

# **Independence Academy Student and Family Handbook 2019-2020**

*Where children are individuals  
destined for success!*

**675 29 Road, Grand Junction, Colorado 81504**

*School Office: 970-254-6850*

*Fax: 970-241-2064*

**School Hours: Monday - Thursday 8:00 am – 3:40 pm**

**Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 7:30 am – 4:00 pm, Friday. 8:30 am -  
12:30 pm**

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<http://independenceacademygj.org>

## Independence Academy Staff

<p><b><u>Office</u></b>  <b>Lisa Gonsalves– Executive Director</b></p> <p><b>Becky Polniak – Executive Secretary</b></p> <p><b>Kindra Nicodemus – Front Desk Secretary</b></p> <p><b>Lacey Weber- Technology/Assessment Coordinator</b></p> <p><b>Katie Bennett–Instructional Specialist</b></p>	<p><b><u>Pre-K</u></b>  <b>Margie Wass</b></p> <p><b><u>Elementary</u></b>  <b>Holly Alexander– Kinder.</b>  <b>Brenda Lee – Kinder.</b>  <b>Janille Hudson – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Jennifer Coleman–1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Eryn Rider – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Bea Conway – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Lauren Lyons – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Belinda Breeds – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Ally Tapp – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Pam Donoher – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Andrew Gagnon – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>  <b>Jennifer Mayes – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b></p>	<p><b><u>Middle School</u></b></p> <p><b>Kaitlin Adleman 6-8</b>  <b>Social Studies</b></p> <p><b>Amanda Chhem 6-8</b>  <b>Math</b></p> <p><b>Natalie Lineback 6-8</b>  <b>Science</b></p> <p><b>Dianna Akin 6-8</b>  <b>English</b></p> <p><b>Sarah Eller -Lead &amp; Explore</b></p> <p><b>Ally Wilson-Lead &amp; Explore</b></p>
<p><b><u>Paraprofessionals</u></b>  <b>Liz Dahl</b>  <b>Amie Borden</b>  <b>Janet Meissner</b>  <b>Jenny Nordenson</b>  <b>Ellie Franzen</b>  <b>Heather Shea</b></p>	<p><b><u>Special Services</u></b></p> <p><b>Katie Brown – Special Education</b></p> <p><b>Megan Murray – School Nurse</b></p>	<p><b><u>Maintenance</u></b>  <b>Tom Maddalone</b>  <b>Elizabeth Hazen</b>  <b>Ron Dahl</b>  <b>Liz Dahl</b></p>

<p><b><u>Elective Teachers</u></b></p> <p><b>Chuck Rider-Physical Education</b>      <b>Megan Henry-Artistic Genius</b>  <b>David Hammaker- Music Extraordinaire</b>      <b>Lacey Weber- Technology Guru</b></p>
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### IACS Governing Board

The Board of Independence Academy meets the last Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m., at Independence Academy, unless otherwise communicated. Parents and community members are welcome to attend open sessions. Please call the school office at 970-254-6850 to verify the meeting date/time as the Board may occasionally need to make changes in the meeting schedule. Please contact the school office with any questions.

**Current IACS Board members:**

*Sherry Price*- President  
*Mike Holmes*- Vice President  
*Hadassa Berger*-Parent member/Secretary & Treasurer  
*Abbie Siegmund*-Parent member  
*Brad Thompson*-Parent member

**IACS Guiding Principles**

*Be safe* – keep yourself and others out of danger.  
*Be kind* – lead with compassion.  
*Be responsible* – own your decisions and the consequences.  
*Be prompt* – be on time.  
*Be prepared* – what tools do you need to do your personal best?  
*Be respectful* – you are part of our community.  
*Be successful* – do your personal best.

**IACS Student Responsibilities**

1. Understand and abide by the handbook – be *respectful & responsible*.
2. Attend school every day – be *prompt*.
3. Be on time, *prompt & prepared* for participation.
4. Talk with school staff when challenges or solutions arise – be *safe*.

**IACS Family Responsibilities**

1. Make sure IACS students are *prompt* and *prepared* for class.
2. Tell us about any changes to student/family information – be *responsible*.
3. Talk to IACS staff if there are academic, attendance, or discipline concerns – be *safe*.
4. Communication is key to ensuring success at IACS – be *responsible*.

**Attendance- Be Prompt**

There is a direct relationship between *success* and class *attendance*. Excellent attendance means better grades, and a happier school experience. Absence from school results in a loss of learning. *IACS families should use Friday to schedule appointments, such as dentist, doctor, etc.*

Student attendance is the direct responsibility of the student and family. IACS may inform students and parents of absenteeism, confer with parents about problems of attendance, and take disciplinary action when necessary to improve attendance.

Missing school can result in poor performance and will result in detention, loss of privileges, or the student being withdrawn from school. It is the student/family responsibility to collect and make up any work missed because of an absence.

**If your student is absent, call the school office (970-254-6850) by 8:00 am, to report an absence. If a parent does not notify the office within 24 hours, the absences will be unexcused.**

Students should make up missed assignments immediately upon returning to school. Students who have excused absences will be given two days to make up every one day missed. Absences not excused will not be given two days. Parents need to check with the school office if they have questions regarding any absence.

The school office should be called if you are requesting homework from your teachers due to an extended absence. Please give the office/ teachers one full school day to prepare the work.

### **Assemblies, Programs, Events, and Concerts**

Assemblies are provided for the student body and are usually presented by students or guests. All students who attend are to conduct themselves in a manner that is acceptable in relation to the activity. Be courteous and supportive of fellow students and of all visitors.

### **Academic Dishonesty/Cheating – Be Responsible**

Students are responsible for their own work. Consequence for cheating/plagiarism is at the discretion of the teacher or administration. It may result in loss of credit, inability to make up the assignment, detention and/or suspension.

### **Closed Campus- Be Safe**

IACS is a *closed* campus. Students are allowed to leave school grounds only when supervised by IACS staff, or parent/guardian. Parents/Guardians must sign their student out prior to leaving and sign them back in upon return.

### **Technology – Be RESPONSIBLE**

Students using electronic media will abide by the Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA) provided by IACS or will face the loss of computer privileges. Students may not access chat rooms, games, music or videos on IACS computers (unless approved by their teacher for educational purpose). A copy of the AUA is available in the office.

### **Discipline– Be Kind**

IACS provides students with the opportunity for self-improvement and individual growth. Students are expected to follow the IACS Guiding Principles;

- *Be safe* – keep yourself and others out of danger.
- *Be kind* – lead with compassion.
- *Be responsible* – own your decisions and the consequences.
- *Be prompt* – be on time.
- *Be prepared* – what tools do you need to do your personal best?
- *Be respectful* – you are part of our community.
- *Be successful* – do your personal best.

Conduct which disrupts the operation of the school, interferes with the rights and privileges of other students, endangers the health or welfare of any person, or damages property will not be tolerated.

IACS staff will share the responsibility for supervising students and helping them abide by the student code of conduct as established in this Handbook. (*Available for viewing in the online on the website or in the office*).

The classroom teachers work closely with the students/families. We're a team. We want our children to be successful. Teachers will provide timely and accurate communications. IACS staff have supervisory responsibilities for all students and are expected to consistently enforce school procedures and rules.

IACS administration will communicate with families when significant consequences are involved. Discipline will be handled appropriately at all levels, with consequences matching offenses. The Executive Director, or appointee, will have the final determination of consequences.

Federal law, Colorado State Laws, and D51 policies support IACS policy and procedures.

In general, the ability to change behaviors rests with the individual student, next is the teacher. Finally, it is the job of the administration to enforce the rules and laws associated with a free and appropriate public education.

Teachers and staff may benefit from the following guidelines when working with students on changing behaviors:

1. *Proximity* – as teachers move towards a student who may be making poor choices, those behaviors may decrease.
2. *1:1 conversation* – talking with a student in a private setting can help build respectful relationships.
3. *Verbal warning* – stating the desired behavior in terms of what the teacher wants to see can help students make proper adjustments.
4. *Change of seat* – moving to a less distracting location can be helpful.
5. *Buddy teacher room* – sometimes a student just needs a time out, or a change of scenery where he/she can reflect and return when the student has decided they're ready.
6. *Phone call to parents* – sometimes having the student explain his/her behavior can be a powerful tool for change.
7. *Referral to the office* – repetitive, disrespectful, disruptive behaviors should be directed to administration. Consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion are then explored. Parents and caregivers will be contacted. The student may be asked to leave the school.

### **Dress and Grooming– Be Respectful**

1. Be safe.
2. Be hygienic.
3. Be respectful.
4. Be responsible.

- Keep shirt straps of any kind at 2 inches wide or credit card width. No halter tops, spaghetti tops, or one shoulder straps.
- Under clothing should remain *under* your clothes at all times. Under wear includes but is not limited to: bras, boxers, lingerie, underwear.
- Be modest. Wear clothing that helps people appreciate your work and your intelligence.
- Shirts with messages should promote IACS principles and values.
- Pull up your pants. Wear a belt. Don't sag – it's gross.
- Shorts and skirts should be at a length that isn't distracting to you or others, and past student's finger tips.
- No midriff exposure.
- Closed toed shoes are encouraged.
- Hats are allowed on special occasions, but shouldn't be worn in the building.
- *Students dressed inappropriately will be asked to change clothes.*

### **Fees**

Our ability to provide field trips, activities, art supplies, celebrations, functions and other consumable materials depends on student fees.

1. Students will be charged for the cost of textbooks and instructional materials that have been lost, damaged, or destroyed.
2. Please prepay for pizza, milk, before/after school care charges.
3. Please contact the office to inquire about your student account balance.
  - **1 student: \$225**
  - **2 students, same family: \$300**
  - **3 or more students, same family: \$350**

*Please contact our office with questions about fees. If fees are 30 days overdue, your child will not be able to participate in activities/field trips. Monthly statements will be sent home with students or emailed home. Pay upon receipt. Fees are subject to change.*

### **Fighting- Be Safe**

Independence Academy maintains a "hands off" policy (including kicking, throwing objects, etc.). Disputes should be settled through problem solving, mediation with teacher or aide, or talking with the IACS Administration. Consequences are at the discretion of the administration.

### **Food/Drinks – Be Responsible**

Food or drink is allowed in the cafeteria. Water in a covered water bottle is allowed in the school building and classrooms.

## **HABITUALLY DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS – BE RESPECTFUL**

Under Colorado State Law and District 51/IACS Policy, a student may be declared habitually disruptive if he/she has caused a material and substantial disruption on school grounds, three times during the school year. When a pattern of disruption occurs, **expulsion may become mandatory.**

## **HALL AND CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

1. Be prompt to class. Be on time. It's a life skill.
2. Be prepared. Bring the tools you need to do your personal best.
3. Be respectful. Your teacher will dismiss you.
4. Cell phones are to be turned off and kept in student's pockets during class and hall time. Use in class is allowed with teacher approval only.
5. **School is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen cell phones, or other electronic devices.**
6. Abuse of cell phone policy will result in confiscation and/or loss of privilege. Parents will retrieve your phone from the front office.
7. Administration reserves the right to change this policy as needed.

## **Harassment**

***Harassment is a serious disciplinary infraction dealt with by suspension, and/or expulsion and is defined as any threatening or menacing behavior with harmful intent including:***

- Physical Assault: the act of striking or touching a person or that person's property with a part of the body or with any object with the intent of causing hurt or harm.
- Verbal Abuse: includes but is not limited to swearing, screaming, obscene gestures or threats, directed either orally (including by telephone) or in writing at an individual, his or her family or a group.
- Intimidation: an act intended to frighten or coerce someone into submission or obedience.
- Extortion: the use of verbal or physical coercion to obtain financial or material gain from others.
- Bullying: physical, verbal *or digital* contact or coercion to be cruel or to obtain control over others.
- Stalking: the persistent following, contacting, watching or any other such threatening actions that compromise the peace of mind or the personal safety of an individual.
- Discriminatory Slurs: insulting, disparaging or derogatory comments made directly or by innuendo regarding a person's race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic background or handicap.

## Grading & Reporting – Be Responsible

K-5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>
4- Exceeds Grade Level	100 – 90      A
3- Mastery of Grade Level	89 – 80        B
2- Approaching Mastery	79 – 70        C
1-Unsatisfactory	69 – 60        D
	Below 60       F

### Late Work-Be Responsible

- **Elementary** – your teacher will update you and the student, as needed.
- **Middle School**
  - If you are absent, you have 2 school days to make that assignment up. If you are absent on the day a long term project is due, your project is due the day you return to school.
  - Grade checks will be completed each Monday. If a student has a missing assignment it will show up in Synergy as an “M” for missing.
  - If a student has a missing assignment they will need to fill out a missing assignment sheet and meet with that teacher to remedy the issue.
  - 10% will be deducted for the assignment grade for each day it is late until they turn it in or the assignment is reduced to zero.
  - Please do not hesitate to reach out to our teachers if you have any questions or concerns throughout the year.

### Eligibility

- **Field Trips:** All *academic* field studies provide student-based learning opportunities. All students are expected to attend *academic* field studies. If a student cannot attend, he/she will attend school and complete academic work provided. Parents will be called to pick up students whose behavior is detrimental to the success of the field trip. Non-academic field trips/activities are eligibility contingent.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities**—includes Student Council, IACS Sponsored Sports, Dances, Clubs, and other activities.

*Students with two D's or one F are ineligible for extra-curricular activities. Parents and students can check progress on Parent/Student-Vue. Middle school grades will be checked the Monday*

*prior to the activity to determine eligibility. IACS reserves the right to make the final determination of any extenuating circumstances surrounding academics or behavior.*

### **Homework**

All students should expect daily homework assignments in core subject areas. Please see grade-level teacher for individual expectations. Students benefit from reading at home for 20 minutes each day.

### **Lunchroom**

While eating in the lunchroom, be *responsible*, be *kind*, be *respectful*, be *safe*. Each student is responsible for bussing his/her trash and keeping the eating areas clean. Milk is available daily, for 50 cents (\$.50). We have pizza available for purchase on Thursdays. Families must provide lunch for their students Monday-Thursday.

### **Medical/Health Assistant**

- We have a part-time Registered Nurse on staff.
- Students who are ill or injured should report to the school secretary in the school office.
- Parents will be contacted when it is necessary for a student to go home.
- Students must be fever free without medication and/or have not thrown up for a period of 24 hours before returning to school after an illness.
- All medications must be registered with the school secretary.
- Medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the school office during school hours.
- A medication authorization form is available in the school office and must be completed and signed prior to medication distribution.
- A log is kept for each student's medication.
- **DO NOT send your student to school with any medication, including ibuprofen, cough drops, cough syrups, etc. without following this procedure.**
- We cooperate with CDE, District 51, and the Mesa County Health Department on issues regarding immunizations or disease control/outbreaks.

### **Messages for Students – Be Respectful**

Instructional time is a priority at IACS. Messages for students may be delivered on an as needed basis. Do not contact students on their cell phones during instructional time.

### **ParentVue Student Information Updates—Be Responsible**

Parents should notify the school office of any change in legal name, parent/guardian, home address, legal paperwork or phone number. Parents are encouraged to keep this information current in the event of an emergency. Any corrections must be accompanied by official evidence of change.

### **Parent Involvement— Be Involved**

Parents are an essential component of Independence Academy's success. Please check in at the entryway and sign in to receive a visitor badge. We encourage involvement with Family

Council, classroom volunteers, committee membership, and field trip assistance. Check out our Website <http://independenceacademygj.com> or register for **Peachjar** or **Facebook** to stay current on school activities.

- School I.D. badges must be worn by all visitors.
- Staff will ask visitors to obtain identification from the office.

### **Pick Up & Drop Off – Be Safe & Be Responsible**

- School hours are 8:00 a.m. – 3:40 p.m. Monday through Thursday (see School Calendar).
- Drop off begins at 7:40 a.m. and pick up begins at 3:40.
- If a student is on campus between 7:15 and 7:40 am they will be sent to the before school program. If a student is not picked up by 4:00 pm, they will be sent to the after school program. **\*\*Charges Apply For Both Programs\*\***

*Information is available in the school office for enrolling your child in the Before/After School Program.*

### **School Wide Drop-Off and Dismissal Procedures**

#### Before School:

- Drop students off at the main gate, to the left of the school, in the loop.
- Pull forward as far as possible when dropping your students off.
- If a parent needs to come to the office, then send your child outside first so the child is where they need to be when school starts.
- Parents park in the appropriate spaces.

#### After School:

- Teachers escort their classroom students to the appropriate gate. Signs are posted.
- Students will stand in classroom lines until they are dismissed to parents.
- After 4:00 the Gate Duty attendant will take any remaining students to the after school program. **\*\*Reminder\*\*** there is a fee for after school care.

There are **two** main pick-up locations for students.

1. Pre- Kindergarten and 1st graders will be walked to the front doors of the main building.
2. K – 5<sup>th</sup> located at the playground gate, just south of the main building.
3. 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> located at the parking lot south of the playground.

**\*Please Note:** If you have multiple students, all students will be picked up with their youngest sibling (example 6th grade sibling will stand with their 1st grade sibling in the 1st grade line until they are picked up)

### **When navigating the pick-ups or drop-offs:**

- Use caution when parking, backing up, and dropping off students.
- Use one parking space per vehicle.

- Keep the traffic flowing within the loop, driving in a counter-clockwise direction until a slot is available to pull in and drop off.
- Stay in your vehicle while in the loop.
- BE PATIENT and KIND.

### **Profanity/Obscenity – Be Respectful**

As part of the responsibility to our school and the community, students are expected to exercise discretion in their use of language and actions. Profane language, gestures, gang signs, etc. will not be tolerated on campus and will be handled directly and with appropriate disciplinary measures. **Any acts of profanity or obscenity directed toward a staff member will be grounds for suspension.**

### **Report Cards**

Academic reports are issued every nine weeks to inform the student and the parent of academic progress. Middle school report cards are available online through ParentVUE.

### **School Safety**

We work hard to ensure everyone's safety at IACS. We cooperate with the local School District, Grand Junction Police Department, and Mesa County Sheriff's Office on school safety and Emergency Response Plans.

We conduct safety drills throughout the year to include Fire Drills, Lockdowns, and Shelter in Place exercises. Grand Junction Police School Resource Officers (SRO) will assist us with these activities to help our school to be safe.

### **School Sponsored Activities**

School sponsored activities include any situation where students are under the direct supervision of a coach, teacher, or sponsor and are representing Independence Academy in some capacity. This would also include any trip, which is financed through Independence Academy funds, or has been approved by the Executive Director. The Executive Director and staff at Independence Academy will not tolerate behavior, which endangers the welfare, safety, and/or well-being of any student or staff member.

### **Serious Violations of School Rules**

***Serious violations will result in suspension, expulsion, and/or prompt reporting to the appropriate law enforcement officials:***

1. Physical or verbal assaulting any IACS staff member or IACS student.
2. Using, possessing, distributing, buying or selling any of the following: tobacco, alcohol, or drugs on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. This includes any paraphernalia.
3. Possessing or using a dangerous weapon, fireworks, or explosives.
4. Using any object as a weapon in a threatening manner.
5. Threatening or menacing with harmful intent.

**The following violations may result in an in-school or out-of-school suspension:**

1. Chronic insubordination, disrespect for authority, or lying to school personnel.
2. Fighting or initiating/provoking a fight.
3. Willful destruction of school or personal property.
4. Vandalism of this sort may also result in notification to law enforcement officials and payment for damages.
5. Theft or Forgery
6. Tampering with Alarms, Fire Equipment, Locks.
7. Engaging in verbal abuse, discriminatory comments made directly or by innuendo regarding a person's race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic background or handicap.

### **VISITORS – BE RESPECTFUL**

**ALL** visitors must sign in at the entryway upon arriving on campus. We have a transaction window for dropping off paperwork, fees, student materials, parents sign in, etc. If you wish to enter the school, you will need to be “buzzed in”.

We have visitor and volunteer badges so staff and students know a visitor has gone through the office. A person failing to sign in will be asked to return to the school office or to leave the campus.

### **PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES**

- *Be safe* – keep yourself and others out of danger, avoid injuries.
- *Be kind* – include others, say excuse me, say please and thank you.
- *Be responsible* – follow the rules of the game.
- *Be prompt* – be on time.
- *Be prepared* – what tools do you need to do your personal best?
- *Be respectful* – when IACS staff give instructions, follow them.

