

# **Innovation Montessori, Inc.**

## **Parent Student**

### **Operations Manual**



**Innovation Montessori Ocoee**  
1644 North Lakewood Avenue, Ocoee, FL 34761  
**Innovation Montessori Ocoee Casa, LLC.**  
1610 North Lakewood Avenue, Ocoee, FL 34761  
**Innovation Montessori High School**

1475 E Silver Star Rd, Ocoee, FL 34761

## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

**IMO PHONE:** 407-654-2045

**IMHS PHONE:** 407-601-3950

**FAX:** 407-654-2046

**EMAIL:** [office@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:office@innovationmontessori.com), [imhsoffice@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:imhsoffice@innovationmontessori.com),  
[primaryoffice@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:primaryoffice@innovationmontessori.com)

**Executive Director:** Heather Clay

**Principals:** Cathy Tobin (Elementary), Dr. John Pagnotti (Secondary)

**Assistant Principals:** Ilene Costello (Elementary), Liana Mubarak (Secondary)

### ***ABOUT INNOVATION MONTESSORI OCOEE***

*Innovation Montessori Ocoee (IMO) was conceived and approved in 2010.*

*The school was founded by a group of devoted and supportive parents. Our schools are governed by a school board of parents and community members. Our charter is granted through Orange County Public Schools (OCPS).*

### ***Our Overall Vision and Purpose for IMO***

In accordance with its mission, the goal and purpose of the educational program at Innovation Montessori Ocoee is to ensure that all students meet or exceed rigorous academic, personal, and social/ emotional objectives. This will be accomplished using a curriculum that effectively aligns the research-based Montessori Primary through Adolescent curriculum with the state standards. Montessori's holistic, comprehensive, individualized curriculum, and integrated character education make it well suited to achieving the mission. Further, Innovation Montessori defines a joyful, authentic public Montessori education to include the following ten elements:

- Beautifully and thoughtfully prepared classrooms, designed with a complete collection of developmentally appropriate Montessori learning materials.
- Research-based, world-renowned Montessori Materials.
- Multi-age classrooms consisting of 1st-3<sup>rd</sup> grades, and 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades, more commonly called Lower Elementary (ages 6-9), and Upper Elementary (ages 9-12), Secondary 1 (7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>), and Secondary 2 (10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>). Primary classrooms include our private Casa program three- and four-year-old students and our public kindergarten students.
- Teachers who are both Montessori and state-certified, possess a passion for seeing children flourish, and are strongly committed to the school's mission.
- Individualized education founded upon differentiated instruction using child and lesson-driven Montessori work plans.
- Frequent observations and assessment of student learning outcomes throughout the year, faculty collaboration, and active parent partnership and participation will provide the momentum for our Montessori K-8 program.
- Individual and small group lessons with immediate, ongoing assessment embedded in every lesson ensuring mastery of content across the Montessori curriculum for every child.
- Joyful, self-directed, exploratory learning leading to personal responsibility and intrinsic motivation in students.
- Long, uninterrupted work cycles and project-based learning encourage concentration and focus on children.
- An emphasis on stewardship and respect for the natural world, with a global awareness and appreciation for the interconnectedness of all of life.

# INNOVATION MONTESSORI

## Parent/Student Handbook

2024-2025

### Parent-Student Handbook

*We hope you find this Alphabetical Guide to Innovation Montessori, Inc., student policies helpful. This is not intended to be an all-Inclusive list. If you have questions about our Charter, the Montessori curriculum, ESE (Exceptional Student Education), MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Support), Gifted Services, or any other information not listed, please contact the front office. We are happy to provide additional information.*

*The purpose of the handbook is to provide parents and teachers with a quick guide to the most relevant day-to-day information. At the end there is a parent agreement that needs to be returned to school within the first 10 days of school with your signature, following the agreement you will find our "Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools". If you have any questions, please contact the front office.*

### ADDITIONS (VOLUNTEERS)

Innovation Montessori students need you! Parents and friends of IMO can help our school through the ADDITIONS Volunteer Program. We encourage you to become involved. Younger siblings will not be allowed to accompany parents to the classroom during volunteer times. ADDITIONS is where you log in for your Volunteer Hours. If you have any questions, please ask the staff in the front office.

#### Volunteer Guidelines

Volunteering at school is one way to get involved in your child's education. Volunteers contribute in many ways, including accompanying classes on field trips, helping to make materials, or organizing and participating in events. Parent volunteers get a close-up view of their child's school. Seeing how children are taught may also provide insight and ideas on how to support your child at home.

The school charter requires that families support the school by volunteering their time. Almost every charter school in Florida has this policy, with most requiring 50 or more hours per year. Innovation Montessori families are only asked to contribute 20 hours per family. Note that it is parents' responsibility to record hours online through OCPS ADDITIONS. If you have any questions regarding volunteering at Innovation Montessori, please contact the front office. Please remember that you need to reapply to Additions each year. Link is here [https://ocps.samaritan.com/custom/503/volunteer\\_home](https://ocps.samaritan.com/custom/503/volunteer_home)

Only adult family members will be credited with volunteer hours. Please plan to spread your volunteer hours out over the school year. All volunteer hours must be fulfilled prior to May 15.

Attendance at PTO meetings, in person or on Zoom (use your full name as your identifier for attendance purposes), equals one volunteer hour per meeting.

EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

*Material Making \* Classroom Support (Seasonal Activities) \* PTO Activity Assistance*

*Teacher Appreciation Week \* School Field Trips \* Volunteer Coordinator \* Fundraising Events*

## ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please keep us informed of any changes in address, telephone number, or parent's work location. It is important for us to be able to contact you in case of an emergency. If you get a new phone number or email address, please update your information in ParentSquare and SchoolMint.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

### Elementary Campus

#### **All Primary-6<sup>th</sup> grade students Receive Placards for Car Line Pick-Up and Primary Dismissal**

PLEASE BE ON TIME! When students are tardy, they miss morning meetings and information for the day. campus before 8:25 AM. Any student (K-12) who is not in class by 8:30 will be marked tardy. According to Florida State attendance guidelines, 5 tardies is equal to 1 unexcused absence. Primary parents will park and walk their children into the school. If a family has students in both main and primary campus, please drop main campus students off first in carline and then proceed to primary to park and walk primary students to the front door. Due to parking constraints primary parents may not walk their main campus children from primary to the main campus and parents with students in grades 1 through 6 may not park and walk their child into school. The only exception is for parents of Kahlo and Cassatt classes who are required to walk their children to the main campus, and when the car line is closed. Then you **MUST** park and walk your child to the sign in table by the MPR (for main) or to the office (for primary). If no staff member is attending to late sign-ins outside the MPR on the elementary campus, please alert the office staff who will make sure your child is directed to class. Once our dismissal process is running smoothly, during afternoon pickup, main campus students with primary siblings may be escorted to primary for dismissal. This is offered as a convenience but if inclement weather threatens or occurs, a message will be sent on ParentSquare, and these students will dismiss from the main campus.

#### **Car Line Protocol**

Do not use cell phones in carline while the car line is active. For the safety of students and staff, we need your full attention.

1. Please pull up to the designated cone when it is your turn.
2. Place the car in park when you are loading or unloading children from the passenger side.
3. Stay in your car.
4. Do not move off until directed by carline staff.
5. Please turn right out of the school parking lot to keep the car line moving.

#### **Arrival Car Line Protocol**

Do not use cell phones in carline while the car line is active. For the safety of students and staff, we need your full attention.

Cars will enter through the main gate and proceed to wind through the parking lot in a single file line.

Students will exit the right side of the vehicle in the lane closest to the school sidewalk.

1. Parents stay in the car.
2. If you need to exit the car, please park in a visitors' spot and cross with caution.
3. After drop-off, please leave through the secondary exit leading into the plaza lot.

Dismissal will begin at 3:00pm (2:00pm on Wednesday). Students will need to be off campus by 3:30pm (2:30pm on Wednesday) unless arrangements have been made previously with a specific teacher or staff member. Dismissal will require that Secondary 1 students exit the building down the stairwell nearest to the cafeteria and exit through the double doors of the cafeteria to the main sidewalk. Secondary 2 students will exit the building down the stairwell nearest the front office and exit out of the main doors at the front of the building. All secondary students who are walkers must immediately leave campus through the pedestrian gate. Car line secondary students will line up along the sidewalk to wait for pick up. For security reasons, the main gate will not open before 2:30pm (1:30pm on Wednesdays) for carline pick up. Please plan accordingly.

### **Dismissal Car Line Protocol**

Do not use cell phones in carline while the car line is active. For the safety of students and staff, we need your full attention.

1. Cars will enter through the main gate and proceed to wind through the parking lot in a single file line.
2. As cars approach the lanes closest to the building, the single file line breaks into 3 lanes. Car line will take the two lanes closest to the building leaving the far-left lane clear for through traffic to exit.
3. Please pay attention and wait for the directions of the car line staff and only load in the designated loading zones in between the cone areas when indicated it is safe to do so.
4. Exit the loading zone once directed by the staff member when it is safe to do so.

Students who are eligible to drive may do so and park on campus with the purchase of a parking permit (inquire in front office). Students who drive are expected to be kind and mindful of fellow drivers, students and community members as they leave the parking lot area. You are only authorized to park in a designated space on campus and are subject to the rules of the plaza if you park off campus.

### **Early Check Out/and Late Drop off**

#### **Elementary/Primary Campus**

1. When checking students out early please pick them up by 2:00 PM (1:00 PM on Wednesdays) at the latest. As it is such a busy time, we do not dismiss children during the last thirty minutes of the school day.
2. Late arriving students must be signed in at the table by the MPR and if no staff member is outside, please go to the office.

Again, when needing to check your child out early for any reason, please note, for the safety of our students, students must be picked up before 2:00 PM (1:00 PM on Wednesdays). Once we begin moving students for dismissal, it is exceedingly difficult to have a smooth transition if we are also calling for students to go home early at that time. Students must be signed out at the office for security reasons. Please be prepared to present your identification.

If a student is to be picked up by anyone other than the parent or authorized person **those arrangements must be made in writing, in advance.** (Also, refer to CUSTODY). Parents /Guardians can email the office and the student's classroom teacher to make them aware of any changes in transportation.

**On North Lakewood, please follow the rules of the road, do not block intersections and please be conscious of any neighbors trying to enter or exit their properties, and allow them to do so.**

### **Secondary Campus**

The school day begins promptly at 8:30 am! Any student not in class by then will be marked tardy. Students can arrive on campus at 8:00 and go directly to their first period class of the day. All students will arrive through the front to main double doors in the front of the building. Any parent that arrives on campus **MUST** check in the main office if they wish to enter the building for ANY circumstance. Any student that arrives after 8:30 am will need to go to the front desk to check in and

receive a pass before going to class. For security reasons, the main gate will be locked by 8:45am. The secondary gate closest to the building will remain open for visitors to check in at the front office.

### **Early Check Out/Leaving Building**

#### **Secondary Campus**

1. When checking students out early please pick them up by 2:00 PM (1:00 PM on Wednesdays) at the latest. As it is such a busy time, we do not dismiss students during the last thirty minutes of the school day. Please plan accordingly.
2. For safety and security reasons, students are NOT authorized to leave campus for any reason without being signed out by a parent or guardian if they are under the age of 18. This includes trips to their car or leaving campus for lunch. If a student is over the age of 18, they may sign themselves out to leave campus. When they return to campus they must show acceptable documentation (medical or official appointment) for their absences from class to receive and excused absences. Excessive unexcused absences are subject to truancy interventions.

If a student is to be picked up by anyone other than the parent or authorized person **those arrangements must be made in writing, in advance**. (Also, refer to CUSTODY). Secondary parents, please email the front office at [IMHSoffice@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:IMHSoffice@innovationmontessori.com) from your email on file to make such arrangements. No student will be released to a person not on their authorized pick-up list, without prior written permission from a parent or guardian. Phone calls may not be accepted for dismissal arrangements. For safety and security reasons, no exceptions will be made.

## ATTENDANCE

Student attendance is an integral part of your child's social, emotional, and academic growth. Ultimately, student attendance is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian. Please use this link below to read Florida Law regarding compulsory school attendance. <http://www.fldoe.org/how-do-i/attendance-enrollment.stml> Students must be in class, ready to learn by 8:30 AM. If your child will not be in school for the entirety of the school day - tardy, absent or leaving early - please complete the attendance form on our school's website. Students with frequent tardies or absences may be removed from the school.

## BACKPACKS

Only children in secondary are welcome to bring backpacks to school. Children in primary and elementary may use drawstring bags or reusable cloth shopping bags to carry their lunches and water bottles.

## BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

Before and after school enrichment (BASE) is designed to meet the needs of working families with children enrolled at IMO/Casa. BASE is fee based and enrollment is limited by staffing and space and may not be able to accommodate all families. The BASE program operates Monday-Friday following the OCPS Calendar, from 7:00-8:00 AM and 3:00-6:00 PM. More information can be found on the school website or by email ([base@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:base@innovationmontessori.com)).

## BULLYING POLICY

The OCPS Code of Student Conduct outlines the policy that IMO follows to comply with the state's Anti-Bullying Policy. The policy can be found in the Code of Student Conduct below. Bullying is defined as "repeated and targeted behavior towards another person that causes that person to be afraid either on school property or off school grounds."

## CASH

IMO discourages all students from bringing cash to school and is not responsible for any cash that is lost on school property.

## CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Florida law outlines both the rights and responsibilities of students. While the student has the right to expect a good education, the school has the right to expect good behavior and responsibility from the student. Specific information is printed in the Code of Student Conduct. Students who choose to continually be disruptive, disrespectful, or discourteous will be dealt with in accordance, when applicable, with the Orange County Code of Student Conduct. The Code of Student Conduct describes the rules that must be followed as well as the consequences if rules are not followed. All parents receive the link for reading the policy. This link is provided to parents as an 'acknowledgement page' in the beginning of the school year. Parents and students sign this page, acknowledging they have read the policy. OCPS typically provides paper copies when needed. Please inquire at the front office if you would like a paper copy. A link may also be found on our website. If you have any questions on this Code of Student Conduct, please contact the principal. Due to FERPA (below) we will never communicate with you about any child(ren) other than your own. This includes around discipline consequences.

Innovation Montessori may also dismiss a student for repeated behavior issues. Dismissal is not the same as expulsion as students who have been dismissed from our program are able to enroll in a district school.

Please speak to your children about the importance of not making any threats at school. We are mandated to participate in a threat management system which gives little grace. Please also ensure that your children know not to bring anything that could be considered as a weapon to school for the same reason. If they ever find themselves with something they should not have, they are asked to turn it into the office at the earliest opportunity.

## COMMUNICATION

If you have a question or concern about something happening in the classroom or around academics, please contact your child's teacher directly. If you fail to reach a resolution you may then forward previous communications to administration for support. If you need further support, you may then reach out to the Executive Director and then the Board President.

**Newsletters** Summary newsletters are the most comprehensive look at what happened each week and what is upcoming at IMO. Posted in ParentSquare, these newsletters include information from administration along with updates from the PTO.

**SchoolMint** This system is used by the school office staff to send official school communication related to registration, activities, and other important requests on a periodic basis. Keep an eye out for emails from [noreply@schoolmint.com](mailto:noreply@schoolmint.com)

### Online Resources

- School website: [www.innovationmontessori.com](http://www.innovationmontessori.com)
- PTO website: [www.ptoowls.com](http://www.ptoowls.com)
- Online school calendar: [www.innovationmontessori.com/calendar](http://www.innovationmontessori.com/calendar) – linked to both the school and PTO websites, this Google calendar is updated regularly with all school holidays, events, and meetings. Add it to your own Google calendar with the click of a button and help line up your schedules!

**ParentSquare** The hub for online parent communication. Each class has their own private page which is used to share pictures and information with families. We recommend that you download the app and adjust your notification settings to your liking. **It is very important that all families are connected to ParentSquare as it is also where we send alerts.**

**Sign Ups within ParentSquare** This is the primary place for finding and signing up to help with activities in the classroom, and for bringing in donated items.

**Email** Please ensure that you provide current parent/guardian email addresses to the school. We will respond within 48 hours during the work week.

**Messages** Plans for transportation home, and other after-school activities should be made before the student comes to school. Calls to the school with requests to deliver a message to students should occur only in case of emergency

**Phone** Front office staff can take phone messages for teachers but won't transfer calls (unless they are being returned) to the classroom during the school day. Similarly, calls will not be transferred to students during the school day. Any changes in pick-up arrangements may be communicated to front office staff.

Canvas For students in the adolescent program (7-12) Canvas is the program wide tool used to communicate student performance. Parents are encouraged to start with Canvas for an overview of their student(s)' academic trends and reach out to teachers via email with additional questions.

Boarddocs.com All information regarding board meetings can be found here.

## CLASS PLACEMENT

In keeping with Montessori pedagogy our hope is that all children remain in their assigned classrooms for a three-year period. We understand that sometimes the various dynamics in a classroom may not work well for an individual student. Parents may reach out to the administration to request a classroom change if attempts to resolve concerns are not successful. We are limited by class size requirements as to if/when a change can be made. We will do our best to meet class change requests for the new school year if an earlier move isn't possible, but again we may be limited in our ability to do that. We do not ask parents for input in classroom placement when children change levels; we do solicit input from our instructional staff and work to balance all the things that need to be balanced. In keeping with Montessori pedagogy and the desire for each child to grow in independence and responsibility, we do not place siblings in the same suite.

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

The school maintains and regularly practices emergency procedures including the "I Love You Guys' Foundation" protocols as adopted by OCPS. The following drills include procedures for fire (evacuation), severe weather, and 'I Love You Guys' protocols. School administration has developed a crisis management plan and a crisis team for use in case of any emergency and/or crisis. Specific procedures for evacuations are posted in every room. Training for all school personnel on these procedures is conducted annually.

## CUSTODY

School staff is required to release students to either of their natural parents unless we have a copy of a court order that grants custody to one of the natural parents or to someone else. If you have a court order, please give a copy to the office staff. It is parents/guardians' responsibility to update the school with any new legal paperwork. All students must be signed out at the office by a parent, legal guardian, or designated adult listed in the emergency form.

### RELEASING A STUDENT FROM SCHOOL

Innovation Montessori, Inc is concerned about the safety of our students. Students will only be released to people who are their parents or legal guardians, unless we have received **written** permission to release the student to another adult. In the case of divorce or separation of the parents, both parents shall have full rights until legal notification is provided to the school(s) limiting the rights of either parent. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to keep the school updated with any new legal paperwork that affects custodial rights. If a parent or legal guardian is not able to receive a student and the person receiving the student is not an approved person with written permission to receive the student, the school(s) shall make all efforts to contact the parents/legal guardians, and if not the parents/legal guardians, then the previously approved persons. If none are able to provide permission, then the local police or sheriff's office shall be contacted to take custody of the child or determine whether the person attempting to receive the child without written permission may do so. The Director shall also notify the Florida Department of Children and Families, informing them of the matter.



## DRESS CODE

### K-6 Students

See Uniform

### Secondary Students

Secondary students are expected to wear appropriate dress, as outlined in the OCPs code of conduct dress code. Students must always be in dress code. If students are out of dress code, contact home may be made and students may need to be brought a change of clothes. Cleanliness, good hygiene, and neatness are important standards of appearance for everyone.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students at IM may be allowed to request enrollment at other School(s) for extracurricular activities including sports if they are not offered at our school. Participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right. Interscholastic competition and participation in extracurricular activities may be withheld from any student as a condition of discipline. Furthermore, all policies that apply to the regular school day apply also to interscholastic competition and extracurricular activities. Coaches and sponsors may establish policies for their groups in addition to those set out by athletic associations, however, any and all disciplinary action resulting from conduct at an extracurricular activity rests solely with the school.

## CLUBS

### Elementary Students

After-school clubs are provided by our staff and are offered on a first come-first-served basis. Information and sign-ups will be posted on ParentSquare as the clubs become available. Some clubs offered in the past have included band, percussion, soccer and gardening – offerings may change each year.

### Secondary Students

Students in the adolescent program (7-12) are encouraged to propose a club they would like to see on campus. Once the idea is formulated, students need to find a sponsor (staff or community member-additions approved) to support the club. The club must have at least 5 interested members to be registered as a club. Applications to create a new club can be found in the front office on both campuses. All proposed clubs must be approved by the principal or the principal's designee prior to meeting as a club.

## FIELD TRIPS

Permission slips and fees for field trips need to be returned at least two weeks before the trip is to take place. Chaperones are selected by the classroom teacher. Younger siblings may not attend school field trips. \*\* Please note that money will not be refunded under any circumstance if your child cannot attend a field trip.

## GRADING POLICIES

There are multiple purposes for the assignment of grades, including but not limited to the documentation of student and teacher achievement; providing teacher feedback on student progress to students, parents, and fellow teachers; monitoring for continuous student growth and concept mastery; and informing instructional practices and small-group instruction in the classroom. Each developmental level of the Montessori program at IM has established the parent reporting of student progress as normed by state standards. These rubrics are shared with parents at the beginning of each school year.

## HEAD LICE

Unfortunately, head lice can be a common occurrence in a school setting and there is no need for embarrassment. IM, Inc., policy states that any student with head lice may not stay in school. Students with head lice will be isolated until taken home. Nits and lice must be removed at home before returning to school. Before returning to the classroom, the student must be checked by the clinic. Please accompany your child to the office when returning to school after a lice related absence.

## LUNCH

Innovation Montessori, Inc., participates in the federal food program for free and reduced lunch. Students in K-12 who qualify for free or reduced lunch will be afforded the opportunity to participate in the program. While neither campus has a kitchen conducive to cooking on site, we do offer a hot lunch provided by an outside vendor. All students can purchase lunch through our outside vendor or pack their own lunch. If packing a lunch, please include a reusable/cloth napkin for lunch, placemat, and appropriate silverware with your child's lunch every day. We do not provide single-use plastic utensils.

We are a PEANUT-AWARE SCHOOL on both campuses, please do not send in any food items containing peanuts.

Please remember that healthy food is part of our charter. When packing lunch for your student we ask that you pack a nutritious meal. Please do not send candy, soda, or sugary sweet treats - teachers will send those items back home. For the main campus, please do not send in items needing to be heated or refrigerated. Please also send your child(ren) with a labeled water bottle.

Secondary students will have access to the cafeteria and microwave. Due to changes in safety regulations, we will not allow any outside vendor to deliver food to the high school campus. Students will not be allowed to sign themselves out to obtain lunch.

For reasons of security and space we do not invite family members to eat lunch with students.

## PARENT LIAISON

Pursuant to Section 1002.33 (7)(d)(1), Florida Statutes, each charter school's governing board must appoint a representative to facilitate parental involvement, provide access to information, assist parents and others with questions and concerns, and resolve disputes. For the Lakewood campus our parent liaison is Cathy Tobin, [cathy@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:cathy@innovationmontessori.com), and for the Silver Star campus our parent liaison is John Pagnotti, [john.pagnotti@innovationmontessori.com](mailto:john.pagnotti@innovationmontessori.com).

## PARKING

INNOVATION MONTESSORI, Inc., is growing and, to accommodate our growing population and limited parking we ask that you are mindful of where you park and that you do not linger on campus longer than necessary at drop off and pick up. Only primary parents are invited to park during drop-off and pick-up. There are times when we may have access to parking at the church next door, and we will let you know in advance when this is the case.

At the secondary campus, there is adequate parking on campus. Should there be a need for additional parking, please find parking in the lot adjacent to the building. Please note that the parking lot will also be shared with student drivers.

## PHONES

### Elementary and Secondary Students

The OPCS policy, which we follow at IMO, allows the possession of cell phones on school property, at after-school activities, and at school-related functions, provided that during school hours, the cell phone **remains off** and is **concealed** in a bag. Phones may not be kept on the student's person (in a pocket of pants, coats, etc.). This policy applies to all handheld electronic devices including but not limited to cell phones, digital music players, smart watches, and personal laptop computers. It also includes personal headphones, earbuds, and accessories used with devices. Smart watches may be worn in the classroom if they don't become a distraction, as determined by school staff. IMO is not responsible for any damage to or loss of personal electronic devices including those mentioned above. Should misuse of cell phones become a trend, students will be required to check their phones in to the front office when they arrive in the morning and will receive it at dismissal. Further misuse may result in disciplinary consequences and/or parent pick-up of cell phone.

## PLATFORMS

iReady is an instructional tool used for interventions with students in MTSS (multi-tiered systems of support). School Pay is our payment platform and is used to pay for student supply fees, BASE, Casa tuition, field trips, etc.

ParentSquare is how teachers, admin, BOD, and PTO communicate with families. Emergency alerts also come from ParentSquare.

RAZ-Kids is an online reading program used by primary and elementary.

School Mint is where parents submit applications and registration information. Until all families are loaded in ParentSquare it is also used for communication.

Skyward is our student management system. Secondary students and parents will access progress and report cards in Skyward. Elementary students' parents will access standardized test scores in Skyward.

Transparent Classroom is where primary and lower elementary report cards are posted.

Canvas is used for our adolescent program (7-12) and is an online learning platform used to provide students and parents with a detailed map of student progress (assignments, missing work, upcoming deadlines, and teacher feedback). It is advised that students and parents check canvas regularly and reach out to teachers with any questions or concerns. Each student sets their own log-in credentials and should be shared with parents by the student for access.

## PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds may only be used when supervised by a member of IMO or BASE staff.

## PTO

Innovation Montessori Ocoee's Parent Teacher Organization is a group of dedicated parents working to enrich our students' school experience and support the school. PTO meetings will be shared on the PTO calendar and ParentSquare. Our 2024-2025 PTO Board includes President Karen Griner, Vice President Sarah Vleko, Treasurer Joe Newstreet, and Secretary Rachel Smith. Joining our PTO is a fantastic way to support our school and earn volunteer hours. Every PTO meeting attended counts as one volunteer hour. Our PTO website is here -

<https://www.ptoowls.com/>

## REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards are used to inform families about their child’s academic and social progress in the classroom. They are published quarterly, four times per year. Primary and lower elementary report cards can be found in Transparent Classroom. Upper elementary report cards will be sent home with the students and secondary report cards can be found on Canvas. Only secondary and ESE students receive progress reports. Progress reports for ESE students will also be sent home at the end of each quarter. Gifted reports will be sent home at the end of each semester, twice per year. For students transferring to another school, we do not provide discipline/behavior report cards or reference letters. Most relevant information can be found on the report card.

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

At IMO we have implemented a Restorative Practices program designed to address the unique needs of students (Grades 1-12) who have committed a non-violent (Level I-III) behavioral offense in violation of the OCPS Code of Conduct. The foundation of the Restorative Practice program is both respect for community, safety, and a systemic understanding that builds on strengths of the participants, employs a System-of-Care team approach, embeds Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS) practices, and identifies clear and specific expectations and outcome measures to help the youth develop more effective coping skills and pro-social behaviors. Restorative justice focuses on repairing harm through inclusive processes that engage all community members. Restorative Justice shifts the focus of discipline from punishment to learning and from the individual to the community. In our school, the practice of RJ begins with an emphasis on community building. Students and their parents/guardians must willingly participate in Restorative Justice practices for them to be effective – otherwise we revert to more traditional disciplinary actions.

## RETENTION

You will receive a letter in the spring if your child is being considered for retention. All retention decisions are made by the school administration on a case-by-case basis. Retention is mandatory at third grade level for students who don’t score a level 2 or higher on the 3<sup>rd</sup> English Language Arts Progress Monitoring testing of the year, and don’t meet criteria for Good Cause promotion. Third grade students who don’t score a 2 or higher can be promoted for Good Cause by attending and passing summer reading camp. Summer Reading Camp happens at your zoned school (or a nearby school) in the month of June.

## SIBLINGS

There are special events during the year when younger siblings can visit, but they may not “help” when parents/guardians are volunteering in the classroom. Please read classroom invitations to see if siblings are invited. To support the development of independence and responsibility, and to give each child their own unique experience, we do not place siblings in the same suite.

## SICKNESS, MEDICATIONS, and ALLERGIES

### **When not to send your child to school:**

Red rashes, bumps.

Fever, nausea, and vomiting.

Red, itchy eyes with yellow discharge.

Swollen glands.

Cramping, diarrhea.

Nits and live lice.

If your child has a chronic illness that presents with any of the above symptoms, please provide a doctor’s letter to the school clinic so we know not to call you to pick them up whenever those symptoms are present.

### **Actions you should take:**

Keep your child at home until free of fever (without medication) for 24 hours.

Keep your child home until free of vomiting or 24 hours or at least two solid meals.

#### **Illness or injury during school hours**

In emergencies, staff will call 911 and alert the office and parents will be notified. We will share medical and contact information with emergency personnel.

No student will be released to anyone except parents or authorized adults, unless release to emergency medical personnel is necessary.

Ensure that your child's emergency contacts, and medical information are up to date with the school.

#### **Guidelines for Prescription Medication**

Notify the office in writing of all prescription medications being taken by a student, so we may advise first responders in the event of an emergency.

When possible, medication should be administered outside school hours.

If medication must be sent to school, the following legal requirements must be met:

For each prescribed medication, the student's parent or guardian must complete an AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICATION FORM and sign-in the medication on a clinic log, which is available in the office, and personally deliver the medication to the office.

All prescribed medication must be received in the ORIGINAL container. The prescription label must show the date, student's name, dosage, and time to be administered.

If it is necessary for medication to be taken home, the parent or guardian must pick it up after dismissal. Parents or guardians are responsible for transporting medications to and from school.

#### **Guidelines for Non-Prescription Medication**

Any over the counter medication brought to school to administer to students must be unopened. The over-the-counter medication seal must not be broken. Parents must bring it to the office and complete AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICATION FORM. For the purposes of school, medicine is considered anything that goes in or on the body that is not also considered food.

Students are prohibited from keeping non-prescription medication in their backpacks.

Students are prohibited from providing such medication to fellow classmates.

#### **Children with Severe Food Allergies**

Fill out the following forms:

Authorization for Emergency Care of Children with Severe Allergies.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Policy for Administering Emergency Treatment.

Release and Hold Harmless Agreement.

Provide updated and current information.

Keep the teacher aware of a child's food allergies.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide medication, as prescribed by the child's physician.

Two sets of current medication must be provided to the school and on hand always.

When the student is on a field trip, an additional set of medication must be provided to the child's teacher.

No sharing of food or snacks among students.

In the event of a severe food allergy, we may ask classes not to bring certain foods to school.

When the school calls and asks you to pick your child up, the expectation is that someone is here within one hour of the call being made. We will reach out to emergency contacts if this is not the case.

## ELEMENTARY SNACK

The Montessori philosophy encourages grace and courtesy, independence, care of self and the environment. Snack is an opportunity for students to practice these skills. Each student will bring their own individual **healthy** snack. A recommended healthy snack would be a protein, fruit, or vegetables (avoid processed food).

## STUDENT PROGRESSION PLAN

We will adhere to all provisions under Florida Law for Pupil Progression. Orange County Public School's Pupil Progression Plan will be used as a framework while provisions of Florida Law will be the final arbitrator in decisions and policies around Pupil progression. Also see Retention.

## STUDENT PROPERTY

Please put names on coats, sweaters, jackets, books, school bags, lunch boxes and other items belonging to your child. Remind your child that they are responsible for keeping up with their own personal belongings and money. Children are not permitted to bring toys to school. Lost and found items will only be kept for a small period of time and are then donated to a local charity. Innovation Montessori, Inc. will not be responsible for lost or stolen property

## TECHNOLOGY

IMO follows the OCPS Code of Student Conduct for the appropriate use of the internet, “for limited educational purposes.” Students found to be using the internet inappropriately will be disciplined in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include loss of access to technology. If students choose to bring cell phones to school, they must be silenced and kept out of view and off their person during the school day. At dismissal, phones may be used solely for communication with parents/guardians if there is a time sensitive need to discuss pick up. Also see Phones. Multiple breakage or misuse of technology could lead to removal of devices or fees.

## TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks Student Parent Handbook add statement about policy for reviewing textbooks.

The board and book committee reviews and approves all new instructional material which can be found on our website. Students will be issued books in some of their classes, which remain the property of the School(s). Textbooks include either the physical copy of the book itself, or the digital version. Any lost, stolen, or damaged books are the sole responsibility of the student whom the book has been loaned out to. If something occurs to this property, including lost or damaged books, the incident must be reported immediately to the student’s teacher. Students not returning books or returning severely damaged books or digital media will be required to make payment for the replacement or repair costs.

## UNIFORM – Elementary Only

Cleanliness, good grooming, and neatness are important. IMO students are always expected to wear appropriate dress, as outlined below. Uniforms are a requirement for preschool through sixth grade students at Innovation Montessori Ocoee. The Uniform Policy is applicable all 5 days unless it is specifically designated by administration as a non-uniform or spirit wear day (see below). No characters, large logos (other than the school’s logo), light-up wearables, or slogans are permitted.

**Uniform Colors:** Uniform colors are all solid colors, as listed below.

**Shirts/Dresses:** Solid White, Navy, Light Blue, Hunter/Forest Green, or ‘Gator’ Orange.

#### Innovation Montessori Uniform Top Colors



Jumpers/Skirts/Skort/Shorts/Pants: Solid Khaki or Navy.

#### Innovation Montessori Uniform Bottom Colors



#### **Uniform Details:**

**Shirts:** Short or long-sleeved polo-style or button-down, oxford-style shirts are acceptable. Shirts must be collared. Visible undershirts must adhere to uniform colors.

**Pants:** Long uniform pants in solid khaki or navy may be worn. Jeans are not acceptable (except for Spirit Days, see below), nor are leggings when worn alone.

**Dresses/Jumpers/Skirts:** Fingertip length or longer. Solid-colored shorts, tights, or leggings must be worn underneath. Please note that shorts worn alone must be either solid khaki or navy, while those worn under dresses/skirts may be in any solid color. Dresses and shirts must be collared. Jumpers must be paired with a collared shirt.

**Shorts & Skorts:** Fingertip length or longer in solid khaki or navy.

**Leggings & Socks:** Leggings may be students' choice of solid color and may only be worn underneath uniform, not alone.

**Joggers/Sport Bottoms:** May not be worn as uniform attire.

**Outerwear:** Jackets, sweaters, scarves, and gloves worn inside the classroom must be compliant with the school uniform color policy. If other colors are worn outside the classroom, they must be removed and stored while inside the classroom. It is a good idea to label outerwear.

**PE** – students will wear uniform clothing for PE.

**Shoes:** Closed-toed and closed-back shoes only. Shoes should be suitable for the playground and PE as applicable. **Crocs** and light up shoes are not to be worn to school.

**Spirit Wear:** At designated times, such as Fridays and once monthly Worthwhile Wednesdays (when donating to that month's cause only), students may wear school spirit shirts (purchased from PTO at events or here <https://www.ptowls.com/store/>) and blue denim shorts, skirts, or jeans. If jeans have rips, the rips must start below fingertip length. Wearing a spirit shirt and uniform bottoms is also acceptable on spirit wear days, as is wearing a uniform shirt and blue denim bottoms.

**Accessories:** Hair bows, belts, etc. may be in the student's choice of solid color. Ties, if worn, must be in a solid uniform color. Hats and hoods may not be worn indoors on elementary campus.

**Jewelry:** If worn, it should not be distracting and should be safe for the classroom. The school is not responsible for lost or broken jewelry.

**Logos:** School logo shirts are not required, but they are available to be purchased from Lands' End at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com). The school receives a percentage of sales from uniforms purchased through Lands' End. Our school code is 900167834. Logos may also be embroidered on any uniform shirt or uniform-color sweater or jacket at Stitches by Leyla: <http://www.stitchesbyleyla.com>, 13020 West Colonial Drive, Winter Garden, FL 34787. A percentage of every logo purchase comes back to the school. Logos may only be added to the items listed above.

The IMO logo is the property of IMO and, with the above as the exception, may not be used without written permission from school leadership.

**Financial Considerations/Assistance:** Students will not be denied attendance at school, or be otherwise penalized, for failing to wear clothing that complies with the school uniform if such failure is due to financial hardship. Parents/guardians should notify the principal if assistance is needed. The principal shall aid students who would have, or are having, difficulty complying with the school uniform policy due to financial hardships. This is supported through our PTO's uniform closet.

**Discipline:** The principal or designee has the authority to decide if clothing complies with the IMO Uniform Policy and dress code. If the principal determines that a student's clothing does not comply with the IMO Uniform Policy, a parent/guardian may be asked to bring an appropriate change of clothes to school, or the student may be asked to leave an after-school activity. The student may also receive a disciplinary consequence for not following the school's dress code policy. Repeated violations may result in progressively serious consequences. Students may appeal the principal's decision to the Governing Board President.

## VISITING SCHOOL

For the safety of our children, we must insist upon everyone registering in the front office and wearing a visitor's badge during visits. A driver's license is required to register as we need to complete a quick background check per the Jessica Lunsford Act. Arrangements for classroom visits must be made in advance with the teacher. This policy ensures each child's uninterrupted instruction. Parent conferences should be scheduled for times other than student instructional times. Teachers are responsible for the safe arrival and dismissal of students to and from their classrooms. Please schedule conferences with teachers when they are not responsible for supervising children. For reasons of security and space we do not invite parents/guardians to have lunch with our students.



## WITHDRAWAL

Please let the office know as soon as possible if you will be moving or withdrawing your child from school. A withdrawal form must be completed, and the school must report where your child will attend school next. This includes withdrawals at the end of the school year.

## WORK CYCLE

Montessori focuses on intrinsic motivation and concentration which are essential to the success of all students. Within our model, it is the expectation that students utilize the work cycle appropriately to complete follow up work and/or assignments. 90-minute work cycles are built into the school week for students to have uninterrupted periods to focus and complete unfinished work. It is not an option for a student to choose not to work or not to participate in the work cycle. Repeated attempts to encourage a student to work will result in an administrative conference with parents, and a discussion around the potential benefit of an alternative environment that better serves the needs of the child may be warranted.

**One Final Note...***We anticipate that you and your child will have a wonderful experience at Innovation Montessori Ocoee. But, in case conflicts arise, please note the following protocol which will help you navigate through those times. If the problem has to do with your child's classroom, the students in the class, the teacher or teacher assistant, please talk with the teacher first and share your concern. We always want to foster open communication. After communicating with the teacher, if you still have concerns, please contact the Assistant Principals, or Principals. Our Executive Director or Board President are also available after you have spoken with the principal.*

## Innovation Montessori Ocoee Parent-Student-School Agreement

Innovation Montessori Ocoee community is committed to providing a strong Montessori foundation in a public-school setting that enables our students to achieve their full potential, develop curiosity, creativity, imagination, and become responsible citizens of the world. Our students flourish when their homes and schools operate harmoniously with each other.

I/we, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to the following.  
I/we will:

- View ourselves as in a partnership with the school in support of our child(ren).
- Make every attempt to learn Montessori principles and use them in the home.
- Attend all conferences scheduled with any member of the Innovation Montessori Ocoee staff.
- Engage in the culture of giving; share my time, talents, and resources to support the best educational experience possible for all students of IMO.
- Provide transportation to and from school for my/our child.
- Provide uniforms for my/our child and ensure that my/our child abides by the dress code of Innovation Montessori Ocoee (elementary campus only).
- Supply a healthy lunch/snack, either from home or bought through the school's lunch provider.
- Annually review the Parent Handbook, OCPS Code of Conduct and my child's classroom's expectations.
- Model grace and courtesy when interacting with members of Innovation Montessori community and resolve any problems respectfully.
- Communicate respectfully, directly, and actively with the school. This includes bringing all problems and concerns directly to school where they can be resolved, rather than broadcasting them in places where they cannot. Our goal is that our community be a positive one where we model positive and productive communication for our children.

Innovation Montessori will:

- View ourselves as in a partnership with families in support of our students.
- Provide a genuine Montessori environment in our public-school setting.
- Nurture curiosity and initiative so your child develops strong work habits, a sense of purpose, and the will to learn and grow.
- Encourage students to take on work and projects that require them to stretch.
- Communicate as partners, working hard to provide open, timely, respectful information and insight into your child and the school community.
- Be professional and courteous, providing mutually respectful communication with all our community members. We are striving to be a model of grace and courtesy that guides Montessori curriculum and culture.
- Work to balance the individual needs of the child with the needs of the classroom and school community.

We look forward to a working partnership to provide both an outstanding educational experience and a warm, welcoming community for both you and your child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# FERPA

## Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

This notification is intended to inform you of certain rights that you have under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a federal law requiring that the School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. Your rights under FERPA include:

1. **Right to Inspect and Review Records:**

FERPA gives parents the right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day Innovation Montessori ("School") receives a request for access.

Parents who wish to inspect their child's education records should submit to the School's Principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parents of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. **Right to Request Amendment to Records:**

FERPA gives parents the right to request the amendment of education records that the parent believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents who wish to ask the school to amend their child's education record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent, the school will notify the parent of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. **Right to Consent to Disclosures:**

FERPA gives parents the right to provide written consent before the School discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official includes a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel). A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School may disclose education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The School will make a reasonable attempt to notify you of any records request from another school or school district prior to releasing the records.

**The School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" related to your student without written consent, unless you have notified the School in writing that you do not wish for us to do so no later than October 1st.** The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include information from your child's education records in certain school-related publications. Directory information is considered not to be harmful or an invasion of privacy and includes:

- **Student's name**
- **Address**
- **Telephone number**
- **Email address**
- **Photograph**
- **Date and place of birth**
- **Major field of study**
- **Dates of attendance**
- **Grade level**
- **Participation in officially recognized activities and sports**
- **Weight and height of members of athletic teams**
- **Honors and awards received**

- **The name of the most recent educational institution attended**
- **Student ID number**

If you do not want the School to disclose any or all of the types of information designated above as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the School in writing by September 15, 2023.

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without the consent of the parent, if the disclosure meets certain conditions. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests.
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.
- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the parent's State under certain circumstances.
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a state statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the School, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met.
- To accredit organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- Information the School has designated as "directory information."
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement.
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions.

4. **Right to File a Complaint:**

FERPA gives parents the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

If you would like additional information on FERPA, you can visit the U.S. Department of Education's website here:  
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

-Notification of Rights under FERPA



## **Innovation Montessori Code of Civility**

The education of a child happens only through a partnership among the child, school faculty and staff, parent(s) or guardian(s), the community and district office employees. Partnership is an active state that includes sharing responsibilities, having meaningful communication and welcomed participation.

When people who are working together agree, the partnership runs smoothly. Two people will not always agree and that can make partnership difficult. The partnership is most powerful, as children are educated to reach their potential, when we agree on how to disagree. We must be civil in our discourse.

Civility is often described by its absence. We hear of harmful actions such as road rage, physical confrontation, ethnic stereotypes and slurs. But civility is not just an absence of harm. It is the affirmation of what is best about each of us individually and collectively. It is more than saying “please” and “thank you.” Civility is reflecting our respect for others in our behavior, regardless of whether we know, agree with each other, or even like each other. It is not simply being politically correct and should not be used to stifle criticism or comment. It is being truthful and kind and taking responsibility for our own actions rather than blaming others.

As we communicate with each other, we need to remember that we are working together to benefit the children of this community. Therefore, Innovation Montessori, Inc. requires that, as we communicate; students, IM faculty and staff, parents, guardians and all other members of the community shall:

### **1. Always treat each other with courtesy and respect**

This means:

- We listen carefully and respectfully as others express opinions that may be different from ours.
- We share our opinions and concerns without loud or offensive language, gestures or profanity.

### **2. Treat each other with kindness**

This means:

- We treat each other as we would like to be treated.
- We do not threaten or cause physical or bodily harm to another.
- We do not threaten or cause damage to the property of another.
- We do not bully, belittle or tease one another and we do not allow others to do so in our presence.
- We do not demean and are not abusive or obscene in any of our communications.

### **3. Take responsibility for our own actions**

This means:

- We share information honestly.
- We refrain from displays of temper.
- We do not disrupt or attempt to interfere with the operation of a classroom or any other work or public area of a school or school facility.

### **4. Cooperate with each other**

This means:

- We obey school rules for access and visitation.
- We respect the legitimate obligations and time constraints we each face.
- We notify each other when we have information that might help reach our common goal. This includes information about safety issues, academic progress, changes that might impact a student’s work and events in the community that might impact the school

- We respond when asked for assistance.
- We understand that we do not always get our way.

### **Authority and Enforcement of the Code of Civility**

Authority and enforcement of a code for civil conduct ultimately depends on the individual and collective will of those involved – students, IM staff, parents, guardians and all other members of the community. However, individuals need to know how to respond to uncivil behavior and how such behavior will be responded to. Therefore:

1. A student who believes that he or she has not been treated in a manner reflective of the Code of Civility should report such behavior to the appropriate school administrator.
2. A parent, guardian or community member who believes that he or she has not been treated in a manner reflective of the Code of Civility should report such behavior to the staff member's immediate supervisor.
3. An employee who believes that he or she has not been treated in a manner reflective of the Code of Civility should use the following guidelines:
  - If personal harm is threatened, the employee may contact law enforcement.
  - Anyone on school property may be directed to leave the premises by an administrator or school resource officer. Anyone who threatens or attempts to disrupt school or school district operations, physically harm someone, intentionally cause damage, uses loud or offensive language, gestures, profanity or shows a display of temper must be directed to leave the premises by an administrator or school resource officer. If such person does not immediately and willingly leave and if the school resource officer is not available, law enforcement shall be called.
  - If a telephone call recorded by an answering machine, email, voicemail message or any type of written communication is demeaning, abusive, threatening or obscene the employee is not obligated to respond.
  - If personal harm is threatened, the employee may contact law enforcement.
  - The employee shall save the message and contact his or her immediate supervisor, the school resource officer and/or OPCS District Police if the school resource officer is not available.
  - If any member of the public uses obscenities or speaks in a demeaning, loud or insulting manner, the employee to whom the remarks are directed shall take the following actions:
    - Calmly and politely, ask the speaker to communicate civilly.
    - If the verbal abuse continues, give appropriate notice to the speaker and terminate the meeting, conference or telephone conversation. In the case, when the caller is so heightened that the employee cannot give notice, the call will be immediately terminated.
    - If the meeting or conference is on school district premises, request that an administrator or authorized person direct the speaker to promptly leave the premises.
    - If the speaker does not immediately leave the premises, an administrator or other authorized person shall notify law enforcement to take any action deemed necessary.

We look forward to a working partnership to provide both an outstanding educational experience and a warm, welcoming community for both you and your child.

## How We Commit to Practicing PEACE in Our Community

**P** – Problem Solving - We seek solutions through empathy, braving difficult conversations, and understanding.

- Seek answers from those empowered to meet our needs.
- Dare greatly by engaging in hard conversations.
- Assume best intentions.

**E** – Encouragement - We encourage community and collaboration by celebrating one another and choosing words that nurture growth.

- Celebrate each other.
- Honor our differences.
- Forge authentic connections.

**A** – Acceptance - We embrace diversity and foster a culture of belonging.

- Inform and include all members of the community.
- Accept mistakes made by ourselves and others.
- Everyone has a voice.

**C** – Caring - We cultivate a safe space by building trust through empathy, kindness, and clarity.

- Be clear and kind – “This is what I need. What do you need?”
- Listen with curiosity and compassion.
- Consider the greater good of the IMO community - we can advocate for individual needs while supporting our community.

**E** – Effort - We are mindful of and accountable for our words and actions.

- “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” – Mahatma Gandhi
- Communicate clearly and respectfully utilizing “I” messages.



- Make your words a gift to others.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

# INNOVATION MONTESSORI

## Discipline Policy

2024-2025

### Innovation Montessori Student Code of Conduct

#### Introduction

Restorative practices encourage student development while reducing exclusionary and punitive discipline practices. Often traditional discipline practices in schools disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged students, black students, students of color, and students with disabilities (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer, & Rose, 2018; Kupchik & Ward, 2014). Restorative practices focus on increasing student reflection, communication, community building, and making amends when harm occurs, in place of punishment. A range of research suggests that restorative practices result in fewer suspensions and expulsions, fewer disciplinary referrals, improved school climate, high-quality teacher-student relationships, and improved academic achievement across elementary and secondary classrooms (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher, 2019). Contrary, no study has ever shown that students who came back from suspension or punitive discipline measures were more engaged and ready to learn. Students who spend more time out of the classroom enter a cycle of more misbehavior and disengagement, as punishment, coercion, and exclusion result in weakened relationships with teachers and peers, falling behind in course content, and failure to graduate.

At Innovation Montessori, we acknowledge that “discipline” means to educate, not to punish. Therefore,

**We have identified and implemented restorative justice practices as our core disciplinary model.** This model aims to guide students as they reflect and acknowledge the impact their actions have on others, and, when needed, take steps to repair relationships and build new skills. This inclusive approach deepens relationships by asking students to consider how they impact their community and participate in reflective conversations with adults and peers. Overall, RJ supports the ongoing healthy development of students as they seek to change their behavior and contribute to the well-being of their school community.

We thank you for your support as we work to shift the narrative at Innovation Montessori around discipline in school settings.

*Please note that this Discipline policy is a living document and will be amended and adapted as we learn and grow as a school community. This policy shall apply to Innovation Montessori Ocoee and Innovation Montessori High School. This policy is intended to interface with OCPS code of Conduct.*

## School Culture

Restorative practices create a learning community where there is an experience of deep belonging, respect, and commitment to practicing common values. This community framework is laced with intention into all facets of the learning curriculum at Innovation Montessori. The objective of this restorative discipline policy is to effectively address wrongdoing while keeping everyone connected to their learning community. Our goal is to ensure everyone feels welcomed and accepted as whole human beings. While no harmful behavior is condoned, we affirm the innate value that everyone brings, even in the moments when their behavior does not reflect that value. Inherently, Innovation Montessori holds on to 7 core assumptions that guide us in our disciplinary efforts. Those core assumptions are that we believe our community of students, staff & families are:

Good, Wise, & Powerful

Interconnected,

Relationship driven,

Gifted,

Capable,

Holistic

What we practice.

*\*These assumptions as most restorative practices are, derive from Indigenous teachings and other wisdom traditions.*

In addition, the values that drive our effort include equity, respect, compassion, self-determination, and the acceptance of multiple truths. Thus, Innovation Montessori strives to develop and to implement approaches to learning and discipline that will:

Ensure parental confidence in the ability of Innovation Montessori to provide a safe and orderly learning environment.

Help administrators, teachers, and other staff provide effective teaching and learning environments.

Assure students can learn in a restorative atmosphere and be treated in an equitable, consistent, and nondiscriminatory manner.

### **Community guidelines**

**Community guidelines are expected to be upheld by all members of our community. As a result, power struggles occur less frequently.**

Students share the responsibility for making school a safe, orderly, and enjoyable place where education takes place effectively.

Parents and legal guardians understand that the school community is expected to hold students accountable for behavior while at school and during school-sponsored activities.

We seek to create a partnership with parents/guardians- Such partnership is a two-way, cooperative process.

Students are expected to follow the guidance of adults regarding choices in behavior.

Teachers and staff are expected to use a consistent, common-sense approach to handling repetitive misconduct. Behavior management includes positive guidance, redirection, and setting appropriate boundaries to foster the student's ability to become self-disciplined.

Staff members will guide students to develop self-control and positive conduct in their relationships with peers and adults.

Within reason, staff members will show children positive alternatives rather than simply telling students "No".

Staff members will address the behavior or situation rather than label the character of the student.

Staff members will respond quickly and calmly to minimize students from harming each other.

Students will experience teachers and staff who are compassionate and who understand their limitations

Students are allowed to appropriately express their feelings, i.e. anger, hurt, frustration, etc.

### **Montessori & Restorative Justice**

In direct alignment with the Seven Core Assumptions, Maria Montessori believed education should value the human spirit and development of the whole child (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive).

Restorative practices also seek to balance all parts of who we are: emotional (our feelings), mental (our thoughts), spiritual (our values), and physical (our bodies). Combined, Montessori and restorative practices contain shared values and connections to promote community building and healing.

Throughout the Innovation Montessori community, we recognize that Montessori can only benefit students as described above when it moves beyond philosophy and takes a practical application. This involves the careful preparation of teachers as guides, the classroom environment, and an established restorative school culture and climate. We also understand the importance of not relying solely on restorative practices as an approach to the "back end" of school culture—what we do when things go wrong. Instead, **Innovation Montessori focuses on proactive measures to create a community that practices PEACE whenever possible.** Our emphasis on Peace Education (see below) is a centerfold of Montessori's philosophy. In combination with restorative justice, we create a basis for maintaining a school culture that is equipped with community members who learn self-control through an understanding of personal needs, the use of problem-solving skills, and an expectation that children and adults can make amends – restitution – for the harm that they cause.

### **Proactive Approaches to Discipline in the Innovation Montessori environment**

*At Innovation Montessori we engage in the following proactive measures to establish an environment where Montessori intertwined with restorative practices and PEACE education is the framework for interactions amongst our students, staff and community. The following proactive practices are foundational to the discipline procedures found in our discipline policy.*

Peaceful Classroom Environments:

The aim of the Montessori classroom is to radiate harmony and respect. Members are encouraged to communicate with one another using a deep sense of empathy. Students and staff move and speak with grace

and courtesy. Each classroom is equipped with a “peace space” to allow students an opportunity to reflect & rest without guilt. Students work together as stewards of their environment. They take turns caring for the classroom environment and engaging in interdependence; how to live in a community, to learn independently, to think constructively and creatively: these are the lessons of the Montessori classroom that remain with students as they make their way in the world and that assist them in times of conflict.

### Ethic of Care

Within the prepared environment, children develop at their own pace and adults guide that development with quiet respect for the needs of the children and their emerging capacities as learners. Through carefully orchestrated experiences guided by physical and mental order, children acquire the inner discipline necessary to persist at their chosen tasks, to interact with the world respectfully, and to participate confidently in an increasingly complex world. At all times we aspire to model good manners and social interactions. Social emotional learning through Peer Counseling (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade), peaceful practices taught through Peace Ed curriculum (PK-12) and problem solving/community building efforts through restorative justice philosophy (K-12) are a regular part of the curriculum.

### PEACE Education Curriculum

Peace education curriculum focuses on being intentional about the practice of PEACE in our daily lives. In Primary, lower EL, and upper EL, students participate in a bead ceremony that allows them to identify the parts of peace that they have experienced throughout the Week.

The parts of PEACE include:

(P)roblem Solving (E)ffort (A)cceptance (C)are (E)njoyment

*\*The bead ceremony is a symbolic visual representation of how PEACE has been practiced within the community. The product is a strand of beads that tell an ongoing story about the peace we practice in our lives.*

### Social Emotional Learning

(SEL) is the process of developing self-awareness, self-control/management, interpersonal skills and responsible decision making that are vital for school, work, and life success. At Innovation Montessori SEL is a framework of the Montessori academic curriculum for grades K-12. Each year the social work department utilizes Panorama’s SEL assessment tool to measure and support students' soft skills like growth mindset, self-efficacy, social awareness, and self- management. Innovation Montessori then uses the results from Panorama to build more positive, equitable, and supportive environments for student learning and support when there are concerns around behavior.

### **Mental Health and Restorative Justice**

Mental health and wellness refer to a continuum of emotional support available to students & staff. The goal is to create a learning environment where students feel they have choice, feel empowered to maximize their connections with peers and adults and are able build trusting and meaningful relationships.

### Restorative Justice (RJ) Philosophy/Practices

In a restorative approach, the inherent worth of everyone is recognized while seeking to strengthen the essential ties that bind us to one another. Using restorative framework, Innovation Montessori aims to create safe and supportive spaces for our community where members of the school learn to bravely engage in

community and learn from honest and sometimes difficult conversations. When relationships break down – as they will, Innovation Montessori works to have a fair responsive process in place in which everyone can share their stories, hear the impact of their actions, repair the relational harm, and figure out the best way forward, together. The overarching framework of RJ allows us to build capacity in students and in adults to live in, understand, and embrace the real world, with all its contradictions and complexities.

***While RJ practices act as a tool for addressing harm, restorative justice is most potent when used proactively as it builds and nurtures trust, meaningful and just relationships, and a strong sense of community. These are foundational traits for addressing harm & challenging behavior effectively.***

### Common terms and RJ practices

Circles-A literal and symbolic space where members of a community come together to restore, repair or relate (may be formal or informal, can be used for academics, community building, and restoring community etc.,) i.e., academic circle, community-building circle, restorative-circle or healing circles. (Circles are utilized in PK-12 at least once a week)

Circle Norms- A setting of structure that defines how the circle will run.

Talking Piece- A chosen object used in most circles that symbolizes power by granting each participant an equal voice in the circle.

Restorative conversations-conversations to discuss less serious incidents or conflicts within a relationship. Usually takes place one-to-one or in a small group setting.

Restorative conferences- Structured discussions designed to address more serious, or long-term, ongoing conflicts within a relationship.

COSA- Circle of support and accountability put in place as a welcoming tool to reintegrate students to the school community after a need for separation has been met. Can also be used as a tool to help students reestablish their presence in the classroom even if an absence/separation has not occurred.

Circles used in restorative discipline are often referred to as healing, peacemaking or talking circles and serve a specific purpose. This practice originated with indigenous and aboriginal people. The circle members include the person who committed the harm, those who were harmed or impacted, family and friends of both, and support personnel (such as teachers, administration student service/staff specialist). Members take turns discussing the event to understand what happened and collectively identify the steps needed to heal the affected persons and prevent future harm.

### *Restorative Discipline in the Montessori Environment*

Discipline in the Montessori environment is not something that is done to the child; nor is it a technique for controlling behavior. Thus, our concern is with the development of the internal locus of control which promotes discipline through liberty.

Our aim when guiding students toward self-discipline, is ultimately a degree of self-respect in which a child/adolescent desires to respect the rights and needs of others alongside their own. This in return allows all students to learn and grow freely in the security of a community of respectful individuals.

Maria Montessori distinguished between the “active discipline” typical of happily engaged, and productive students and adult-centered strategies for maintain extrinsic “control” of students. Self-control is a foundational

skill for all subsequent learning. Building self-control is an important aspect of all our programs, where focus, concentration, persistence, and an awareness of the needs of others take root with adults setting limits through example. This is identified in Montessori's philosophy of education as the concept of freedom within limitations. Thus, we seek to clear a path that affords students the liberty to choose (reference unacceptable behaviors).

When setting limits, adults seek to direct with positive rather than negative guidance and patience, restraint, and respect for the student's need for sensitive intervention acts as a framework for adult interaction with students.

In restorative justice schools, when there are breaches of cultural norms and behavioral expectations, students are held accountable for repairing the harm their actions cause. Likewise, when students have difficulty making respectful and safe choices and instead engage in distracting, destructive or dangerous behavior, a series of actions may be taken depending on the nature of the behavior.

***\*While Innovation Montessori works closely in collaboration with OCPS discipline initiatives, utilizing RJ practices to address disciplinary concerns is our primary aim. Thus, each student incident is treated individually. In addition, discipline records are maintained and reported as required under Charter Contract and Florida Law. Similarly, Innovation Montessori uses an internal data base to track and monitor disciplinary records via incident reports, witness statements and restorative action plans etc.,***

*Addressing Behavior Restoratively at IMO*

**In Class Responses:** As issues of challenging behavior arise in the classroom, teachers/assistants will work to handle the challenging behavior by reminding students of their need to adhere to school guidelines and offer students a choice to redirect. If students choose to correct their behavior, the incident will be considered resolved. If the incident involves a single student, the classroom teacher will invite the student to discuss the issue in a one-to-one conversation with the student at an agreed upon time by both individuals. If the challenging behavior involves a group of students or the entire class, the classroom teacher or TA will handle the issue in class using an appropriate method, such as a class circle.

Please note students reserve the right to decline a restorative conversation or participate in the restorative process, forfeiting this right may lead to traditional disciplinary actions.

*In addition to the above restorative practices for minor incidents, the following disciplinary actions/responses may occur:*

Request student(s) to separate from peers/group for a designated amount of time

Assign seating near the teacher or in a different area of the classroom for a short time

Work with student(s) to identify logical consequences to address harmful behavior. (Logical consequences should be related to behavior, respectful-does not cause blame or shame, reasonable-from perspective of guide & student(s), helpful-does not cause more harm)

Develop a Restorative Action plan- Student(s) document what needs to happen for things to be made right & who oversees meeting those needs

Communication to parents sent home via email, incident report and/or phone call

*Common in class issues might include:*

Minor disruptive or inappropriate behavior in class such as talking and disturbing friends

Unkind words/name calling or inappropriate language

Non-serious inappropriate physical contact.

Failure to complete responsibilities

Minor disrespect towards guides and/or other students

Excessive playfulness in class that results in disruption or potential physical harm

Academic dishonesty

Minor dress code violations

Failure to follow procedures for maneuvering around campus

Raising one's voice in a verbal conflict

**Out of class Responses:** There are times when issues need to be addressed outside of the classroom. These behavior challenges are considered more serious in nature and require the assistance of administration, or student support staff such as a campus social worker.

Behavior that warrants out of class assistance may include but is not limited to

Responding to staff in a disrespectful or defiant manner,

Not following safety procedures,

Leaving a classroom/campus without permission,

Unsafe use of objects, etc.

Physical altercations

In the instance that a challenging behavior needs to be addressed outside of the classroom, Teachers/Assistant's will request out of class support by making a phone call to the front office. An Administrator, or Support staff will work with the student & teacher to determine if the student behavior is social-emotional, academic, or discipline related. To address the challenging behavior, the following restorative plan will be followed:

1.) Administration or Support Staff will work with students to discuss the incident and acknowledge that when a person does harm, it affects the people they hurt, the community and themselves.

2.) Administration or Support Staff will guide the student to identify self-control techniques through an understanding of personal needs, the use of problem-solving skills and the community expectation that when harm takes place, amends can be made.

3.) Student(s) is given the opportunity to participate in a restorative process as a means of making things right for the person(s) harmed and the school community.



4.) An attempt is made to repair the harm caused by one person to another and to the community so that order is restored for everyone.

Facilitation of the above actions may include

Conferencing circles –formal conversation among people affected by behavior to explore the harm and how individuals were affected and how to repair the harm with a plan of action.

Peace making circles – group of individuals acknowledge & address the issue using parts of PEACE

Restorative meeting(s) – wrongdoing occurs; individual(s) or classroom discusses impact on fellow students and school community and discuss repair.

In addition to the above restorative practices to address harm that requires out of classroom support, the following disciplinary actions/responses may occur:

Engagement with on campus social worker or student support team

Student is required to take a break from the classroom environment for an established period (in school or out of school)

Outside assistance from school personnel (social worker, principal, SRO, etc.)

Parent phone call/conference

Miss recess or lunch in the office as a logical consequence

COSA-The Student's Support Team meets to discuss the student's behavior and develop a shared agreement (behavior plan) to support a positive and peaceful environment.

Development of Restorative Action plan for student, parent and guide

No contact agreement/Behavior agreement plan initiated by Dean, Administrators and or Student support team.

Restitution in the form of in school community service or financial compensation

### **Unacceptable Behaviors**

Experimental behavior often communicates a need and is found in every developmentally aged child. At Innovation Montessori, we work to offer students grace as they formulate self-awareness through identifying individual needs. However, because the community lies at the center of our approach to learning, any individual action that disrupts the safety or well-being of the community is considered unacceptable.

As a result, Innovation Montessori cannot allow the following:

Language or behaviors that expresses disrespect for another person based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion etc., or that is dehumanizing in nature.

Verbal, or written gestures that express aggression, character attacks or ridicule.

Violent behavior such as hitting, kicking, biting, shoving or throwing objects

Vandalism of school property or the property of others

Violent role-playing that is one-sided, including pretend gunplay or stabbing

Possession of weapons, or illegal substance

Bullying: threatening, harassing, or intimidating other members of the school community in person, through online, cell phone, and/or through a third party.

Repeated failure to follow instructions or community expectations

Each of the above incidents will be shared and analyzed with our student services team and administration and followed up with appropriate conversations and consequences. Incidents involving violence, weapons, bullying or sexual harassment will be handled as outlined in the IMO policy in combination with restorative practices. In the event of repeated or serious behaviors that endanger the health and safety of others, the School Resource Officer will be involved, and the student may be sent home. A COSA (Circle of Support of Accountability) will be required before the student is readmitted to class.

**NOTE: Although it is the philosophy and policy of Innovation Montessori to exhaust behavior challenges using restorative practices, if a student's behavior disrupts the learning environment such that neither they, nor other students can learn, then Innovation Montessori will consider using the following discipline measures to assist the student in learning positive behavior.**

**Behavior contracts (If previous attempts to learn positive behavior have not been successful). The teacher and/or administrator will draft the behavior contract, ideally with the involvement of the parent and student.**

**Discipline referrals tied to short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or recommendation for expulsion from school may be used, if previous methods are not effective or if the circumstances warrant. This is usually the case in behaviors that rise to a level IV referral as outlined by OCPS**

Executive Director or Principal's Authority: The Executive Director or Principal has the final authority to impose suspensions and dismissals as well as authority to recommend expulsion to the Orange County Public Schools. The Executive Director, Principal, or their designee, will conduct an inquiry into the harm that was caused, including consulting the student(s) and those affected. The Executive Director, Principal (or designee) will reserve the use of suspension, dismissal, and recommendation for expulsion for repetitive or serious infractions and safety issues and will be used only as a last resort.

Suspension: If the Executive Director, Principal (or designee) determines that consideration of suspension is warranted, they have the discretion to impose a suspension directly. The Executive Director, Principal (or designee) shall provide notice to the student's parents and/or guardians of their determination in writing, including reasons for the suspension and the length of the suspension. The Executive Director's, Principal's (or designee's) notification to the parents/guardians shall also include information about due process rights regarding the determination. Academic make-up work is required. Return to school may be contingent upon the student addressing the issue at hand and stating how the student intends to move forward Through a COSA or DTM (District team meeting). Parents will be notified of the reasons for suspension and shall be provided with an opportunity for a conference by the end of the next school day following the decision.

Dismissal: After imposition of a suspension following the procedures listed above, if behavior infractions continue and the Executive Director, Principal (or designee) determines that consideration of dismissal is warranted, they will consider evidence and/or testimony as appropriate and will render a decision that shall be in the best interests of the student and the school. The Executive Director, Principal (or designee) shall inform

the student's parents and/or guardians of their determination in writing, including the reasons for dismissal. The Executive Director, Principal (or designee)'s written notification to the parents/guardians shall also include information about due process regarding the determination. Involuntary dismissals will only be utilized in severe cases and in accordance with Innovation Montessori's Charter Contracts and applicable laws

"Manifestation Determination Review" is the evaluation of the relationship between a student's disability and an act of misconduct that must be undertaken when a school proposes to change the student's placement by imposing disciplinary removals. Students that have an IEP or 504 Plan have a right to a manifestation determination review.

This determination is made prior to implementing a disciplinary removal up to 10 consecutive school days or a pattern of short-term removals that cumulate up to 10 school days in a school year that would constitute a significant change of placement. Innovation Montessori will conduct manifestation determination reviews for eligible students.

**Cell phone/Technology Resource policy** (also see student acceptable use policy):

Misuse in technology is defined as a violation in policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student or the student's parent regarding the use of technology resources. Highlighted in the tech agreement form & in addition to the tech policy signed by students/parents, students should refrain from the following:

Attempting to access or bypass passwords or other security-related information of the school, students, or employees, or upload or create computer viruses.

Attempting to alter, destroy, or disable school wide technology infrastructure.

Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten or harass others

Sending, posting, delivering, or possessing electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation.

Using the Internet or other electronic communication to engage in or encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety.

Taking photos of other students at school or posting confidential or sensitive information about other students on the internet unless authorized to do so.

Electronic devices, Cell phones, and personal electronic use is restricted to before and after school for middle school students.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Cell phones are prohibited. Please see OCPS cell policy.

### **Responses to Technology Based Infractions:**

A Restorative process is put in place to discuss the nature of the tech violation. Teachers are asked to communicate any tech violations to the administration. Should continuous violations occur, a student may receive limited network and/or Internet access, or loss of tech privileges. Alternative instructional materials will be provided. See tech agreement for acceptable tech behavior.

Failure to follow cell-phone procedures will result in the cellphone being housed in the office for the remainder of the day or for an extended amount of time. Should there be a recurrence in cellphone violation, parents will be contacted and will be asked that students refrain from bringing the cell phone to school.

### **Bullying, Threats and Harassment Policy**

Innovation Montessori believes that providing an educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers, and families, free from harassment, intimidation/threats, or bullying supports a learning experience that promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships, wellness, and freedom from discrimination and abuse. Therefore, harassment, intimidation/threats, discrimination or bullying are forms of dangerous and disrespectful behavior that will not be tolerated

The following policy ensures that all students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind.

The policy defines the following:

Bullying-Systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees and may involve but is not limited to: teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking including cyberstalking, physical violence, theft, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public humiliation, and destruction of property.

Harassment- Any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or employee that: places a student or employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, or has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Threats- a communication of intent to harm that may be spoken, written, gestured, or expressed in some other form, such as via text messaging, email, or other digital means. An expression of intent to harm someone is considered a threat regardless of whether it is communicated to the intended target(s) and regardless of whether the intended target is aware of the threat. Threats may be implied by behavior that an observer would reasonably regard as threatening, planning, or preparing to commit a violent act

***Incidents of alleged bullying, threats or harassment should be reported to administration immediately.***

Upon receiving allegations, administration will notify the parent or guardian of a student who commits a verified act of harassment, bullying, or threat as well as the investigation process, and consequences that may result from further acts.

\*According to the level of infraction, parents/legal guardians will be notified of actions being taken to protect the child; the frequency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Thus, the right to confidentiality of students involved will be maintained consistent with applicable laws.

The investigation process- Administration will appropriately and promptly investigate all reports of harassment, threats and bullying. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes bullying, harassment, or a threat, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, the student's history, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated.

Thus, the Administration will make every effort to inform the parents/guardians of the target and the subject of any report of harassment, bullying or threat.

Investigation procedures shall consist of personal interviews with the target, the subject(s) and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstance(s). The investigation may also consist of other methods or documents deemed relevant, including referral to the school's threat assessment team.

Consequences: Verified acts of bullying, threats or harassment shall result in intervention by administration and the social work team. Interventions are intended to ensure that the deterrence against this behavior is enforced. Behaviors of bullying, threats, or harassment can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the targeted individual and other students.

While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying" "threatening" or "harassing" as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the subject, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (detention, in and out-of-school suspension, or expulsion) is a matter for the collective professional discretion of the Administration, and Dean of Students.

### **Search of Person or Property**

Physical Searches – Search of a student's person or property may be conducted only where there is reasonable suspicion that the student being searched engaged in a breach of the disciplinary code.

Minimally Intrusive Searches – Searches such as emptying of pockets, searches of student backpacks, removal of hats, socks, and shoes may be conducted by any certified school employee.

More Intrusive Searches – Searches such as pat downs, and frisks will be conducted by a trained staff member of the student's choosing.

### **Review of Discipline Data**

At least twice a year Administration and the Dean of Student's will review discipline data to analyze and make necessary changes to school discipline policies and practices, address and resolve disproportionalities in student discipline data as well as restorative justice practices.

### **Distribution of Policy**

This policy will be available for access on the school website, as well as readily available in hard copy form in the main office.

### **Record keeping**

In addition to internal record keeping, maintenance and reporting discipline incidents as required under the Charter Contracts, Innovation Montessori reports SESIR incidents pursuant to Section 1006.07(9), Florida Statutes, and Rule 6A-1.0017, Florida Administrative Code. In determining whether to report an incident as a SESIR offense, consideration will be given to developmentally age-

appropriate behavior and to any factors that may be indicated on a student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan and the other factors set forth in Rule 6A-1.0017(3), Florida Administrative Code.

### **Appendix**

School Discipline

Innovation Montessori engages in the practice of progressive discipline in addition to restorative discipline practices. Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach that employs a range of interventions, provisions and consequences to address inappropriate student behavior and build upon strategies that promote positive behavior. When inappropriate behavior occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to a focus that is both corrective and restorative.

Progressive discipline is designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to discipline and that the previous disciplinary history of the student and all other relevant factors will be considered.

The following pages act as a tool for administrators to assign interventions and/or consequences for student misconduct and thus does not necessarily apply to classroom management as assigned by the teacher.

**Innovation Montessori's discipline policy interfaces with the OCPS code of conduct.**

**Thus, the definitions and offense levels and potential consequences have been taken directly from the OCPS code of conduct** and is designed to offer consistency so that students are disciplined fairly when their behavior requires responses outside the classroom. Each incident type contains interventions or consequences for each violation. Two types of action, either mandatory (\*must) or potential (possible), can be taken by administration depending upon circumstances. It is important to note that **school administrators have the discretion to deviate from these guidelines by assessing an appropriate consequence other than stated in the chart if they determine that there are mitigating or aggravating circumstances.**

Repeated instances of the same behavior may result in more severe consequences. Administration will make every effort to contact parents/guardians regarding all disciplinary matters resulting in an out of class consequence. Parent contact can be used as an intervention, a consequence, or as a result of a disciplinary issue. In matters relating to the disciplining of students with disabilities, the Board and the District shall abide by Federal and State laws regarding suspensions and expulsion.

#### Notes:

Repeated instances of the same behavior may result in more severe consequences.

Unless required by law, school principals have the discretion to deviate from these guidelines by assessing an appropriate consequence other than stated in the Discipline Chart they determine that there are mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

SRO and/or Schools Police are also available to discuss responses to incidents should the need arise.

Administration will make every effort to contact parents/guardians regarding all disciplinary matters. Parent Contact can be used as an intervention, a consequence, or as a result of a disciplinary issue.

In matters relating to the disciplining of students with disabilities, the Board and the District shall abide by Federal and State laws regarding suspensions and expulsion.

Innovation Montessori recognizes discipline from OCPS and participates in the DTM (Discipline Team Meeting) process for level IV offenses.

Level infraction- Each incident of misconduct may be associated with a level offense for record keeping purposes within the range outlined below:

Level I infractions are minor acts of misconduct that interfere with the orderly operation of the classroom, a school function, extracurricular/co-curricular program

Level II infractions are more serious acts of misconduct than Level I offenses. Level II includes repeated acts of misconduct from Level I and acts directed against people or property that do not seriously endanger the health or safety of others.

Level III infractions are major acts of misconduct that disrupt the orderly operation of the school, school function, or approved transportation that threatens the health, safety, and property of others.

Level IV infractions are the most serious acts of misconduct and may result in expulsion.

#### LEVEL I: OFFENSES

A. Cheating willful or deliberate unauthorized use of the work of another person for academic purposes, or unauthorized use of notes or other material in the completion of an academic assignment or test. In addition to disciplinary responses, the student may receive no credit for the assignment, test, or exam at the discretion of the teacher.

Disorderly Conduct or behavior that interferes with or disrupts the orderly process of the teaching/learning process, school environment, a school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular activity.

Disrespect Conduct or behavior that lacks regard, civility, politeness, and/or courteous consideration towards a student, IMO/IMHS employee, volunteer, or contracted personnel. This offense may include, but is not limited to, speech or behavior that is insulting or rude.

Dress Code Non-conformity to established dress code.

Failure to Report for Detention

Failure to report for assigned discipline.

False and/or Misleading Information Intentionally providing false or misleading information to, or withholding valid from an IMO/IMHS employee, contracted personnel, or volunteer, which does not cause a disruption to the school environment.

J. Profane, Obscene, or Abusive Language/Materials The use of either oral or written language, or gestures, which are disrespectful or socially unacceptable and are not directed at another person. This section does not include threatening or intimidating language.

KK. Electronic Device Violation The misuse of wireless communication devices, which is not educational in nature, and may include, but is not limited to, cellphones, smartphones, smart watches, MP3 players, iPods, e-readers, tablets, laptops, and other electronic devices.

Tardiness Repeated late arrival to class, not to school. Unauthorized Absence from School or Class A student arrives at school and then leaves campus, has temporary unauthorized absences from classes, or fails to attend specific classes.

Other Misconduct Any other minor act of misconduct which interferes with the orderly operation of the classroom, the school program, a school function or activity, an extracurricular/co-curricular program, or approved transportation and cannot be coded as another Level I offense.

**Unsubstantiated Bullying** After a complete investigation and follow up of a reported bullying incident, the investigator determines that there is not enough evidence to substantiate that the incident meets the criteria of a prohibited act under the definition of bullying as listed in the Jeffery Johnston Stand Up for ALL Students Act (Section 1006.147, Florida Statutes).

**Unsubstantiated Harassment** After a complete investigation and follow up of a reported harassment incident, the investigator determines that there is not enough evidence to substantiate that the incident meets criteria of a prohibited act under the definition of harassment as listed in the Jeffery Johnston Stand Up for ALL Students Act (Section 1006.147, Florida Statutes).

**Harassment** Any threatening, insulting, dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct that places an IMO/IMHS student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property, has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, and/or has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school including any course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose. This offense may include, but is not limited to, teasing, name calling, gossiping, spreading or starting rumors, and/or purposefully embarrassing or humiliating another person.

#### LEVEL I: CONSEQUENCES

Parent/guardian contact mandatory\* **M**

Counseling and direction\* **M**

Verbal reprimand **P**

Restorative Practice **P**

Special work assignment **P**

Withdrawal of privileges **P**

Return of property **P**

Detention **P**

Referral to intervention program **P**

Confiscation of unauthorized materials, objects, or contraband **P**

Assigned seat **P**

Safety plan **P**

SAFE/Guidance referral **P**

Schedule change **P**

No contact contract **P**

Referral to mental health services **P**



Warning of referral to Level II P

\*Required Administrator Responsibilities (M)

Level II: Discipline Response Code

*Level II infractions are more serious acts of misconduct than Level I offenses. Level II includes repeated acts of misconduct from Level I and acts directed against people or property that do not seriously endanger the health or safety of others.*

*The misconduct must be reported to the appropriate school administrator for further investigation. After hearing the student's explanation, consulting with staff members and other students, and doing any other investigation necessary, the administrator will follow the procedure designated for Level II violations in investigating the matter and deciding on the progressive disciplinary action. Out of school suspension is not an available disciplinary response for Level II violations.*

## LEVEL II: OFFENSES

**Destruction of Property/ Vandalism (under \$100)** The willful or malicious destruction of school property or the property of others.

**Disrespect** Repeated conduct or behavior that lacks regard, civility, politeness, and/or courteous consideration towards a student, IMO/IMHS employee, volunteer, or contracted personnel. This offense may include, but is not limited to, inappropriate language directed towards another that is not profane.

**Fighting** Minor physical contact between two or more students such as pushing, shoving, or altercation that stops upon verbal command.

**Forgery (Non-criminal)** To create or reproduce the signature or document of another for fraudulent purposes. This offense may include, but is not limited to, signing a document with your parent's signature without permission.

**Gambling** Any unlawful participation in games (or activities) of chance for money and/or other things of value.

**Insubordination/Open Defiance** Verbal or non-verbal refusal to comply with school rules or directions from an IMO/IMHS employee, contracted personnel, or volunteer without causing a disruption or committing any further acts.

**Intimidation/ Threats** Any direct or indirect threat to do harm to the property of another student, IMO/ IMHS employee, contracted vendor, or IMO/IMHS volunteer. Or any direct or indirect harm to hit, fight, or beat up another student or a threat to another student's life if the threat to life is vague, said out of anger or frustration, an expression of humor or rhetoric and can be easily resolved. The content of the threat suggests the person is unlikely to carry it out. This section does not include threats made to IMO/IMHS employees, contracted vendors, or IMO/IMHS volunteers; these threats are a Level III or IV. **Stealing (under \$375)** Taking the property of another without permission of the person.

Unauthorized Assembly Publications, etc., Demonstrations and/or petitions by students, or possession and/or distribution of unauthorized publications, including misuse of electronic messages or computers which interfere with the orderly process of the school environment, a school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular activity.

**Bullying** A bullying offense includes repeatedly being cruel to other students, IMO/IMHS employees, volunteers, or contracted personnel, on or off IMO/IMHS property if it adversely impacts the educational environment at school for students or staff. This offense may include, but is not limited to, repeated teasing, name calling, and/or minor physical contact.

**Other Serious Misconduct** Any other intermediate act of misconduct or any more serious, harmful, or disruptive example of any of the offenses described in Level I, which interferes with the orderly operation of the school or school function and cannot be coded as another Level II offense.

**Gang Related** The possession, use, or displaying of items associated with gang activity that include, but is not limited to, clothing and accessories, gang related insignias, writings, signs, or symbols that promote gang affiliation and/or involvement.

**Harassment** Any threatening, insulting, dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct that places an IMO/IMHS student or school employee in reasonable fear or harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property, has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, and has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school including any course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose. This offense may include, but is not limited to, name calling with profanity, and/or minor physical contact.

**Electronic Device Violation** The repeated misuse of wireless communication devices, which is not educational in nature and Violation may include, but is not limited to, cellphones, smartphones, smart watches, MP3 players, iPods, e-readers, tablets, laptops, and other electronic devices.

**Sexual Harassment** Any minor slur, innuendo, gesture, or other written or verbal conduct reflecting on an individual's gender which has the purpose of creating an offensive educational environment. This offense may include, but is not limited to, unpleasant distasteful comments, jokes, or gestures that are sexual in nature; however, this does not include acts involving physical contact.

**Horseplay** Any rough uncontrolled play or prank that involves two or more students and there is risk of injury as a result of the horseplay.

**Dress Code** Non-conformity to the dress code (second and subsequent offenses).

## LEVEL II: CONSEQUENCES

Parent/guardian contact mandatory\* **M**

Counseling and direction\* **M**

Behavior plan/contract **P**

Restorative Practice **P**

P.A.S.S. (1-10 days) **P**

Special work assignment **P**

Detention **P**

SAFE/Guidance referral **P**

Confiscation of unauthorized materials **P**

Return of property **P**

Suspension from bus (1-10 days) **P**

Referral to intervention program **P**

Alternative Classroom **P**

Safety plan **P**

Schedule change **P**

No contact contract **P**

Temporary removal or participation in extracurricular/co-curricular programs or activities **P**

Referral to mental health services **P**

Warning of referral to Level III **P**

\*Required Administrator Responsibilities **(M)**

Level III: Discipline Response Code

*Level III infractions are major acts of misconduct that disrupt the orderly operation of the school, school function, or approved transportation that threatens the health, safety, and property of others.*

*The misconduct must be reported right away to the school administrator for further investigation. After hearing the student's explanation, consulting with staff members and other students, and doing any other investigation necessary, the administrator will follow the procedure designated for Level III violations in investigating the matter and deciding on the progressive disciplinary action, which may result in the removal of the student from the school or activity immediately.*

### LEVEL III: OFFENSES

**A. Physical Attack** An actual and intentional striking of another student against his/her will, without injury. This section does not include injury that is a result of fighting if students are mutual combatants.

**Destruction of Property/ Vandalism (\$100 to \$999)** The willful or malicious destruction of IMO/ IMHS property or the property of others.

**Disrespect** Conduct or behavior that lacks regard, civility, politeness, and/or courteous consideration towards a student, IMO/IMHS employee, volunteer, or contracted personnel. This offense may include, but is not limited to, language and/or gestures that are abusive and/or profane directed towards another person.

**Extortion/Blackmail** The willful or malicious threat of harm, injury, or violence to the person, property, or reputation of another with the intent to obtain money, information, services, or items of material worth. This offense may include, but is not limited to, threatening to accuse another of a minor offense or crime in order to obtain lunch money.

**Fighting** When two or more persons mutually participate in the use of force or physical violence that requires: (1) physical intervention; or (2) results in injury requiring first aid or medical attention. Note: Self-defense is described as an action taken to restrain or block an attack by another person or to shield oneself from being hit by another person. Retaliating by hitting a person back is not self-defense and will be considered as fighting.

**Firecrackers/ Fireworks** -Unauthorized possession, sale, or storage of unlit fireworks or firecrackers on IMO/IMHS property, at a school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular activity.

**Gross Insubordination/Open Defiance** Willful refusal to submit to or comply with authority; exhibiting contempt or open resistance to a direct order; challenging the authority of an IMO/IMHS employee, contracted personnel, or volunteer in the presence of others which causes a disruption.

**Illegal Organizations** Establishing or participating in a secret society on IMO/IMHS property, at a school function, or at an extracurricular activity.

**Possession of Contraband Material** Possession, use, and/or distribution of materials or items, other than weapons or firearms, which are forbidden. The parent/guardian will make arrangements to pick up the object from the school, if applicable. At no time shall IMO/IMHS be responsible for theft, loss or damage to contraband items brought onto its property.

**Smoking/Vaping and Other Use of Tobacco/Nicotine Products** The possession or use of tobacco/vaping nicotine products, or items represented to be of said nature. This offense may include, but is not limited to, electronic cigarettes, CBD oil, Juuls, pods, vapors and hookah pens that do not contain THC or any other illegal controlled substance.

**Stealing (\$375 to \$749)** The taking of the property of another without the permission of the person.

**Trespassing** To enter or remain on school grounds/campus, school transportation, or at a school- sponsored event/off campus, without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry.

**Violation of Curfew**

Breaking of curfew regulations during an extracurricular/co-curricular activity.

**Bullying** The offense must include repeatedly inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more IMO/IMHS students, employees, volunteers, or contracted personnel that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation, on or off IMO/IMHS property if it adversely impacts the educational environment at school for students or staff. This offense may include, but is not limited to, repeated name calling with threat, physical contact with minor injury, distribution or sharing of written texts/pictures/video to multiple recipients.

**Other Serious Misconduct** Any other major act of misconduct which seriously disrupts the orderly operation of the school program, or any school activity which threatens the health, safety or property of self or of others, or behavior not specifically described above which substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of a school, school function, or an extracurricular/co-curricular activity and cannot be coded as another Level III offense. This

offense may include, but is not limited to, providing false/misleading information to staff members which causes a disruption to the school, language intended or reasonably calculated to insult and/or incite another person; or the activation of a fire alarm that was not the result of a willful or malicious act.

#### R. Physical Aggression on an Employee or Contracted Personnel

The willful use of force upon an employee or contracted personnel that does not result in bodily injury.

**Sexual Harassment** Any slur, innuendo, gestures, or other written, verbal or physical contact reflecting on an individual's gender which has the purpose of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. These acts are sexual in nature and may include, but are not limited to, mooning, sharing/sending/showing images or video that have no bodily exposure but are taken in a private area, and/or minor physical contact that is sexual in nature.

**Intimidation/ Threats to a Person** Repeated Level II threats or any direct or indirect threat to another student's life if the threat has some details and information obtained suggests that some thought was given to how the threat will be carried out, but there is no clear indication that the student has taken preparatory steps. This section also includes threats of harm or violence towards an IMO/IMHS employee, contracted vendor or IMO/IMHS volunteer without any further acts of aggression or where there is no intent to carry out the threat.

**Gang Related** Conduct or behavior that tends to promote gang activity, provoke violence, or seriously disrupt the orderly operation of the school program, any school activity or transportation services, including but not limited to the possession, use or displaying of gang paraphernalia, jewelry, tattoos, clothing, or other insignias and writings that promote gang affiliation/involvement/the use of gang related signs or symbols or any other gang associated behavior.

**Harassment** Any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct that places an IMO/IMHS student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property, has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits and has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school including any course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose. This offense may include, but is not limited to, name calling with threat, physical contact with minor injury, distribution or sharing of written texts/pictures/video to multiple recipients.

**Hazing** Any action or situation that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student at a school with any of grades 6 through 12 for purposes of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any school-sanctioned organization. This offense may include, but is not limited to, false imprisonment not resulting in medical attention, verbal or physical behavior resulting in minor injury, or any other act that creates a substantial risk of physical injury.

**Electronic Device Violation** The continual misuse of wireless communication devices, which is not educational in nature, and may include, but is not limited to, cellphones, smartphones, smart watches, MP3 players, iPods, e-readers, tablets, laptops, and other electronic devices.

**District Technology Violation** Unauthorized modification of software/hardware configuration on a district issued device (i.e. factory reset); unauthorized access to programs and/or files not expected or intended for student use on a district issued and/or personal device (i.e. gaming); sharing another person's username and password; or providing access to another person to use the student's device while the student is logged in.

Horseplay Any rough uncontrolled play or prank that involves two or more students and there is injury as a result of the horseplay. Any horseplay that results in serious injury where medical attention is needed may result in a Level IV offense.

### LEVEL III: CONSEQUENCES

Parent/guardian contact mandatory\* **M**

Counseling and direction\* **M**

Behavior plan/contract **P**

Restorative Practice **P**

Return of property **P**

P.A.S.S. (1-10 days)

Suspension from bus (1-10 days) **P**

Suspension from school (1-10 days) **P**

Detention **P**

Temporary or permanent removal from participation in extracurricular/co-curricular programs or activities **P**

Referral to intervention program **P**

Confiscation of unauthorized materials, objects, or contraband **P**

Schedule change **P**

Safety plan **P**

No contact contract **P**

SAFE/Guidance referral **P**

Referral to mental health services **P**

Warning of referral to Level IV **P**

\*Required Administrator Responsibilities (**M**)

### Level IV: Discipline Response Code

*Level IV infractions are the most serious acts of misconduct and are grounds for expulsion. Any Level IV act shall result in a 10-day suspension with a potential recommendation for expulsion.*

*Major acts of misconduct must be reported right away to the school administrator for further investigation. After hearing the student's explanation, consulting with staff members and other students, and doing any other investigation necessary, the administrator will follow the procedure designated for*

*Level IV violations in investigating the matter and refer the Level IV to District personnel for further review.*

Students who commit a Level IV offense may be referred to local authorities for further investigation.

#### LEVEL IV: OFFENSES

**Alcohol** The possession, use, distribution, transmission, sale, purchase, solicitation, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages. Distribution or transmission of alcohol is defined as delivery of alcohol to another person without the intent of communal or collective consumption. Use means the person is caught in the act of using, admits to use or is discovered to have used in the course of an investigation.

**Arson** The willful and/or malicious burning of or attempt to burn IMO/IMHS property, contents in or on the property, or personal property of others.

**Intimidation/ Threats to a Person** Repeated Level III threats. Or any direct or indirect threat to hit, fight or beat up an IMO/IMHS a Person employee, contracted vendor, or IMO/IMHS volunteer with an aggressive act to carry out the threat. Or any direct or indirect threat which threatens the life of another student, IMO/IMHS employee, contracted vendor, or IMO/IMHS volunteer and the threat to life appears to pose an imminent or a serious danger to the safety of others. The threat is specific, detailed and plausible. Information obtained suggests steps may have been taken to carry out the threat, and/or there is a strong concern about the student's potential to act. This offense includes, but is not limited to, threats made verbally or nonverbally by act, through social media, or by text.

**Battery** An actual or intentional touching or striking of a student, IMO/IMHS employee, contracted personnel, or volunteer against his/her will, causing more serious injury, such as great bodily harm; permanent disfigurement; permanent disability; use of a deadly weapon; or where the attacker knew or should have known the victim was pregnant. The harm must be documented through medical evaluation. The attack must be serious enough to warrant reporting to law enforcement. This section does not include injury that is a result of fighting if the students are mutual combatants. This section includes the actual use of a weapon, firearm, or other dangerous object as defined under Level IV H and Level IV K.

**Threats to the School** Any direct or indirect threat that may harm the school or may disrupt the function of the school campus or school sponsored activity including, but not limited to, threats made verbally or nonverbally by act, through social media, or by text. All threats are taken seriously, regardless of intent.

Threats to the school may include, but are not limited to, bomb threats, threats to use firearms in a violent manner, and/or threats to conduct a mass shooting or an act of terrorism. Threats to the school are deemed zero tolerance by Sections 1006.07 and 1006.13, Florida Statutes.

**Drugs/Possession/Use** The possession, solicitation, use or being under the influence of any drugs, narcotics, controlled substances, or any other substance when used for chemical intoxication, or the possession or use of any substance represented to be of said nature. Use means the person is caught in the act of using, admits to use or is discovered to have used in the course of an investigation. The possession, solicitation, use, or being under the influence of over-the-counter medication or prescription medication in excess of the manufacturer's prescribed limits are included in this section. Also included in this section is any amount of THC oil.

**Firearms/ Weapons** The possession or control of any firearm or weapon (operable or inoperable, loaded or Possession unloaded) as defined in Chapter 790, Florida Statutes. This section also includes the attempted use of any object that can be used to inflict serious harm on another person or places a person in a reasonable fear of serious harm. Firearms/Weapons are deemed zero tolerance by Sections 1006.07 and 1006.13, Florida Statutes. A firearm means any weapon which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted

to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device; or any machine gun. A weapon means any dirk, knife (blade length is 2.5 inches or more), metallic knuckles, slingshot, billie, tear gas gun, chemical weapon or device, or other deadly weapon.

**Major Disruption on Campus** Major disruption of all or a significant portion of campus activities, school-sponsored events, Campus and/or school bus transportation. Disruptive behavior that poses a serious threat to the learning environment, or the health, safety, or welfare of others. This offense may include, but is not limited to, inciting a riot, initiating a false fire alarm, incidents that result in closing the cafeteria, and/or incidents that prevent students from proceeding to the next class.

**Larceny/Theft (\$750 or over)** The act, participating in the act, or attempted act of taking, carrying, riding away with, or concealing of property from the possession or constructive possession of another person, including motor vehicle, without threat of violence or bodily harm. This offense may include, but is not limited to, pocket picking, theft from a building, theft from a motor vehicle, theft from a vending machine, theft of a golf cart, motor vehicle, or anything that is self-propelled or motorized.

**Other Dangerous Objects** The possession, sale, or control of any instrument or object, other than a firearm or weapon as defined under a Level IV H offense, which could be used to inflict harm on another person or to intimidate any person. The actual use of a dangerous object shall be coded as a Level IV D. The attempted use of a dangerous object shall be coded as a Level IV H. This offense includes, but is not limited to, BB guns or pellet guns, air soft guns, paintball guns and replicas of any gun or weapon, common pocket knives (blade length is less than 2.5 inches), chains, pipes, common household tools, razor blades, box cutter/utility knife, ice picks, other pointed instruments, nun chucks, Chinese stars, pepper spray, Taser, ammunition, firearm clips, firearm cartridges. This offense also includes igniting fireworks/firecrackers.

**Repeated Misconduct of a More Serious Nature** Repeated misconduct which tends to substantially disrupt the orderly conduct of a school, school function, or extracurricular/co-curricular program or activity. Recommendations for expulsion relative to repeated misconduct must be based on documented referrals and a variety of intervention strategies.

**Robbery/Extortion** The taking, participation in taking, or attempting to take anything of value that is owned by another person or organization, under the confrontational circumstances of force, or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. This offense may include the taking of objects such as purses, phones, clothing etc.

**Sexual Battery** Any sexual act or attempt directed against another person, forcibly, and/or against the person's will. The category includes rape, indecent liberties, child molestation, and sodomy.

**Sexual Harassment** Unwanted verbal or physical behavior with sexual connotations that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment, cause discomfort or humiliation or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation. These acts are sexual in nature and may include, but are not limited to, sharing/sending/showing/taking images or video that have bodily exposure, fondling or groping of another against their will.

**Sexual Offenses** Any willful and/or deliberate act, behavior, or conduct intended to result in sexual gratification or furthering acts lewd or lascivious in nature. This offense includes, but is not limited to, consensual sexual acts, and/or exposure of nude body parts in the presence of others or by sending through electronic means.



**Violation of Early Re-entry Plan** Any act or series of acts which violates or has the practical effect of violating an early re-entry plan from full exclusion/expulsion.

**Vandalism (\$1000 or over)** The willful or malicious destruction, damage, or defacement of public or private property including the act of defacing with graffiti, keying, or scratching a car or trashing a room resulting in damages.

**Other** Any other intentional or wanton act which is clearly beyond the bounds of acceptable and tolerable student conduct in the community, which cannot be coded in another Level IV offense. This offense may include, but is not limited to, hate crimes; any false accusation made by a student that jeopardizes the professional reputation, employment, or professional certification of any IMO/IMHS employee; any speech on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, or disability that does or would be likely to cause a substantial disruption to the educational environment; dating violence; human trafficking; possession/sale of drug paraphernalia; or felony forgery.

**Drugs/Transmission/ Distribution/ Selling/Buying** The manufacture, cultivation, transmission, distribution, buying, selling or intending to sell any drug, narcotic, controlled substance or any substance represented to be a drug, narcotic, or controlled substance. This includes any form of payment for any drug or contraband substance.

**Bullying** Repeatedly inflicting physical hurt, or psychological distress on one or more students, IMO/ IMHS employees, volunteers, or contracted personnel, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation on or off IMO/IMHS property if it adversely impacts the educational environment at school for students or staff. This offense may include, but is not limited to, repeated name calling with threats, stalking/cyber stalking, distribution or sharing of written texts, picture/video to multiple recipients, posting picture or video to social media for public view, and/or physical contact with serious bodily injury.

**Harassment** Any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct that places an IMO/IMHS student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property, has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits and has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school including any course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose. This offense may include, but is not limited to, stalking/cyber stalking, placing another in reasonable fear of death or serious injury.

**Hazing** Any action or situation that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student at a school with any of grades 6 through 12 for purposes of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any school-sanctioned organization. This offense may include, but is not limited to, false imprisonment resulting in medical attention, verbal or physical behavior resulting in injury that requires medical attention, forcing indecent exposure of another, or any other act that creates a substantial risk of death or serious injury.

**Physical Attack** An actual and intentional striking of a student, IMO/IMHS employee, volunteer, or contracted personnel against his/her will, resulting in less serious bodily harm. Less serious bodily harm does not include a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, permanent disfigurement, or permanent disability. The injury must be documented. This section does not include injury that is a result of fighting if the students are mutual combatants.

**Sexual Assault** An incident that includes a threat of rape, fondling, indecent liberties, or child molestation. Both male and female students can be victims of sexual assault.

**District Technology Violation** Use of unauthorized access to programs and/or files not expected or intended for student use on Violation a district issued and/or personal device; or any use that violates Board policies, local, state, and/or federal laws and regulations. This offense may include, but is not limited to, gaining access to the IMO/IMHS mainframe with intent to do harm or alter records.

**Burglary** Unlawful entry into or remaining in a dwelling, structure, or conveyance with the intent to commit a crime therein or cause damage. This offense is more severe than trespassing.

**Homicide** The unjustified killing of one human being by another.

**Kidnapping** Forcibly, or by threat, confining, abducting, or imprisoning another person against his/her will and without lawful authority.

**Tobacco/Vaping/Nicotine Selling/Distribution** The distribution or sale, or intention of selling, tobacco/vaping nicotine products, or items represented to be of said nature. This offense may include, but is not limited to, electronic cigarettes, CBD oil, Juuls, pods, vapors and hookah pens that do not contain THC or any other illegal controlled substance.

#### LEVEL IV: CONSEQUENCES

Parent/guardian contact mandatory\* **M**

Counseling and direction\* **M**

Up to a 10-day suspension with a recommendation for expulsion (mandatory) **P**

Expulsion from the school district **P**

Assignment to an alternative school **P**

Referral to an intervention program

Bus expulsion **P**

Temporary or permanent removal from participation in extracurricular/co-curricular programs or activities, e.g., to include, but not limited to, senior graduation **P**

Restorative Practice **P**

Schedule change **P**

Safety plan **P**

No contact contract **P**

SAFE/Guidance referral **P**

Referral to mental health services **P**

\*Required Administrator Responsibilities **(M)**

## LEVELS I-III PROCEDURES

A student accused of misconduct for a Level I-III offense shall be afforded the following procedures. In emergency situations, these procedures may be modified so long as reasonable efforts are made to provide substantially similar opportunities for the procedural safeguards.

Please note, these procedures should be used in conjunction with the procedures set forth herein which align with Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and the Board Policy JB, entitled, "Equal Educational Opportunities."

Step 1: The student must be told by the principal or designee of the reason(s) for the referral.

Step 2: The student must be given the opportunity to present his/her side of the matter either verbally or in writing and must have the opportunity to present witnesses to the incident.

Step 3: The principal/designee shall make a determination as to whether the evidence supports the offense. If so, the principal/designee determines the appropriate discipline response according to the Code. The student shall be informed of the disciplinary response.

Step 4: The principal/designee shall report each suspension in writing to the student's parent/guardian and to the area superintendent or designee. This report shall be mailed, or delivery initiated within 24 hours of the start of the suspension or on the next regular workday. Reasonable efforts shall be made to contact the parent/guardian prior to the start of the suspension. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached prior to the start of the suspension, the principal or his designee may determine that the suspension will start without the prior contact with the parent/guardian but continued reasonable efforts to contact the parent/guardian shall be made.

Step 5: After the discipline investigation is complete, the parent/guardian may request a copy of all documentary evidence upon which the proposed disciplinary consequence is based; however, if available and used as evidence for disciplinary purposes, video evidence may only be reviewed, a copy will not be provided.

Step 6: The student and parent/guardian have a right to request a conference with the principal or designee upon request of the parent/guardian to appeal the discipline imposed. All such requests must be made within three (3) school days of the first notification of a discipline referral. The principal shall have the discretion to adjust the discipline response. Step 7: A meeting should be held each time any student with disabilities is subject to being suspended/ removed from school or from classroom or transportation for up to ten (10) days cumulative during a school year. The purpose is to determine if the placement is appropriate and if any changes need to be made in order to more effectively deal with the student's behavior concern.

Step 8: At the discretion of the principal, a written behavior contract or safety plan may be required upon return of the student.

Step 9: If the parent/guardian feels that procedural safeguards were not provided, they may appeal by contacting an area administrator. The area administrator shall discuss the matter with the parent/guardian, and if appropriate, schedule a meeting between the principal, the area administrator, and the parent/guardian to further discuss the matter.

Step 10: The area administrator will make a recommendation to the principal's supervisor to either uphold the principal's decision or modify the decision based on the specific facts and charges upon which the

consequences are based. The principal's supervisor has the final decision-making authority for these types of appeals.

A student accused of a violation of the Code which, in the opinion of the principal or designee, may require expulsion from school or transportation, shall be afforded the procedural safeguards described below. In emergency situations, these procedures may be modified so long as reasonable efforts are made to provide substantially similar opportunities for these procedural safeguards.

Please note, these procedures should be used in conjunction with the procedures set forth herein which align with Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and the Board Policy JB, entitled, "Equal Educational Opportunities."

#### LEVEL IV PROCEDURES

A student accused of a violation of the Code which, in the opinion of the principal or designee, may require expulsion from school or transportation, shall be afforded the procedural safeguards described below. In emergency situations, these procedures may be modified so long as reasonable efforts are made to provide substantially similar opportunities for these procedural safeguards.

Please note, these procedures should be used in conjunction with the procedures set forth herein which align with [Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972](#) and the Board [Policy JB, entitled, "Equal Educational Opportunities."](#)

Step 1: The principal or designee must inform the student of the reason(s) for consideration of expulsion.

Step 2: The student shall be given the opportunity to present his/her side of the matter either verbally or in writing and must have the opportunity to offer witnesses to the incident.

Step 3: The principal or designee shall make a determination in writing as to whether the evidence supports the offense. If so, the principal/designee determines the appropriate discipline response according to the Code. The student shall be informed of the Level IV offense. If the principal/designee determines that there are sufficient grounds for expulsion, then the principal/designee shall inform the student that he or she is being suspended from school for ten (10) days and a recommendation that the student be expelled is being considered.

Step 4: The principal shall report in writing to the student's parent/guardian and the district that the student has been suspended for ten (10) days and a recommendation that the student be expelled from school is being considered. The report shall be mailed or delivery initiated within 24 hours of the start of the initial ten (10) day suspension or on the next regular school day. Reasonable effort shall be made to contact the parent/guardian prior to the start of the suspension. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached prior to the start of the suspension, the principal or a designee may determine that the suspension will start without the prior contact with the parent/guardian.

Step 5: The student and parent/guardian have a right to request a conference with the principal or designee to review the Level IV offense. All such requests must be made within three (3) school days of the first notification of suspension that the parent/guardian receives.

Step 6: After the discipline investigation is complete, the parent/guardian may request a copy of all documentary evidence upon which the proposed expulsion is based; however, if available and used as evidence for disciplinary purposes, video evidence may only be reviewed, a copy will not be provided.

Step 7: The area administrator shall convene a Discipline Team Meeting (DTM) as soon as possible. The IMO/IMHS employees present at the DTM shall include the area administrator, principal or designee and other appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to, a counselor, school psychologist, administrative dean, or Positive Pathways Transition Center staff. The school will also request that the parent/guardian and student attend the DTM.

The purpose of the DTM is to:

Review all documentary evidence upon which the proposed expulsion is based; Ensure the student received due process during the investigation;

Provide the student and parent/guardian the opportunity to present new information and/or explain the student's involvement; and determine whether a referral will be made to an alternative program/school or expulsion.

Step 8: No later than one (1) school day prior to the DTM, parents/guardian/students must notify the school principal or designee of all parties that will attend the DTM on behalf of the student. The parent/guardian/student may elect to bring parties to the DTM of their choosing. If the parent/guardian retains legal counsel the Office of Legal Services must be notified prior to the DTM at (407) 317-3411.

Step 9: If the decision is made by the area administrator to verify the Level IV and the consequence is a full exclusion, without continuing educational services, the Superintendent may invoke Section 1006.08, Florida Statutes, and either extend the student's suspension or temporarily administratively place a student in an alternative setting pending the final decision of expulsion from the Board. If a decision is made by the area administrator to verify the Level IV and the consequence is an alternative placement, Section 1006.08, Florida Statutes, will be invoked and the student will be administratively placed at the alternative school within Orange County. It is important to note, once the student is withdrawn from their home school the only OCPS school the student may attend is the school designated by the area administrator at the DTM, however, the parent/guardian may instead elect to enroll their child in home school, or Florida Virtual School, private school, or another county, if permissible.

Step 10: If the decision is made by the area administrator to verify the Level IV and the parent/guardian believes the student is entitled to further procedural safeguards or would like to dispute documentary evidence upon which the proposed expulsion is based, the parent/guardian may request an administrative hearing by providing notice of such request to the applicable area administrator or designee. Failure of the parent/guardian to request an administrative hearing from the applicable area administrator or his/her designee within fourteen (14) days after the Discipline Team meeting shall be deemed a waiver of any challenge to the procedures utilized by the Discipline Team in making its decision. Administrative hearings shall be granted or denied within fifteen (15) days from the time they are requested unless an extension is agreed upon in writing. The area administrator and the principal or designee may attend the administrative hearing. The parent/guardian shall notify the applicable area administrator of all parties attending the administrative hearing on behalf of the student no later than three (3) school days prior to the administrative hearing. If the parent/guardian retains legal counsel the Office of Legal Services must be notified prior to the Administrative Hearing at (407) 317-3411. If the student is recommended for a full exclusion without educational services, the administrative hearing will be governed by the provisions in Sections 120.569 and 120.57(2), Florida Statutes.

Step 11: The Administrative Hearing Officer will either recommend upholding the DTM decision or recommend overturning the decision based on the specific facts and charges upon which the proposed consequence is based. Both the principal or designee and the parent/guardian shall have the right, but not obligation, to submit

a recommended order to the Administrative Hearing Officer containing proposed findings of facts and conclusions of law. The Administrative Hearing Officer may, in his/her discretion, use a proposed order submitted by either the principal/designee or the parent/guardian; provided however, the Administrative Officer may reject both proposed orders and issue his/her own order.

Step 12: If the recommendation of the Administrative Hearing Officer is to uphold the Level IV, the student/parent/guardian may request a meeting with the principal's supervisor to discuss the

recommendation of the area administrator and Administrative Hearing Officer. The principal's supervisor will review the documentary evidence and procedural safeguards and provide a recommendation to the Superintendent for review. The Superintendent shall then review the principal's supervisor's recommendation and shall have the authority to recommend to the Board that the student be expelled or take whatever action he/she deems appropriate. The Superintendent shall notify the parent/guardian and the principal or designee prior to the Board meeting at which the Board will consider his/her recommendation.

Step 13: The parent/guardian shall have the right to appear before the Board. Factual evidence which was not properly presented either at the DTM or the Administrative Hearing may not be presented to the Board. The parent/guardian/student is limited to challenging whether the facts as found at the DTM may appropriately lead to the consequence under the Code.

## **Title IX**

A student accused of sexual harassment pursuant to [Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 \(Title IX\)](#) definition and Board [Policy JB, entitled "Equal Educational Opportunities,"](#) shall be afforded the following procedures. In emergency situations, these procedures may be modified so long as reasonable efforts are made to provide substantially similar opportunities for the procedural safeguards.

These procedures must be implemented for sexual harassment claims if they meet the definition under Title IX and/or Board Policy JB before any discipline consequence is given to the respondent, unless an emergency removal of the respondent is required due to an immediate threat of physical health or safety to others. The definition for "sexual harassment" as outlined in Title IX and Board Policy JB includes: (1) an IMO/IMHS, OCPS employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; (2) unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity; or (3) sexual assault as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

The initiation of these procedures does not prohibit the school from implementing supportive measures which are designed to protect the safety of all parties and/or the educational environment.

The student discipline investigation as detailed throughout this Code shall be conducted after these Title IX procedures have been completed. Nothing in the section prohibits the school from implementing discipline consequences if the respondent is found to have committed an offense in the Code through the discipline investigation, regardless of whether the Title IX complaint was dismissed.

For reference, as used in this section, the "complainant" is the individual who is the alleged victim and the "respondent" is the individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of the conduct.

## **TITLE IX PROCEDURES**

**Step 1:** A school must follow these procedures within twenty-four (24) hours or no more than two (2) school days when the school has actual knowledge of sexual harassment occurring in an IMO/IMHS education program or activity. Education activity or program includes location, events, or circumstances over which IMO/IMHS has exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurred. A report may be made by any person with knowledge of sexual harassment incidents occurring. If the school believes the alleged sexual harassment constitutes a crime, the matter shall be immediately reported to the School Resource Officer or appropriate law enforcement agency. If the alleged sexual harassment may constitute child abuse it shall be immediately reported to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). If the alleged sexual harassment is against an IMO/IMHS employee, the Title IX Coordinator or school administrator shall immediately notify IMO/IMHS Professional Standards.

**Step 2:** The school-based Title IX Coordinator must promptly notify the complainant of available supportive measures and explain the process for filing a formal complaint. If there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety to others, then the respondent shall be removed from the school under the emergency removal provisions in Title IX Policy.

**Step 3:** The complainant or parent/guardian of the complainant must file a formal written complaint with the school alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting an investigation of the allegations within ten (10) school days of the alleged misconduct occurring. The school-based Title IX Coordinator may also file the formal written complaint on behalf of the complainant if a written complaint is not received from the complainant or parent/guardian. At the time of filing the complaint t must be participating in or attempting to participate in the educational program or activity of the school where he/she is filing the complaint in order for the school to investigate under Title IX Policy; however, this provision does not prohibit the school from continuing with a discipline investigation.

**Step 4:** If a formal complaint is filed, the school must immediately determine if: (1) the allegations meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX policy (2) the conduct occurred in an IMO/IMHS education program or activity; and (3) the allegation is against a person in the United States. If the allegations meet the above criteria the school shall continue with the following procedures as detailed herein and provided in the Title IX Policy. If the allegations do not meet the above criteria the school shall dismiss the formal complaint and conduct a discipline investigation as detailed in the Code of Conduct. The complainant must be notified of the dismissal within twenty-four (24) hours or no more than two (2) school days. The complainant may request an appeal from the decision of the school to dismiss the formal complaint as outlined under Title IX policy, The request for an appeal should be provided to the Title IX coordinator within two (2) school days of notice of the dismissal. Failure to request an appeal within two (2) school days shall be deemed a waiver of the appeal.

**Step 5:** If the complaint is not dismissed, then the school must provide the respondent and complainant and his/her parent/guardian written notice of the allegations against the respondent upon the receipt of the sexual harassment complaint within two (2) school days. The respondent and complainant may elect to have an advisor of their choice to assist them throughout the Title IX process. The advisor may be an attorney but is not required to be.

**Step 6:** The respondent shall be afforded the opportunity to prepare a response regarding the complaint and provide that response during the initial interview. The respondent shall have no less than two (2) school days from the date of the written notice to prepare a response and conduct the initial interview; the time to provide

the response and conduct the initial interview shall not exceed five (5) school days. This time may be modified for good cause as outlined in Title IX Policy.

**Step 7:** The Title IX Coordinator/Investigator must conduct a Title IX investigation into the allegations of the sexual harassment. Both the respondent and complainant will be given an equal opportunity to: present witnesses; present evidence; and inspect and review all evidence related to the investigation once the investigation is complete. The investigation must be completed and evidence provided to the respondent and complainant within five (5) school days of the initial interviews with the complainant and respondent, whichever interview is later.

**Step 8:** After the evidence is provided, the respondent and complainant will be given five (5) school days to review and submit a written response to the evidence for the Title IX Coordinator/Investigator to consider before the Title IX Coordinator/investigator completes his/her investigative report. If a response is not received within five (5) days, the Title IX Coordinator/Investigator will deem the non-response as a waiver and continue with his/her investigative report.

**Step 9:** After reviewing the evidence and responses, the Title IX Coordinator/Investigator shall create an investigative report summarizing his/her findings. The investigative report will be provided to the respondent and complainant for review. Both the respondent and complainant will have no more than two (2) school days to provide written relevant questions to the Title IX Coordinator/investigator to be asked of any party or witness. The party or witness has no more than two (2) school days to respond to the questions. Responses will be provided to the complainant and respondent by the Title IX Coordinator/Investigator. The respondent and complainant will then have no more than two (2) school days to provide no more than three (3) written relevant follow-up questions. The party or witness has no more than two (2) school days to respond to the follow-up questions. The respondent and complainant will have five (5) days from receipt of the investigative report to provide a written response to the investigative report.

**Step 10:** The investigative report and written responses will be provided to the Principal/Decision-maker. If a response is not received within five (5) days, the Principal/Decision-maker will deem the non-response as a waiver and continue with his/her determination of responsibility.

**Step 11:** The Principal/Decision-maker shall issue a written determination regarding the responsibility of the respondent to the respondent and complainant within three (3) school days. The Principal/Decision-maker shall apply the preponderance of the evidence standard when making his/her determination. The school-based Title IX Coordinator will be responsible for the implementation of all remedies stated in the written determination. The determination of responsibility will become final after two (2) school days if an appeal of the determination is not requested.

**Step 12:** If either the respondent or complainant do not agree with the Principal/Decision-maker's determination, either party may appeal the decision in writing to the Principal/Decision-maker. A request for an appeal must be made within two (2) school days of issuance of the determination of responsibility. An appeal will be granted if: (1) procedural issues affected the outcome; (2) there is new evidence that becomes available that could affect the outcome; or (3) there was a conflict of interest or bias by the Title IX Coordinator/Investigator or Principal/Decision-maker against the respondent or complainant. The respondent and complainant shall have three (3) school days to submit a written statement challenging or supporting the determination of responsibility issued by the Principal/Decision-maker. If a statement is not received within three (3) school days, the appeals decision-maker will deem the non-response as a waiver and continue with



his/her decision regarding the appeal. The appeals decision-maker will review the statements, if available, the investigative report, and the determination of responsibility before submitting his/her written decision to the respondent and complainant. The written appeals determination describing the result and rationale for the decision must be provided simultaneously to the complainant and respondent and his/her parent/guardian within five (5) school days. The decision of the appeals decision-maker will become final upon issuance.

### **Additional Guidelines**

No recipient or other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing.

Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for Code of Student Conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or this part, constitutes retaliation.

Schools are required to keep confidential the identity of the following individuals: any individual who makes a report or complaint of sex discrimination; any individual who makes a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment; any complainant; any respondent; any individual reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination; and any witness. Disclosure of the aforementioned individuals may be permitted according to the FERPA or as required by law.

A Code of Student Conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith during the course of the grievance process does not constitute retaliation. A determination regarding responsibility alone is insufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

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# INNOVATION MONTESSORI

## Student Laptop Acceptable Use Policy

2024-2025

### 1. Overview

Institutional information and information resources shall be used in an approved, ethical, and lawful manner to avoid loss or damage to Institutional operations, image, or financial interest and to comply with official policies and procedures. Students shall contact the Director of Information Technology prior to engaging in any activities not explicitly covered by these policies.

For the purpose of this policy institution refers to Innovation Montessori Ocoee and Innovation Montessori High School. Charter Schools operating under charter from the Orange County School District, Orange County Florida.

### 2. Scope

The Institution owns all institutional information resources; use of such resources constitutes consent for the institution to monitor, inspect, audit, collect, and remove any information without permission or further notice. Students shall be instructed in what use is acceptable and what is prohibited. Information Technology will send regular security awareness bulletins to students to address any concerns. IMO/IMHS regards any violation of this policy as a serious offense. Violators of this policy are subject to IMO/IMHS discipline action as prescribed by IMO/IMHS and Orange county school District standards of discipline.

### 3. Designation of responsibilities

#### 3.1 Institutional Executive Director:

- Shall be responsible for ensuring appropriate and auditable security controls are in place

#### 3.2 Institutional Principals, Assistant Principals and Deans shall be responsible for:

- Informing personnel of institutional policies on acceptable use of information resources.
- Communicating with parents and guardians when violations occur related to student use of technology.
- Coordinating with the Orange County School District when appropriate regarding infractions of the technology policies.

#### 3.3 Teachers and educational staff shall be responsible for:

- Informing current and new students of IMO/IMHS policies on acceptable use of information resources.

- Ensuring that students comply with IMO/IMHS policies and procedures.

3.4 Department of Information Technology shall be responsible for:

- Monitoring systems for integrity
- Maintaining and ensuring data backups of critical electronic information as designated by the Director of Information Technology.
- Developing and maintaining the institutions information resource security policies
- Addressing violations of IMO/IMHS and district policies on information resources
- Interpreting institutional policies on information resources

3.5 Students shall be responsible for:

- Abiding by official IMO/IMHS policies on acceptable use of information resources.
- Promptly reporting suspicion or occurrence of any unauthorized activities to the Director of Information Technology or one of their designees
- Any use made of their accounts, logon ID's, passwords, PINs, and tokens.

#### 4. Hardware and Software

IMO/IMHS provides laptop computers based on the Microsoft Windows Operating System for student education use both in classroom and with permission at home. Because students work on institution owned computers, they must comply with institution policies and procedures regardless of the device's physical location. Personal devices are not authorized for use for academic work on school campus. Resources may be made available to facilitate additional learning at home as needed and personal devices can be used at home in accordance with the remainder of these policies.

##### 4.1 Software

To prevent the introduction of malicious code and protect the integrity of institutional information resources, all software shall be obtained from official institutional sources. Users shall not be permitted to install and/or modify information resources in a manner that diminishes security standards set forth by the institution.

##### 4.2 Complying with copyright and licensing

All software used on Institutional information resources shall be procured in accordance with official IMO/IMHS and district policies and procedures, and shall be licensed, and registered in the name of the institution. All students shall abide by software copyright laws and shall not obtain, install, replicate, or use software except as permitted by the software licensing agreements and institution policy.

##### 4.3 Use of Personally Owned Software

To protect the integrity of the institutional information resources, students are not authorized to use personally owned software on institutionally owned equipment. This includes purchased and licensed applications; shareware; freeware; downloads from the Internet, Intranet, FTP sites, local area networks (LAN's) or wide area networks (WANs); and other personally owned or controlled software unless otherwise authorized in

writing by the Director of Information Technology or her or his designee in advance of such use. Documented approval shall be secured prior to use and or instillation of personally owned software on an institutionally owned equipment.

#### 4.4 Hardware Repair

All hardware repairs on all institution devices will be completed by the Department of Information Technology in accordance with department procedures and processes. No staff other than IT staff are authorized to repair, modify, configure, replace any hardware component without first obtaining the permission of the Director of Information Technology or the Executive Director of the institution.

Students are expected to maintain the hardware entrusted to them in good working order. While accidents certainly happen, it is expected that students take care in preventing damage to the hardware entrusted to them. Any damage to the device found to be non-accidental in nature is subject to require payment to replace or repair. This includes any charger or cable that may be included with the device. Replacement chargers will be made available to purchase in the event a replacement may be needed.

Hardware is to remain on campus for campus use unless specific arrangements are made with the Department of Information Technology well in advance. To prevent loss, theft, damage, etc devices should not leave the State of Florida without prior approval.

#### 4.5 Use of Freeware, online games, chat rooms, resources etc

To prevent the introduction of malicious code and protect the integrity of institutional information resources, online gaming websites shall not be accessed via any institution owned device or network within or outside of operating hours.

Chat rooms as well as online messaging services besides what is prescribed in the subsequent sections of policy are not to be accessed on institutional devices for any reason without prior authorization by the Department of Information Technology. This includes but is not limited to, Discord, Twitter etc.

### 5. Electronic Mail and Messaging

Access to the Institution's electronic mail (email) system is provided to all students for dissemination of information and conducting institutional business. Since email may be monitored, all students using Institutional resources for the transmission or receipt of email shall have no expectation of privacy.

#### 5.1 Acceptable use of Electronic Mail and Messaging

The institution provides email to facilitate the conduct of official business. Use of electronic mail and/or electronic messaging resources shall not be done in a manner that interferes with the institutions ability to perform its mission and shall meet the conditions outlined in official institutional directives, missions and/or goals.

#### 5.2 Prohibited Use

Prohibited activities when using the Institutions electronic mail shall include, but not be limited too, sending or arranging to receive the following:

- Information that violates institutional policies, regulations, local, state, or federal laws.

- Unsolicited commercial announcements or advertising material, unless approved by the institution in advance.
- Any material that may defame or libel the institution, the recipient, the sender, or any other person.
- Email hoaxes, malicious code, or spam (defined as unwanted and unsolicited emails or materials in such large volumes that they tend to disrupt the proper functioning of institutional information resources and or individuals' ability to use those resources).
- Information technology services for unlawful purposes including fraudulent, threatening, defamatory, harassing, or obscene communications.
- Any use deemed threatening, defamatory, harassing, or obscene by the Director of Information Technology, her or his designee, with approval from the Executive Director of the Institution.

## 6. Internet and Network

Access to the Internet is available to students using the assigned student network. Since Internet activities may be monitored; all students accessing the Internet shall have no expectation of privacy. While other campus wide networks may exist, students are to only connect their device to the approved Student network using the manner prescribed by Information Technology. Any student device detected on any other password protected network will be immediately removed and subject to disciplinary actions.

### 6.1 Acceptable Use

The institution provides Internet access to facilitate the conduct of Institutional business. Use of the Internet shall not be done in a manner that interferes with the work of students, personnel, or the Institutions ability to perform its mission, and shall meet the conditions outlines in official institutional directives or goals.

### 6.2 Prohibited Use

Prohibited activities when using the Internet include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Posting, sexually-explicit material, hate-based material, hacker-related material, or other material that may be deemed detrimental to the integrity, image, ad mission of the institution.
- Posting or sending restricted information outside of the Institution without proper or formal authorization.
- Posting commercial announcements or advertising material.
- Promoting or maintaining a personal or private business.
- Using non-work or non-academic related applications or software that occupies excess workstation of network processing time.
- Use of online browser-based games.
- Any use deemed threatening, defamatory, harassing, or obscene by the Director of Information Technology, her or his designee, with approval from the Executive Director of the Institution.
- Any use deemed as not furthering and supporting the educational mission of the Institution by the Executive Director or her or his designee.

### 6.3 Cellular devices and mobile hotspots

Wireless mobile phones and associated cellular hot spot features are not to be used to conduct academic business or to circumvent network protections.

### 7. Authorized Monitoring

All institutional owned information systems including but not limited to hardware, networks, software applications, services such as email and messaging, are subject to monitoring and restriction by the Department of Information Technology in consultation with Administration. There is no expectation of privacy for students using these resources. Department of Information Technology may place monitoring software on student devices, as deemed appropriate and prudent by the Director of Information Technology in consultation with the Executive Director of the Institution and Administration. Additionally, students are prohibited from removing, interfering with, disabling or otherwise preventing the said monitoring of devices.

### 8. Generally Prohibited Uses of Information Resources

Generally prohibited activities when using Institutional Information Resources shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Stealing or copying of electronic files without permission including the use of peer to peer P2P or other file sharing websites.
- Violating copyright laws.
- Browsing the private files or accounts of others.
- Performing unofficial activities that may degrade the performance of systems, such as playing of electronic games including browser-based games and applications.
- Attempting to access any network, resource, computer, or institutional resources, even if the attempt was unsuccessful, that would or could result in damage or disruption to the resources.
- Performing activities intended to circumvent security or access controls of any organization, including the possession or use of hardware or software tools intended to defeat software copy protection, discover passwords, identify security vulnerabilities, decrypt encrypted files, or compromise information security by any other means.
- Writing, copying, executing, or attempting to introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or otherwise hinder the performance of or access to any institution computer, network or information.
- Using another user's login credentials passwords, PIN's or any other unique identifier with or without the user's knowledge or consent.
- Conducting fraudulent or illegal activities.
- Disclosing restricted Institutional information.
- Engaging in conduct that is inconsistent with the stated goals and mission of the institution.
- Unauthorized entry into a file or attempted entry of a file or program, to use, read, or change the contents, or for any other purpose regardless of intent

- Use of any technology to intimidate, harass, bully or otherwise interfere with any staff, student or teacher's ability to perform their official duties.

#### 9. User ID's and Passwords

Innovation Montessori Ocoee requires that each student who accesses multiuser information systems have a unique user-ID and a private password. Each authorized individual is personally responsible for the protection and security of his or her user-ID and password and should be aware of the applicable federal and state laws regarding access to authorized systems. Authorized users should not share their private passwords with other individuals or allow other individuals to perform activities on computers under another login.

#### 10. Security Compromise Tools

Innovation Montessori Ocoee students must not acquire, possess, trade, or use hardware or software tools that could be employed to evaluate or compromise information systems security. Examples of such tools include those which defeat software copy-protection, discover secret passwords, identify security vulnerabilities, exfiltrate data, or decrypt encrypted files. Similarly, users are prohibited from using "sniffers" or any other hardware or software which monitors the traffic on a network or the activity on a computer.

Users should also not engage in any penetration testing, network exploration or exploitation unless directed by the Director of Information Technology.

#### 11. Items not explicitly covered by policy

Students shall contact the Director of Information Technology prior to engaging in any activities not explicitly covered by these policies.

The institution reserves the right to disconnect or remove institutionally owned or privately-owned equipment, or restrict use thereof at any time as required to maintain the functionality, security, or integrity of network, computing and telecommunications resources. This policy is not intended to abridge academic freedom or the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech or freedom of expression but rather to allow us to continue to provide a secure computing environment for our students and staff.