavior shall be used instead of focusing upon unacceptable behavior only.
- (c) Punishment that is shaming, humiliating, frightening, verbally abusive, or injurious to children shall not be used.
- (d) Punishment shall not be related to food, rest or toileting.
- (e) Spanking or any other type of corporal punishment is prohibited. ("Corporal punishment" is the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for behavior of which the punisher disapproves.)

### **The following is considered unacceptable behavior:**

Running in the classroom	Leaving the area or group without permission
Becoming disruptive	Removing shoes or other articles of clothing
Throwing toys, rocks, sand	Using toys and materials inappropriately
Aggressive behavior	Using toys and materials inappropriately
Abusive, or inappropriate language	Arguing with team members or other children
Lack of Cooperation	Behavior determined by the director to be unacceptable
Hurting themselves or others, such as hitting, biting, spitting, kicking, and pulling hair	

### **The teacher has these prime responsibilities when dealing with inappropriate behavior:**

- 1) **Redirection** - Encourage child's good behavior and/or redirect his or her activity.
- 2) **"Time out" or "think time" within their area**
  - A) If a problem still exists, the child is then removed from the situation
  - B) One minute per year of age, no more than three minutes after the child has regained control or composure.
  - C) "Time out" or "think time" shall be defined as an area away from the group or activity yet within their area.

- D) The child will be allowed to return to the group as soon as possible.
  - E) The teacher will not only decide if the child is ready to return, but will encourage him/her to be ready.
  - F) If redirection and “time out” /”think time” periods are not sufficient, staff members intervene as soon as possible to prevent physical or emotional injury.
  - G) The teacher will try to help the child identify his/her unacceptable behavior and possible alternatives
- 3) **“Time out” or “think time” away from the group**
- A) If the child continues in the inappropriate behavior
  - B) And/or the “time out” /”think time” with-in the area becomes either inappropriate or ineffective
- 4) **Behavior Report**
- A) If the child’s behavior continues to be inappropriate
  - B) OR the severity denotes an un-resolved problem.
- 5) **Behavior Intervention Meeting**
- A) If the child’s behavior continues to be inappropriate, a behavior intervention meeting may take place
  - B) Those in attendance will be the parents, the child’s lead teacher, and a member of the leadership team
  - C) This may be called by any of the individuals listed above.

Continued disrespect, classroom disruption and a disregard for school rules may be reason for suspension or expulsion. The following are considered serious and are subject to strict review and definite action, including continued detention, suspension or expulsion:

1. Fighting
2. Sexual harassment
3. Disrespect shown to faculty members, other adult or to fellow students
4. Use of obscene language and/or gestures
5. Disruptive behavior or insubordination
6. Possession of dangerous and/or harmful materials or weapons on school property
7. Smoking anywhere on school property
8. Possession or use of controlled substances
9. Dishonest behavior
10. Possession of immoral or pornographic material
11. Truancy (absence without permission)
12. Consistent nonconformity to school rules regarding proper dress
13. Threatening behavior of any kind
14. Misuse of the computer or the internet.
15. **Any infraction** of any other rule set down by the administration when such infraction is serious

**Suspension for fighting:** Students who are involved in physical confrontation on the playground, in the classroom, during extra-curricular activities or in school building may be suspended. **Physical confrontation means:** Hitting, pushing, shoving kicking or bullying another child. If the other child hits, pushes or shoves back, both students may be suspended. The second time a child is involved with physical confrontation, an extended suspension may apply. If this behavior continues, the offending student may be asked to leave the school permanently. Suspensions may be in or out-of-school suspensions.

*Action will be taken for students who partake in any threatening behavior. Consequences will be considered based upon the student’s age and level of understanding. Our goal* will be to help students resolve their differences by using “I care” language, taking personal responsibility, learning from the experience and reflecting on how Jesus would want us to treat another person. Students are accountable to school rules at any time that they are on school premises or involved in a school-related activity off premises.

**Sending a child home**

- A) When the child becomes out of control
- B) And/or when the child fails to respond to the measures taken by the **INNOVATIVE LEARNING** Team
- C) This is at the discretion of the most senior Leadership Team member present

**Suspension**

- A) Three written behavioral reports within a nine week period constitute the child’s being suspended from the child care program for one week.
- B) Behavior Intervention Meeting - During this time the parent or guardian, the lead teacher and a member of the leadership team will meet in an attempt to determine if the child is capable of drastically changing his/her

behavior to allow re-entry into the program. This is the mandatory behavior intervention meeting described in the Behavior Intervention Policy.

- C) Fees will still be paid for this week to retain the child's space in the **Innovative Learning** program.
- D) If the child does continue in the program and does receive a fourth behavioral report within a 30 day period, termination of services may occur.

#### **Termination of services**

- A) When the severity of a problem is great enough that it could endanger the safety of the child(ren)'s welfare
- B) Termination may be effective immediately after consulting the most senior Leadership Team member present
- C) The parent or guardian will be notified.
- D) The School considers this to be a drastic measure and would not resort to such unless the child's behavior significantly and directly threatens the physical or mental health, safety or well-being of one or more of the other children or team members and, that threat cannot be eliminated.

#### **In addition to the above, the school will use three methods to track behavior and communicate with parents.**

- 1) Daily Reports – a parent/school communication format that does not count as a written behavior report. If the teacher deems necessary, a copy will be kept on file.
- 2) Observation Form – an inner school documentation of observed inappropriate or challenging behavior. These may be filled out at any time by any school team member and are used solely to track behavior patterns. These are to be turned in daily to the lead teacher over the student and then to the leadership team for filing.
- 3) The "Behavior" Report – These are the "Incident Forms" and are duplicate. The original is filed in the child's file and the copy is given to the parent. These are pre-approved by a leadership team member. Each "Behavior" Report counts as one of the three that would result in suspension.

**Innovative Learning** expects parental involvement and cooperation in all aspects of discipline. Failure to comply can warrant termination. We reserve the right to discontinue work with any child/parent whose needs we cannot meet. The key to effective discipline is consistency. We try to be as consistent as possible in all areas. We provide the child with a warm and loving atmosphere in which to grow and learn.

## **Innovative Learning CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION POLICY**

At **Innovative Learning**, our vision is to provide the best education to the most children possible. We strive to help every child be successful and to achieve their highest potential. We implement the Behavior Intervention Policy when needed to ensure this happens.

The basis for our Discipline Policy is an organized classroom and prepared staff members. At **Innovative Learning** we strive to develop a positive relationship between the teacher and the child. We also believe that if an interesting and challenging program is offered to the child, then discipline problems are at a minimum. **If inappropriate behavior does occur, we begin with a positive approach.**

A Behavior Intervention Meeting may be called in three different manners:

- 1. The primary teacher or a member of the Leadership Team may call for a Behavior Intervention Meeting at any time prior to the third disciplinary action as they deem necessary.
- 2. Either parent may call for a Behavior Intervention Meeting at any time prior to the third disciplinary action as they deem necessary.
- 3. A Behavior Intervention Meeting is mandatory after the third Discipline Note.

Under the first two scenarios, our first goal will be to determine and identify the behavioral difficulties that the child is having. The child's primary teacher will document the circumstances surrounding the behavior and the current actions that are being taken to correct this. Parents will then be asked to provide information concerning any changes in the home and will give input if they have noticed this behavior and what actions they are currently taking to correct it. A plan of action will then be discussed and agreed upon by all members present. If problems continue, an additional intervention will be scheduled.

The approach will vary slightly in the case that a mandatory Behavior Intervention Meeting has been called after the third discipline note. Our first goal will be to determine if our program is appropriate for the needs of the child. Services will be terminated if it is determined that we cannot meet the child's needs in our program. We will follow the steps listed above if we determine our program is appropriate for the child's special needs.

In addition to the above, the school will use three methods to track behavior and communicate with parents.

1. Daily Reports – a parent/school communication format that does not count as a written behavior report. If the teacher deems necessary, a copy will be kept on file.
2. Observation Form – an inner school documentation of observed inappropriate or challenging behavior. These may be filled out at any time by any school team member and are used solely to track behavior patterns. These are to be turned in daily to the lead teacher over the student and then to the leadership team for filing.
3. The “Behavior” Report – These are the “Incident Forms” and are duplicate. The original is filed in the child's file and the copy is given to the parent. These are pre-approved by a leadership team member. Each “Behavior” Report counts as one of the three that would result in suspension.

**Innovative Learning expects parental involvement and cooperation in all aspects of discipline. Failure to comply can warrant termination. We reserve the right to discontinue work with any child/parent whose needs cannot be met.**

The Behavior Intervention Policy's purpose is to establish procedures for the parents, lead teacher, and a member of the leadership team to utilize when planning to meet the needs of the child(ren) with unacceptable or inappropriate behavior. A parent, the child's lead teacher and a member of the leadership team will be in attendance at a Behavior Intervention Meeting and agree in advance on the time and date.

## **Innovative Learning MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

State law requires that every employee of a licensed day care or preschool facility, who in the course of employment reasonably believes a child, has suffered sexual abuse, physical abuse, or denial of critical care, shall immediately notify the Department of child services.

Our policy concerning this contains the following:

- a. A staff member shall report the suspected or alleged child abuse or neglect to child protective services or to a local law enforcement agency as prescribed by the state law. This is to be done by any means available within 24 hours of the required report. Written documentation shall also be sent to the Department, Child Protective Services, and any local law enforcement agencies previously notified within 3 days of the initial report, and maintain written documentation of a child abuse or neglect report on facility premises for 12 months from the date of the report.
- b. A staff member shall report the suspected or alleged child abuse by a staff member to the Department and to a local law enforcement agency as prescribed by state law. A Staff member shall also send written documentation to the Department and to any law enforcement agency previously notified within 3 days of the initial report, and maintain written documentation of a child abuse report on the facility premises for 12 months from the date of the report.

The oral and written reports shall contain the following information, or as much thereof as the person making the report is able to furnish:

- a. The names and home address of the child, phone number, date and year.
- b. The child's explanation as to what happened.
- c. The nature and extent of the child's injuries, what the marks look like and color of bruises.
- d. The date CPS was called, name of reporter and case worker.
- e. Any other information or comments in which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury.
- f. The date CPS was called and the name of the specialist.
- g. If the police were called.

Legal sanctions for failure to report are as follows:

1. Any mandatory reporter who knowingly and willfully fails to report a suspected case of child abuse is guilty of a simple misdemeanor.
2. Any mandatory reporter who knowingly fails to report is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure.

Any mandatory reporter who in good faith makes a report of child abuse or participates in the investigation of a child abuse has immunity from any liability, civil or criminal. Records and/or information pertaining to the abuse may be released to the child abuse investigator without releases required in other situations

To report child abuse anytime, day or night, call:

## **Innovative Learning FIELD TRIP POLICY**

We are interested in all areas of growth and development in our students. Due to this fact, field trips are an important part of meeting this goal. These are to be learning experiences as well as trips for enjoyment and to offer a change of pace. The following criteria are applied to create uniformity and structure as well as to insure the safety of our students.

### **I. Permission Slips**

Parents must fill out permission slips in order for the children to be released to participate in the field trip. The permission slip will include the date and purpose of the field trip; the times of departure from and return to the facility; the name, street address and telephone number of the field trip destination; and, if applicable, the cost.

### **II. Written Field Trip Plan**

The staff member in charge of planning the field trip will write a field trip plan that will include the name of each participating child, staff member, and other individuals on the field trip; the times of departure from and return to the facility; the license plate number of any motor vehicle used on the field trip; and the name, street address and telephone number of the field trip destination.

### **III. Ratios**

Each lead teacher shall contact the office two weeks prior to their field trip to ensure extra team members are scheduled to aid in the ratios. The ratios established and used for each class and age group shall be exceeded by at least one qualifying team member. Parents and volunteers may only be used in the ratio if they have gone through the screening process. Before leaving the center, students will be divided into ratio groupings. This shall be done at the direction and discretion of each lead teacher. Each teacher and volunteer used in the ratio shall be responsible for specific children and be made aware of this prior to leaving the facility. Each staff member shall ensure that each child on the list is present at all times and place a checkmark next to the name of each child present at the following times: 1) At the beginning of the field trip or when boarding the motor vehicle, 2) Upon arrival and each hour while at the field trip destination, 3) When preparing to leave the field trip destination or when boarding the motor vehicle to return to the facility, and 4) When reentering the facility at the conclusion of the field trip.

### **IV. Containment Areas**

In some limited types of field trip outings, it may be advantageous to set up a "zone-defense" type of containment area rather than to continue "man to man" ratio style containment. "Zone-defense" is defined as a pre-determined area which each teacher will be responsible for. We use a team concept, where the team leaders are responsible to set up containment areas. The lead teacher, or team leader, is required to assign "zone-defense" positions and parameters such as: no grouping of teachers and no sitting on picnic tables. The lead teacher, or team leader, will decide which system will provide adequate safety for the children. This containment area shall be specific and each team member is to be given a specific assignment similar to the method used during the evening playground time. When the containment area is closed down, each child shall return to the team member's care that was assigned to each of them prior to leaving our facility.

### **V. Emergency Plans**

In case of an emergency while on a field trip:

- a. We will make sure that all of the children are kept together in a safe place.

- b. We will take a head count and keep all of the children calm.
- c. Staff members will use their cell phone or radio to contact the center, and then 911 if necessary. They will also contact the child(ren)'s parent if necessary.
- d. Staff members will follow the directions given by either the most senior supervisor on duty at the school or 911.

#### **VI. Parental/Volunteer help**

All parents or volunteers must be screened according to the process outlined in the Volunteer Policy.

#### **VII. Expenses**

All field trips should be kept to a minimal expense. For the most part, parents will cover the expense of their child attending the field trip. Teachers shall endeavor to round the cost of the outing to the nearest even dollar. In the planning stage they shall endeavor to ensure the funds charged to the parents cover the cost of the team members accompanying the students on the trip. Teachers need to complete the proper paperwork if the field trip requires an activity fee. If staff members are paying by check, (or need cash in advance) a check requisition form must be filled out and turned in to the Director by Wednesday of the week before the event. If staff members want to be reimbursed for the field trip, they must fill out an expense reimbursement form and turn it in with their receipt after the event is concluded

#### **VIII. Leaving the Facility**

Before leaving the facility, staff members must make sure they have notified the office of the time they left and the time they will return. Also, staff members must have the following items with them: first aid kits, meds (if needed), a copy of each child's emergency card and a cell phone or radio. Staff members are required to make sure the office knows which form of communication they have. Water in an amount sufficient for each participating child during the field trip should also be taken in water cooler and cups for drinking. If the field trip spans a snack and/or lunch time staff members are responsible to take the snack/lunch with them. If something special is needed in the way of supplies or food, the staff member planning the field trip must notify the office team at least one week prior to the field trip. Children must be wearing in plain view a written identification stating the facility's name, address, and telephone number. Children must also be wearing a written identification stating the child's first and last name. This identification must be out of view.

## **Innovative Learning TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

We are committed to maintaining safe vehicles and procedures and to meet and/or exceed all standards set by state law.

### **WE WILL INSURE THAT:**

#### **OUR VEHICLES**

- 1) All vehicles used to transport children are registered by the STATE Department of Transportation and have been approved by the state for transportation.
- 2) All vehicles have current insurance coverage for the motor vehicle and proof of such shall be kept in the vehicle and on the facility premises.
- 3) The motor vehicle shall have a working heater and air conditioner that can maintain a temperature between 60° F and 86° F.
- 4) The motor vehicle will include a fire extinguisher, emergency reflective triangles, a first aid kit, a blood-borne pathogenic clean-up kit 2 towels or blankets and water sufficient for the needs of each enrolled child.
- 5) Our vehicles shall be kept clean and mechanically safe.
- 6) All service and repair records of all motor vehicles used for the transportation of enrolled children shall be maintained for 12 months and shall be available for inspection.

#### **OUR STAFF**

- 1) All drivers shall be at least 18 years of age and shall hold a valid STATE driver's license; they shall also meet all standards set by STATE law concerning the class of vehicle being driven.

- 2) All drivers and those accompanying the children while in the vehicle shall receive adequate training every six (6) months in use of the passenger log and all transportation rules of the school and the state of STATE. This training shall include periodic practice of the emergency exiting procedures. The documentation of this training is kept in each staff member's employment file.
- 3) All drivers shall comply with all state of STATE health requirements for schools.
- 4) All drivers and adult monitors shall be CPR/first aid certified and shall be familiar with the use of all emergency equipment and procedures.

## **SAFETY**

- 1) All children under the age of 4 years or who weighs 40 pounds or less shall use an approved child passenger restraint system.
- 2) All children over 4 years and 40 pounds shall be provided an adjustable lap belt or an integrated lap and shoulder belt. (The exception to this is vehicles defined as exempt from this provision such as school busses)
- 3) Each child and adult shall be secured in their own seat belt before and while the vehicle is in motion.
- 4) All children and all passengers shall be seated and entirely inside the vehicle while the vehicle is in motion.
- 5) All children shall always be attended by an adult while in a vehicle – no child will ever be left alone in a vehicle for any reason.
- 6) All children shall not be allowed to open or close any door or window of the vehicle.
- 7) The emergency parking brake shall be set and the ignition keys removed from the vehicle prior to the driver exiting the vehicle.
- 8) All doors of the vehicles shall be locked whenever the vehicle is in motion.
- 9) All children shall be loaded onto or unloaded from the vehicle away from moving traffic at curbside, in a driveway, parking lot or other location designated for this purpose.
- 10) In the case of an accident while transporting children, the STATE Department of Health Services Office of Child Care Licensing will be notified by phone within 24 hours and a written report will be submitted to them within 7 days.

## **PROCEDURES**

- 1) A copy of each child's emergency information and immunization record cards shall be carried in the vehicle in addition to a **Passenger Log** stating the name of each enrolled child being transported.
- 2) Each individual child shall be listed separately by first and last name and shall be counted by individual entry.
- 3) The **Passenger Log** shall be used to take roll each time the vehicle makes a stop as each child is loaded or unloaded.
- 4) Upon unloading the children from the vehicle, the **Passenger Log** shall be transferred to the person designated by the school that shall provide additional review and additional verification that the children have been unloaded from the vehicle and properly accounted for.
- 5) All **Passenger Logs** shall include the names of the persons who complete the **Passenger Log** and a separate attendance record of that event. These records shall be kept at the school for one (1) year with or until the next annual license re-evaluation
- 6) After the children have been unloaded from the vehicle, the driver shall immediately physically walk through the vehicle and inspect all seat surfaces, under all seats and all compartments or recesses in the vehicle's interior to insure no children have remained on the vehicle.
- 7) All Children who are picked up by parent's during field trips or while be transported shall be checked out according to the center's policy concerning drop off and pick up.
- 8) All Children transported to school shall be released in accordance with the school's procedures for this. This to include dropping them off/picking them up at the agreed upon place and time. The school staff shall watch the children while they are getting on and off the vehicle and shall watch them walk through the entrance to the door designated by the school.
- 9) No audio headphones or cell phone shall be used by the driver while the vehicle is in motion.
- 10) We will insure that children never spend more than forty-five (45) minutes traveling one way. (exception: If we choose to attend a field trip that exceeds this we will get prior written permission for each instance)
- 11) We will, at a minimum, double our adult to children ratio on all field trips.

- 12) We will maintain acceptable adult to children ratios when transporting children who are school age. This will include the bus driver and an adult monitor.

## **Innovative Learning Scholarship Policy**

Innovative Learning will set aside an amount not to exceed 1% of the annual income budgeted each year for scholarships. These scholarships shall be designated for families who attend the school and who are having financial difficulty which is creating a hardship in paying their fees. Annual scholarships shall not exceed \$1000 per family per calendar year.

The guidelines of the scholarship applicants will be as follows:

1. Scholarship applicants need to apply for the scholarship using the Scholarship Application Form.
2. Scholarship applicants will be asked to seek assistance through DES and Consumer Credit Counseling or a similar organization and give proof of the same.
3. Scholarship applicants will be required to provide any supporting documents requested by the Scholarship Application Form.
4. Scholarship awards will not exceed 50% of any specified period of care and will not exceed \$1000 per family per calendar year.
5. Scholarships will be awarded based upon the above criteria and will be awarded depending upon the parent's keeping their payment agreements that are adopted as a supplement to the scholarship award. Failure to keep the payment agreements will void all scholarship awards for the awarded period. In this instance, late fees may accrue retroactively.
6. Clients who are having continued financial challenges and are ineligible for additional support elsewhere may seek fund-raising options in order to pay their fees at the center. This is at the client's request and at the discretion of the director. All funds raised shall be accounted for and turned in to the school for credit to the account and purpose they were raised.
7. The scholarship policy is non-discriminatory. No scholarship applicant shall be excluded from the scholarship program because of race, color, religion, disability, sex or national origin.